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The logic of imagination: a Spinozan critique of imaginative freedom

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THE LOGIC OF IMAGINATION:

A SPINOZAN CRITIQUE OF IMAGINATIVE FREEDOM

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BY

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For my friend Anne Dienethal
and my father, Bill Parris, without whom…

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

Unless otherwise noted, translations of Spinoza's writings are from *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, Vols. I and II, ed. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985, 2017). Translations of Descartes' writings are from *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, eds. and trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, 1985), volume III, trans. Antony Kenny (1991), with marginal pagination to *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: J. Vrin, 1964-1974). Abbreviations are used as follows:

AT	Rene Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, cited by volume and page number.
CM	Spinoza's *Metaphysical Thoughts* (*Cogitata Metaphysica*), the Appendix to his *Renati Des Cartes Principiorum Philosophiae*, cited by part and chapter.
CPP	Spinoza's *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* (*Renati Des Cartes Principiorum Philosophiae*), cited by part and proposition.
CSM	Rene Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vols. I and II, cited by volume and page number.
CSMK	Rene Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. III, cited by page number.
E	Spinoza's *Ethics* (*Ethica*), cited by part and proposition.
Ep	Spinoza's Letters (*Epistolae*), cited by number.
KV	Spinoza's *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being* (*Korte Verhandeling von God, de Mensch en des zelfs Welstand*), cited by book and chapter.
TIE	Spinoza's *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* (*Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione)*, cited by paragraph number.
TTP	Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise* (*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*), cited by chapter and paragraph number.
TP	Spinoza's *Political Treatise* (*Tractatus Politicus*), cited by chapter and paragraph number.

Spinoza's *Ethics* and *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* are cited using the following abbreviations:

a	axiom
app	appendix
c	corollary
d	demonstration
def	definition
def.aff.	definition of the affects
l	lemma
p	proposition
post	postulate
pref	preface
prol	prolegomenon
s	scholium

Introduction
What the Imagination Can Do

In the Fifth and final Part of the *Ethics*, "Of the Power of the Intellect, or On Human Freedom," Spinoza claims an affect toward a thing we imagine to be free is "the greatest affect of all" (E5p5).[1] That which is imagined to be free is imagined *simplicter*, that is, "without others" (E3p49d), to the exclusion of other causes. Imaginative freedom therefore focuses and intensifies the affects, deepening affective investment such that the image of freedom becomes real unfreedom. Because Spinoza formulates his own account of human freedom as the overcoming of disempowering affects, Gatens and Lloyd are right to suggest that for Spinoza "freedom is fundamentally the emergence from the illusion of freedom."[2] But in order to emerge from such illusions, we must understand both Spinoza's concept of imagination and the logic by which it produces disempowering images of freedom. That is, we must understand what the imagination can do. In this Introduction I will lay out the ontological place of the imagination in the philosophy of Spinoza, explain the opposition between the imagination and the intellect that I consider fundamental to Spinoza's ethical project, and outline the Cartesian and Hobbesian configurations of freedom that serve as models of the operation of the imagination.

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[1] Benedictus Spinoza, *The Collected Works of Spinoza* Vols.I and II, ed. and trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985, 2017).

[2] Moira Gatens and Genevieve Lloyd, *Collective Imaginings: Spinoza, Past and Present* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 51. Gatens and Lloyd limit this claim to the illusion of free will, but as we will see in Part II below, a Spinozan analysis reveals that even a deterministic image of freedom, like the Hobbesian configuration, can be destructive of freedom. In their own analysis of Spinozan freedom, they argue, quite problematically, that Spinoza is a modern Stoic.

The Ontology of Imagination

In the first English-language work devoted to Spinoza's concept of imagination, *The Significance of Spinoza's First Kind of Knowledge*, de Deugd argues for the importance of imagination in Spinoza's philosophy on the grounds of its role in the production of the *entia imaginationis* against which he builds his philosophical system: contingency, universals, good and evil, and free will.[3] Just a few years later, Deleuze similarly identifies a "triple illusion" endemic to imaginative consciousness: final cause, free will, and the theological illusion. In his final philosophical work, written with Guatarri, Deleuze adds the illusions of transcendence, universals, the eternal, the discursive, finally admitting, "But the list is infinite."[4] The position of the late Deleuze and Guatarri is close to that of Althusser, who describes Spinoza's theory of the imagination as "inexhaustible."[5] In this work I hope to go some way toward explaining the senses in which Spinoza's concept of imagination is infinite and inexhaustible. In what follows we will encounter many of the illusions that de Deugd and Deleuze and Guattarri list. But the work of philosophy is not merely to list *entia imaginationis*. Rather, it is to demonstrate the truth of *entia imaginationis*, that is, to explain the imaginative mechanisms that cause them and, more importantly, to trace their effects for life. Deleuze and Guattari observe, "It would be wrong to think that all these illusions logically entail one another like propositions, but they resonate and reverberate and form a thick fog."[6] In examining the work of imagination, we will

[3] Cornelis de Deugd, *The Significance of Spinoza's First Kind of Knowledge* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1966).
[4] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and G. Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 49.
[5] Louis Althusser, "The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter" in *Philosophy of the Encounter: Later Writings 1978-1987*, eds. Francois Matheron and O. Corpet (London: Verso, 2006), 178.
[6] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 50.

expose the logic, or the determinate order and connection, peculiar to imaginative thought, and the co-ordination of its mechanisms, their resonance and reverberation, in the production of disempowered existence.

Spinoza defines the imagination in the Second Part of the *Ethics*, "On the Human Mind": "Next, to retain the customary words, the affections of the human body whose ideas present external bodies as present to us, we shall call images of things, though they do not reproduce the figures of things. And when the mind regards bodies in this way, we shall say that it imagines." In the early and abandoned *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, Spinoza classifies imagination as one of the four "ways of perceiving" (*TIE* 19), while in the *Ethics* it is, together with reason and intuitive science, one of the three "kinds of thinking"(Ep40s).[7] Because Spinoza defines the imagination as ways of perceiving and thinking, most commentators treat it as part of Spinoza's epistemology.[8] But I maintain that Spinoza's imagination should be interpreted first and foremost in terms of ways of existing. That is, from the first to the last Spinoza's philosophy is an ethics. As Mignini argues, "In fact, Spinoza's purpose is not to build a complete and systematic science of mind, but to know it sufficiently (*quantum sufficit*) in order to show the way to liberty."[9] In order to appreciate this claim, it is necessary to say a few words about Spinoza's ontology more broadly.

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[7] Curely and most others translate "*genera cognitionis*" as "kinds of knowing." Throughout this work I will consistently translate *cognitio* as thinking in order 1. To affirm its connection to the attribute of thought, or the way in which God *sive* Nature exists as thought and 2. To distinguish Spinoza' kinds of thinking from the seventeenth century interest in *scientia*, the translation of the Greek *episteme* or demonstrative knowledge, which is a better candidate for "knowledge."

[8] See, among others, Jonathan Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's* Ethics (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1984); Alan Donagan, *Spinoza* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Herman De Dijn, *Spinoza: The Way to Wisdom* (Purdue University Press, Indiana, 1996); Michael Della Rocca, "Power of an Idea; Spinoza's Critique of Free Will," *Nous* 37:2 (2003), 200-231.

[9]Fillipo Mignini, "The Potency of Reason and the Power of Fortune" in *Spinoza on Knowledge and The Human Mind*, ed. Yirmiyahu Yovel, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994.

For Spinoza, "there is nothing except substance and its modes" (E1p28d), or nature and singularities. Spinoza's (in)famous *Deus sive Natura* syntagma is not a mere identification of the absolute with itself. [10] Nature exists infinitely as the infinite attributes that constitute its essence (E1d6) and as the infinite singularities that it immanently produces in infinite ways (E1p16). Spinoza further demonstrates that nature is the cause of the infinity of finite beings in the same sense that it is *causa sui* (E1p25s). The force of immanent causation, then, is the self-production of being that does not precede or exceed the multitude of singularities. Because there is only one nature, and nature causes itself as the infinite nexus of finite causes, the Spinozan individual is a constitutively interdependent being, produced through and productive of its relations with other individuals (E1p28). It has long been recognized that for Spinoza the individual is part of nature.[11] But it is not always recognized that in their interdependence, Spinozan individuals are also powerful and efficacious beings: "The power by which singular things (and consequently any man) persevere their being is the power itself of God, or Nature (by 1p24c), not insofar as it is infinite, but insofar as it can be explained through man's actual essence (by 3p7)"(E4p4d).[12] The infinite and mutual *concatinatio* of singularities in Nature's immanent self-production is the foundation of what Balibar calls a relational ontology, which he

[10] The *Deus sive Natura* syntagma can easily elide the implications of immanent causation for finite beings. Those who reduce Spinoza's ontology to this formula tend to unwittingly follow German acosmist readings of Spinoza – the singular is swallowed up in the whole. Anthony Paul Smith has identified this as "a problem of scale" in both rationalist and deep ecological readings of Spinoza. He argues against using the "grand metaphysical equivocation of God and Nature," focusing on Spinoza's theory of the affects instead (Anthony Paul Smith, "The Ethical Relation of Bodies: Thinking with Spinoza toward an Affective Ecology" in *Spinoza Beyond Philosophy*, ed. Beth Lord (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 53).

[11] In her now classic study of Spinoza, Lloyd interprets Spinoza's philosophy against Cartesian metaphysics as "a way of thinking the self as part of an interconnected totality – as itself, in a new way, part of nature." Genevieve Lloyd, *Part of Nature: Self-Knowledge in Spinoza's Ethics* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1994), 3.

[12] An important exception to this failure of recognition is Sharp, who grounds her interpretation of Spinoza's ontology and politics in this fundamental insight: "The core thesis of renaturalization is the radical redefinition of human agency as part of nature" (Hasana Sharp, *Spinoza and the Politics of Renaturalization*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 9.

defines as "a general theory of communication, from which the different forms of imaginary and rational life, including the political life, could be derived."[13] Spinoza's relational ontology means that the form of life of the individual is structured pre-individually by and through its relations with other individuals, relational processes that should be understood as trans- or, as Balibar calls it elsewhere, quasi-individually.[14]

It follows from this immanent, relational ontology that ways of thinking are also ways of existing. For Spinoza, the mind, like all other finite beings, is a mode of substance. It is a certain and determinate mode of the attribute of thought (E2p11), part of the infinite intellect of Nature (E2p11s). Spinoza maintains that the *ideatum* of the mind is the actually existing human body (E2p13). In the *ordo geometrico* Spinoza explicates the operations of mind in terms of the operations of body. Beyond the so-called parallelism of the order and connection of the mind and body, for Spinoza there is an ontological identity of mind and body: "a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, but expressed in two ways" (E2p7s). In the axioms and lemmata that follow E2p13, Spinoza therefore explains that the body is a composite union: "The human body is composed of great many individuals of different natures, each of which is highly composite" (E2p13Post.I). That is to say, the body is a multiplicity, the unity of which is constituted by a characteristic relation (*ratio*) of motion and rest communicated between its parts, which are regenerated, continually changed, without

[13] Etienne Balibar, *Spinoza: From Individuality to Transindividuality* (Delft: Eburon, 1997), 7. In this essay Balibar focuses on the ontogenesis of the transindividual process of individuation. He develops the political aspects of this general theory of communication in Chs. 4 and 5 *Spinoza and Politics*, trans. Peter Snowden (New York: Verso, 1998). Both of these analyses are decisive for my own.
[14] Etienne Balibar, "*Potentia multitudinis, quae una veluti menti ducitur*: Spinoza on the Body Politics" in *Current Continental Theory and Modern Philosophy*, ed. Stephen Daniel (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 94.

compromising the *convenientia* between them.[15] The mind is therefore also a composite union, composed of a multiplicity of ideas (E2p15). Because of the identification of mind and body and the internal multiplicity that constitutes each, Spinoza's is an acephalous conception of thought, composed of imaginative and non-imaginative ideas. Mind is not privileged over body as its ruler.[16] The human mind, or the mode existing in and expressing the attribute of thought, is the idea of *the whole body*, not the head (or pineal gland). Beyond Gatens and Lloyd's claim that "human knowledge is embodied knowledge and different ways of knowing *imply* correlative ways of being," we must say that for Spinoza the life of the mind, and so of imaginative life, *is* also the life of the body.[17] This is the first sense, then, in which imagination, as a way of thinking, is also a way of existing.

The second, and perhaps more significant, sense in which the imagination is a way of existing, is at the level of the affects and effectivity. The common measure of mind and body for Spinoza is power, or the *conatus* by which each individual strives to persevere in its being (E3p7). In its relation to others beings, the *conatus* manifests itself in affects, which Spinoza defines as the increase and decrease in the powers of thinking and acting (E3d3). Indeed,

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[15] This unity, which Montag has rightly deemed "tendential," is (re)produced through the multiplicity of which it is composed. Montag point out, "the Latin verb Spinoza has chosen here to denote the 'unification' of several individuals into one underscores its precariousness even more" (Warren Montag,"Imitating the Affects of Beasts: Interest and Inhumanity in Spinoza," *differences,* 20:2 (2009), 60. Although I agree with Montag's emphasis on the precarity of the Spinozan individual, it is also important that this does not undermine its constitutive power. The relationality of being does not erase or render the individual impotent, but, we might say, exposes the way to empowerment.

[16] In this sense, Spinoza is an exception to the history of human exceptionalism grounded in the sovereignty of reason. Thought, like extension, is one among the infinite attributes that constitute the essence of substance. Because thought constitutes the essence of nature, all finite beings involve and express thought. After demonstrating that the mind is the idea of the body, Spinoza continues, "[T]he things we have shown so far are completely general and do not pertain more to man than to other individuals, all of which, though in different degrees, are nevertheless animate" (E2p13s).

[17] Gatens and Lloyd, *Collective Imaginings*, 104, my italics. Of course the identification of mind and body does not allow for explanation of modes of distinct attributes across attributes, but there is insufficient place here to treat of the issue of the relation between substance, attribute, and mode. The complex nature of this relationship is the reason why I treat substance and modes in terms of trans-attribute features like power.

Spinoza identifies imagination and affect (E5p34). Spinoza tells us that while most treat the affects as "empty, absurd, horrible" (E3Pref.), he seeks their truth, the elucidation of their causes and effects. Spinoza claims, "from any given idea some effect must necessarily follow" (E3p1). This efficacy of ideas, in including imaginative ideas, follows from Spinoza's immanent, relational ontology. Because the essence of Nature is power (E1p34), "from everything which exists some effect must follow" (E1p36). Spinoza explains every image, itself relationally engenderd, engenders a certain and determinate disposition: "the images of things are the very affections of the human body, or modes by which the human body is affected by external causes and disposed *to do this or that*" (E3p32s, my italics). Mutilated ideas of the imagination exist also in and through the lived relations with itself and others, in and through the increases and decreases in the power that make for the tumultuous nature of existence. The imagination effects imaginative ways of life.

This brief ontology of imagination indicates that Spinoza's philosophy is indeed an *ethics*. It is therefore important to examine the ethical and political implications of the imagination that is all too often relegated to his epistemology. As Tosel has observed with regard to Spinoza's own method of interpretation, interpretation is "a matter of explaining, that is, of identifying, the author's assertions, of specifying their implications, of subjecting them to the test of the examination of their logical consistency, *of understanding them in their relation to a form of life*."[18] What distinguishes the power of the imagination, then, is the determinate modes of existence, the forms of life, it produces, or what, following Althusser, I will call its "index of effectivity."

[18] Andre Tosel, "Superstition and Reading" in *The New Spinoza*, eds. Warren Montag and Ted Stolze (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 159.

Having gleaned the actuality of imagination, we should also appreciate its ontological ambivalence. Since De Deugd justifiably complained, "It seems there are very few things in the history of philosophy which have been so thoroughly underrated as the significance of Spinoza's concept of the imagination in the totality of his philosophy,"[19] much has been written about Spinoza's imagination. Because Spinoza aligns imagination with the disorder, confusion, and mutilation of thought (E2p40s), many commentators treat the imagination as the cause solely of error.[20] On this reading Spinoza's imagination is the lowest kind of thinking, which must be overcome, if not eradicated by reason, in order to achieve the passage from servitude to freedom. In response to this pejorative account, other commentators have argued for a constructive or positive interpretation of Spinoza's imagination, especially in its role in his ethics and politics.[21] But as is so often the case in the philosophy of Spinoza, imagination is not one or the other, but both. As Gatens and Lloyd rightly observe, Spinoza has "a dual stance toward imagination."[22]

Because of its immanent self-production, all ideas are in Nature, or are part of the infinite intellect, and so for Spinoza even imaginative ideas are in themselves necessary and true. Indeed, Spinoza claims, "the imaginations of the mind, considered in themselves, contain

[19] De Deugd, *The Significance*, 8.
[20] Bennett in particular argues that even though Spinoza identifies imagination as the cause of error, he actually conflates imagination with error itself (Bennett, *A Study*, 169). See also De Dijn, ; Curley, and Alan Donagan, *Spinoza* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).
[21] See, for example, Negri, who argues that Spinoza's imagination is "the fulcrum for the production of the world. The imagination is physicality that achieves intelligence, the body that is constructed in the mind…it is the dynamic motor of being. It shows being as production. Second nature is the human-made world," (Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 225). See also Antonio Negri, "Spinoza: A Different Power to Act" in *Spinoza's Authority Volume I: Resistance and Power in Ethics*, eds. A. Kiarina Kordela and Dimitris Vardoulakis (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2018), 135-145; Susan James, "Spinoza and Materialism" in *Current Continental Theory and Modern Philosophy*, ed. Stephen Daniel (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 100-113; Andreea Smaranda Aldrea, "Spinoza's Imagination: Rethinking Passivity," *Idealistic Studies* 45:1 (2015), 21-39.
[22] Gatens and Lloyd, *Collective Imaginings*, 34.

no error" (E2p17s). In the same passage Spinoza writes of the imagination as a power and virtue: "For if the mind, while it imagined nonexistent things as present to it, at the same time knew that those things did not exist, it would, of course, attribute this power of imagining to a virtue of its nature, not to a vice" (Ibid.). Klein is therefore correct to assert, "For Spinoza images *per se* pose no insoluble problems."[23] And yet, Spinoza also argues that imaginative ideas are the *sole* cause of error: "Knowledge of the first kind is the only cause of falsity, whereas knowledge of the second and third kind are necessarily true" (E2p41). He makes the same claim in the register of the affects: "We are necessarily acted on (by p1) insofar as we have inadequate ideas, and only insofar as we have them are we acted on (by p3), that is, (by E2p40s), necessarily we are acted on only insofar as we imagine" (E3p56). Given this fundamental ambivalence, I maintain that the imagination should be interpreted as a power that can disempower.

Many recent commentators have mistaken this ambivalence of the imagination for its continuity with reason and intuitive science, arguing the distinction between imaginative existence and non-imaginative existence is only a matter of degree. Hippler argues, "Spinoza actually operates a distinction within the imagination, which, rather than opposing imagination to reason, will put the emphasis on the connection between them. Rather than a clear-cut distinction, there is indeed a graduation between the three kinds of knowledge: reason, in other words, is not opposed to imagination but both signify two poles of the same continuum."[24] Gatens claims much the same thing in much the same language: "Differences between the more or less ignorant, and the more or less rational, should be understood to lie on a continuum rather

[23] Julie Klein, "Dreaming with Open Eyes: Cartesian Dreams, Spinozan Analyses," *Idealistic Studies*, 33: 2-3 (2003), 143.
[24] Thomas Hippler, "The Politics of Imagination: Spinoza and the Origins of Critical Theory" in *The Politics of Imagination,* Ed. Chiara Bottici and B. Challand (New York: Birbeck Law Press, 2011), 62.

than an opposition."[25] As does Bottici: "Imagination is not a separate faculty for Spinoza, but a certain type of knowledge distinguished from other types of knowledge only by degree. There is thus no dichotomy, but a threefold scheme, where different types of knowledge are separated at different degrees of the same thing."[26] Even Williams, who argues that imaginative ambivalence involves an irreducible opposition, "a visceral antagonism…that cannot be neutralized or contained completely,"[27] argues that Spinoza understands "the relationship between the imaginary and the true, as well as between the imagination and reason, in terms of their mobility and continuous evolution rather than their opposition or confrontation."[28]

But the thesis of a continuity between imaginative and non-imaginative existence does not countenance Spinoza's own opposition of imagination and intellection. As early as the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, Spinoza suggests that those who "fall into great errors" are those "who have not accurately distinguished between imagination and intellection" (TIE 87). In the *Ethics* Spinoza specifies that the connections made by the imagination happen "according to the order of the affections of the human body *in order to distinguish it from* the connection of ideas which happens according to the order of the intellect which understands things by their first causes, and which is the same in all men" (E2p18s, my italics). Spinoza explicitly opposes the imagination and the intellect in E1p15s, E1app, and E2p29s, as well as in correspondence with friends (Ep 17), false friends (Ep 21), and foes (Ep 67a). Indeed, the discontinuity of intellect and imagination marks the limits of any continuity in the enumeration of thought. Even though Spinoza identifies three kinds of thinking – imagination, reason, and

[25] Moira Gatens, "Compelling Fictions: Spinoza and George on Imagination and Belief," *European Journal of Philosophy* 20:1 (2012): 74-90.
[26] Chiara Bottici " Another Enlightenment: Spinoza on Myth and Imagination," *Constellations* 19:4 (2012), 596.
[27] Caroline Williams, "Thinking the Political in the Wake of Spinoza: Power, Affect, and Imagination in the *Ethics*," *Contemporary Political Theory* 6 (2007), 361.
[28] Ibid., 365.

intuitive science (E2p40s2) – Spinoza counts them in different ways. He *divides* these three "kinds" into universal and singular and, more importantly, into adequate and inadequate. That is to say, the enumeration of thought into kinds is itself circumscribed by the opposition between intellection and imagination. Hampshire is therefore correct to claim, "Spinoza made the distinction between Intellect and Imagination… one of the foundations of his system."[29]

Moreover, the thesis of continuity does not fully countenance the power of the imagination to disempower. Many of those who maintain this thesis take their cue from Deleuze's analysis of the role of passive joy in the transition from servitude to freedom. Deleuze explains, "Reason would not then 'find' itself were its efforts first not traced out in the frame of the first kind of knowledge, using all the resources of the imagination."[30] It is certainly correct to say that the second kind of thinking is, in a sense, conditioned by the first.[31] But even Deleuze himself maintains that reason uses "the laws of imagination *to free us from imagination itself*."[32] For my part, then, I must side with Macherey, who observes, "On this particularly difficult question [of passive joys] I would claim rather bluntly that for Spinoza, all passions, without exception, are sad."[33]

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[29] Stuart Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 31. Although I agree with Hampshire regarding this fundamental opposition, I do not agree with him that intellection is "pure logical thinking" or that the logic peculiar to imagination is reducible to "the association of ideas" (Ibid.)

[30] Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 294.

[31] De Deugd argues, "without the data of sense experience, it seems there can be no knowledge of the second kind" (De Deugd, The Significance, 153). See also Gilead Amihud, "The Indispensability of the First Kind of Knowledge" in *Spinoza on Knowledge and the Human Mind*, ed. Yirmayahu Yovel (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1994), 209-221. Amihud makes similar argument regarding imaginative ideas as data for the second kind of knowledge, but unlike de Deugd, who uses the significance of imagination to underscore the insignificance of the third kind of thinking, Amihud argues imaginative ideas are also essential to *scientia intuitiva*.

[32] Ibid., 296, my italics. Following Deleuze, Gatens and Lloyd claim, "The order of the imagination is not the order of reason. But reason can come to an understanding of the associations which operate between images," (Gatens and Lloyd, *Collective Imaginings*, 24).

[33] Pierre Macherey, "The Encounter with Spinoza" in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 155.

Given Spinoza's immanent, relational ontology, there can be no ontological break in thought, and so in this limited respect the continuum thesis is correct. The opposition between intellect and imagination therefore lies in the principles by which they organize relations. The order and connection of the intellect is the order and connection of Nature. The order and connection of imagination is the order of the idiosyncratic affections of the body in its arrant encounters with other bodies, what Spinoza often refers to as "the common order of nature." I refer to the distinct principles by which intellect and imagination organize relations as distinct logics of existence. Macherey has claimed, "The very specific position Spinoza occupies in philosophy expresses itself in particular in the overthrowal or corruption of traditional forms of 'logic.'"[34] For Spinoza logic exists, as Macherey suggests, "only in deed."[35] And so I will now turn to the deeds of imagination and the logic by which the Spinozan imagination operates.

The Logic of Imagination

If, as Spinoza claims, the imagination "follows in the wake of the intellect in all things, linking together and interconnecting its images and words just as the intellect does its demonstrations" (Letter 17), then how does the imagination turn nature "completely on its head" (E1app)? How can an imaginative idea be both true in itself and the cause of falsity, both a power and a power to disempower? For Spinoza, the cause of falsity does not lie in the imaginative idea itself, but in its relation to other ideas: "the mind does not err from the fact that it imagines, but only insofar as it is considered to lack an idea which excludes the existence of

[34] Pierre Macherey, *Hegel or Spinoza*, trans. Susan Ruddick (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 162. Macherey makes this claim on different grounds than I do, namely, that for Spinoza the principle of contradiction is existential not essential.
[35] Ibid.

those things which it imagines to be present to it" (E2p17). Though privative, Spinoza's account of error does not merely point to error as erroneous; it also shows the cause and necessity of error. It does not point to what the false does not think, but to why it thinks as it does and what it effects in thinking as it does. That is, Spinoza's immanent account of error explicates the way in which what is thought produces the unthought as unthought.

In a parenthetical remark on the origin of the theory of ideology, Althusser suggests that for Spinoza "the image is inherently hallucinatory."[36] This suggestions bears itself out in Spinoza's claim that imaginative ideas are "without intellective order (*sine ordine ad intellectum*)" insofar as they are confused and mutilated (E2p40s2). Spinoza explains that images are confused in two ways: First, because, as affections, imaginative ideas always involve the nature of the individual's body and the nature of the external body (E2p16), they explain neither (E2p18). This confusion is a simultaneous conflation and fixation of the internal and theexternal. Second, the imaginative idea confuses distinct things when, up against the limits of its power of thinking, it thinks them "without any distinction" (E2p40s), a conflation of difference into the same. These imaginative confusions are also, in a sense, mutilations of the imagined, but there is a further sense in which images can be said to mutilate or fragment that which they think. As an affection, the image marks the relations with other bodies. Given Spinoza's immanent, relational ontology, the order and connection of relations in Nature is the same for all individuals; it is nothing but the necessary unfolding of the causal encounters between modes. But for any one individual, "the order and connection of the affections of the human body" is absolutely singular: "the mind, from the thought of one thing, immediately passes to the thought of another, which has no likeness to the first….And in this way each of us

[36] Louis Althusser, "On Feuerbach," *The Humanist Controversy and Other Writings (1966-1967)*, ed. Francois Matheron, trans. G.M. Gosharian (London: Verso, 2003), 136.

will pass from one thought to another, as each one's association has ordered the images of things in the body" (E2p18s). This arrancy of imaginative thought fragments or isolates thought from the whole of the order and connection of Nature. The associations of imagination are the "unfettered" wandering of thought, as one epistolary description has it, fettered by the idiosyncratic experiences that mark the individual body (Ep. 17).

Again, in themselves, that is, insofar as they are in Nature and necessarily produced by the order and connection of Nature, these images are true and manifest a power of thinking. But the confusion and mutilation inherent to the image already indicate how imaginative ideas cause error. Because it is "hallucinatory" in the sense just explained, through itself the image does not disclose the relations on which its existence is conditioned. By the same conative force of all thought, the imaginative idea presents its *ideatum* as immediate and given, excluding the relations that exclude its existence; its exclusion thus excluded, the image presents the imagined as if present and fixes the external as external. The Latin for exclusion is *secludere*, which expresses the sense in which the image is isolated or broken off from the chain of causes that produce it. Spinoza defines an erroneous or inadequate idea as one that does not constitute and is not explicated through the nature of the individual alone. Rather, the inadequate idea is explicated through that which is conceived as external, or with which the mind does not perceive its internal relation. That is to say, the imagination is the cause of falsity only insofar as it is cut off from the necessary relations with the causes that engender it in the immanent, relational order of being. In this sense imaginative ideas are, as Spinoza puts it, "like conclusions without premises" (E2p28s). The erroneous idea has, in paraphrase of the Althusserian formulation, an imaginative relation to its relation to reality. The relation of the idea to its *ideatum* is real, but the relation to this relation obscures its causes; it is a real relation

excluded from the structure of relations that produce it. And so we see that even if the imagination orders and connects ideas according to the arrant and idiosyncratic encounters of the body, it has its own logic. It is this logic by which the image becomes the imaginary, or, as Althusser puts it, imagination operates "a set, a system, or, we may say, a structured system."[37]

Yet even those who recognize that the imagination operates according to a logic have very little to say about its determinate operations, or the principles of the order and connection by which it produces its effects.[38] When, prior to defining it, Spinoza first uses the term imagination in the *Ethics*, he does so to explain a propensity of thought: "If someone should now ask why we are, by nature, so inclined to divide quantity, I shall say we conceive quantity in two ways: abstractly, or superficially, as we commonly imagine it, or as substance, which is done by the intellect alone without the help of the imagination" (E1p15s). There are only a few other passages in which Spinoza refers to the operations of the imagination as propensities,[39] but I consider it helpful for framing the imagination as an orientation in thinking and being. These propensities are what Althusser refers to as "ruses of unreason,"[40] but which I call the mechanisms of imagination, both to emphasize the automaticity of their function and their co-ordination with each other. There is an important sense in which, again following Althusser, the imagination has no history. The tendencies that Spinoza identifies are *sub species aeternitatis* the determinate way in which the imagination produces its illusions, even if, throughout history, and in individual histories, the illusions change. Following this logic we can identify the

[37] Ibid. Following his teacher, Balibar suggests, Spinoza's theory of imagination is "a theory of the structure in which individual selves are primarily constituted (including self-awareness, self-recognition, self-assertion" (Balibar, *From Individuality to Transindividuality*, 25). To this I can only add that as we will see in Part II below, it is also the structure in which individuals are also constituted as social, or anti-social, beings.
[38] See, for example, Gatens and Lloyd, *Collective Imaginings*, Ch. 1.
[39] See E1App and Ep 12.
[40] Althusser, "On Feuerbach," 127.

mechanisms of the imagination, the propensities of thought to present the thought as if present (the present-ing mechanism), while excluding it as external (the exclusionary mechanism), to perceive the thought as thing in the denegation of difference (hypostatic mechanism), or deny the in-common by reducing singular and absolute perfection to mere relative perfection (comparative mechanism), while also perceiving the external in its own image and desire (appropriative mechanism), especially the desire to avoid death (mortal mechanism).

"The Greatest Affect of All":
A Spinozan Critique of the Cartesian and Hobbesian Configurations of Freedom

So what does the imagination do? I think the best – perhaps the only – way to answer this question is to observe the imagination at work. In what follows I will analyze two *entia imaginationis*, the configurations of freedom in the philosophies of Descartes and Hobbes. Many commentators read Spinoza as an heir, even if a sometimes critical heir, to these thinkers. Their relation is framed as one of influence. Curley claims, "In retrospect we can see that Hobbes is the founder of modern moral and political philosophy, much as Descartes is the founder of modern metaphysics and epistemology... when Spinoza was writing the *Ethics*, they seem to have loomed equally large."[41] Hampshire even claims that Spinoza's concept of imagination is "influenced by Hobbes."[42] But in interpreting the history of philosophy I agree with Foucault, who suggests we should "question such ready-made syntheses," arguing that "influence"

[41] Edwin Curley, *Behind The Geometrical Method* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988),106. Lachterman concurs with the view that Spinoza should be understood in relation to Descartes and Hobbes: "Spinoza's speculative intention can only be gauged when set in relation with the parallel enterprises of Descartes and Hobbes" (David Lachterman, "The Physics of Spinoza's *Ethics*" in *Spinoza: New Perspectives*, eds. Robert Shahan and John Biro (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 76).
[42] Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism*, 77.

> provides a support – of too magical a kind to be amenable to analysis – for the facts of transmission and communication; [refers] to an apparently causal process (but with neither rigorous delimitation nor theoretical definition) the phenomena of resemblance and repetition; [links] – at a distance and through time – as if through the mediation of a medium of propagation – such defined unities as individuals, oeuvres, notions or theories.[43]

Rather than read the relation between these thinkers in such magical terms, then, I will present them as encounters, conjunctions and disjunctions, which expose the mechanisms of the imagination and trace their index of effectivity, focusing on their images of freedom. Spinoza claims, "truth is the standard of both itself and the false" (E2p43s). Insofar as imaginative ideas are true, it follows that, as Althusser observes, "Every imaginary (ideological) posing of the problem (which may be imaginary, too) in fact carries in it a determinate problematic which defines both the possibility and the form of the posing of the problem."[44] The Cartesian and Hobbesian configurations of freedom therefore serve to expose different aspects of the ideology of freedom, that "answer which does not correspond to any question posed."[45]

In the discussion of the fundamental prejudices in the Appendix of the First Part, Spinoza points out that the first thing that follows from human ignorance of causes is the belief that they are free: "I take as a foundation what everyone must acknowledge: that all men are born ignorant of the causes of things, and that they all want to seek their own advantage and are conscious of this appetite. From these assumptions it follows, *first*, that men think themselves free…" (E1app). Imaginative freedom has this exemplary status in many other passages in the *Ethics*.[46] Following Spinoza, I will present Descartes' and Hobbes' imaginative configurations

[43] Michel Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Book, 1972), 21-22.
[44] Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Verso, 2006), 116.
[45] Ibid., 28.
[46] E2p17s; E2p35s.

of freedom as models of *entia imaginationis*. I take model here in the sense explained by Adorno in *Negative Dialectics*:

> They are not examples. They do not simply illustrate general considerations. By leading towards what is relevant to the matter, they would like to simultaneously do justice to the substantive intention of what is first dealt with generally, our of necessity, in contrast to the usage of examples as something indifferent in themselves, which Plato introduced and all of philosophy has merely repeated.[47]

I refer to these *entia imaginationis* as configurations because these images of freedom are complex arrangements of elements, a complexity that is often elided by commentators. Although I will be intervening in the interpretation of Descartes' and Hobbes's concepts of freedom, these are intended to lead toward "what is relevant" in the work of imagination in the philosophy of Spinoza. As we will see multiple imaginative mechanisms co-ordinate to produce the Cartesian and Hobbesian configurations of freedom. Rather than making sweeping claims about the "negative" or "positive" work of the imagination, these models "compel our thinking," as Adorno puts it, "to abide with minutiae."[48]

In Part I I will treat the imaginative determination of the self and its freedom in the philosophy of Descartes. In Chapter 1 I will provide an account of the Cartesian configuration of freedom. All commentators agree that for Descartes human freedom consists in the freedom of the will. But many commentators complain that Descartes provides an inconsistent or incoherent account of free will. On my analysis Descartes provides a consistent and coherent account of human freedom as self-determination, a freedom grounded in the ambiguity of the Cartesian self as both sovereign and subject. I will further show that the relation of the self to itself in Cartesian freedom is an internalization of the anthropo-theological mirror, a specular relation made in the all-too-human image of God, in which the Cartesian self is absolutely

[47] Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 2007), xx.
[48] Ibid., 33

responsible for the freedom that it can never absolutely achieve. In Chapter 2 I develop a Spinozan critique of the Cartesian configuration of freedom. Rather than add to the already abundant literature on Spinoza's explicit critique of free will as ignorance of causes, I will show that the Cartesian self and its freedom are produced in the co-ordination of the present-ing and hypostatic mechanisms of the imagination. The present-ing mechanism inclines the imagination to posit the self and its freedom as if present, and so as an obviousness, while the hypostatic mechanism reduces the multiplicity of the self to substance and faculty. We will further see that this image of human freedom is guaranteed in the mirroring of God and human caused by the appropriative mechanism of the imagination, the tendency of the imagination to transpose its image in the image of God, which through the vicious anthropo-theological circle, guarantees its own self-image. Throughout Chapter 2 I will analyze the Cartesian image of freedom in "its relation," as Tosel puts it, "to a form of life."[49] I will show the pernicious intensity of blame and repentance born of the absolute responsibility of the Cartesian self for itself, as well as the way this image both effects a separation of power from its effect and limits power to the self. In this analysis of its index of effectivity, we will see the determinate ways in which, through a Spinozan lens, the Cartesian configuration of freedom is disempowering, an image of freedom that causes real unfreedom.

In Part II I will treat the imaginative determination of sociality and freedom in the philosophy of Hobbes. Hobbes grants the causal determination of the individual which Cartesian self-determination denies, but for Hobbes, a rigorous mechanistic materialist, there is only extrinsic determination. Indeed, the Hobbesian configuration of human freedom is extrinsically defined as the absence of impediment to desire. In Chapter 3 I will analyze

[49] Tosel, "Superstition and Reading," 59.

Hobbes's extended debate on freedom with Bishop Bramhall in order to show that Hobbes has a relational account of freedom, one which consists in the relation of the will to the web of causes that determine it and the non-relational relation to impediments to the will. Contrary to the charges of many of his commentators, the Hobbesian configuration of freedom is consistent with his strict determinism, and, moreover, it is the grounds of his lupine conception of sociality. In Chapter 4 I will provide a Spinozan critique of the Hobbesian configuration of freedom. Spinoza does not deny the lupine sociality that Hobbes presupposes, but he shows that it is produced through the comparative and mortal mechanisms of the imagination, which foreclose both singularity and commonality and render life a being toward death. I further argue that Hobbes's concept of freedom is born of the exclusionary logic of imagination, which fixes the distinction between the internal and external, the relation of self and other, such that freedom is freedom *from*, not freedom *with* others. Throughout this Spinozan critique, I will show that Hobbes's spurious freedom and sociality are destructive of human relations because they posit a negative community, a non-relational relation that disconnects individuals from each other. In conclusion, we will see that both the Cartesian and Hobbesian configurations of freedom isolate the individual from the affinities, the collective empowerment, that Spinoza deems necessary for freedom. Because, as Spinoza claims, imaginative freedom is "the greatest affect of all" (E5p5), the critique of the mechanisms that produce the unthought as unthought in these images of freedom without others in turn produce the affective conditions for real freedom.

Part I

The Cartesian Configuration of Freedom: The Self of Imaginative Determination

> That thing is called free which…is determined to act by itself alone.
>
> –Spinoza, E1d8

> And so since you regard freedom…as a real and positive power to determine oneself, the difference between us is merely a verbal one.
>
> –Descartes, Letter to Mesland[1]

Many commentators treat the relation between Descartes and Spinoza as a relation of influence. Bennett contends, "Inevitably, Spinoza inherited most of his problems from previous philosophers. The one who looms largest is his older contemporary, Descartes."[2] In *Behind the Geometrical Method*, Curley explains his own method in the following terms: "to start from the philosophy of Descartes and to see how far the central themes of the *Ethics* can be derived from critical reflection on the Cartesian system."[3] In such readings, Spinoza is interpreted as the critic or follower, witting or unwitting, under the spell of Descartes' epochal influence. But as Foucault rightly points out, such a methodological approach is "of too magical a kind to be amenable to analysis."[4] It can be used to legitimate the interpretation of Spinoza in his relation to Descartes just as readily as it is used by Wolfson to interpret Spinoza's relation to "all the

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[1] Rene Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. III, eds. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, trans. Anthony Kenny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 234.

[2] Bennett, *A Study,* 15

[3] Curley, *Behind*, 3. Of course Curley is not alone in taking such an approach. See, for example, such wide-ranging interpretations as Donagan, *Spinoza* and Lloyd, *Part of Nature*. Against this tendency see Hampshire, who suggests, "to treat Spinoza primarily as a follower and disciple of Descartes, as he has often been treated, is, I believe, largely to misconstrue and misrepresent him," (Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism*, 28). I believe the same holds for those who treat Spinoza primarily as a critic of Descartes.

[4] Michel Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Book, 1972), 21.

philosophical literature available to him."[5] It assumes causality where there is similitude and continuity where there is discontinuity. Rather than framing the relation of Descartes and Spinoza as one of influence, then, I propose to treat it as an encounter that elucidates the Cartesian configuration of freedom first, by exposing the mechanisms of imagination that produce it and second, by analyzing the disempowering effects that it produces.

I take as my point of departure in this encounter the fact that both Spinoza and Descartes formulate human freedom in terms of self-determination. For both thinkers, self-determination indicates a relation of the self to itself. But by the end of Part I it will be clear that the agreement in these formulations is "merely a verbal one." The very real difference lies in the *se*, or self, of self-determination.[6] The Cartesian configuration of freedom presupposes a self that is a substantial, even if divided, unity that is the absolute internal cause of its own actions, actions, which, if free, do not exceed this self. For Spinoza, freedom cannot presuppose any such self; as a mode, itself composed of a complex relation of modes, of the immanent self-production of nature, the characteristic relation (*ratio*) that constitutes its unity is determined through and with its relations with others. Such a Spinozan conception of the self troubles the absolute distinction drawn by Descartes between internal and external, self and other, even if that other of the self is also internal to the self.

Part I consists of two chapters in which I will present the Cartesian configuration of freedom and develop a Spinozan critique of it. In Chapter 1 I will argue, against the commentators who charge him with an incoherent, inconsistent, or polemical conception of

[5] Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Spinoza*: *Unfolding the Latent Processes of His Reasoning* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1958), 3.

[6] The translation of *se* as self is the common translation of the term, but I would like to make the following clarification: The English 'self' does not capture the reflexive form of the Latin pronoun, and though the reflexive nature of the Cartesian self is important to my analysis – for it is only in the self-transparency of clear and distinct perception that the perfect self is delimited – I find translations like 'oneself' or 'itself' too clumsy and contrived.

freedom, that Descartes has a coherent and consistent concept of freedom as self-determination. This concept involves both a positive and negative formulation of self-determination born of the ambiguity of the Cartesian self. I will further show that the power of the self to determine itself is best understood as the internalization of the specular relation of God and human, the anthropo-theological mirror-relation in which human freedom is made in the image of and yet is absolutely different from the divine. In its dis-similarity to the divine, Cartesian freedom presupposes a self, which is both self-evident and impossible, given and exemplary. In its self-determination, in the mastery of the sovereign self over the subordinate self, the human being becomes god to itself.

In Chapter 2 I develop a Spinozan critique of the Cartesian configuration of freedom. First, I will show the mechanisms of the imagination that engender this configuration. From the Spinozan perspective, the Cartesian self and its freedom are spurious absolutes, the result of imaginative presence and hypostatization, the tendencies of the imagination to present the imagined as if present and a thing. In the Second Section I will show that the specularity of Cartesian freedom introduces an undecidability between human and divine freedom that serves to guarantee them. Following Althusser's analysis in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)," this is what Montag calls "a vicious anthropological/theological circle." Montag explains, "The God who lies beyond the material world and is free to direct it according to his unconditioned will is thus the mirror image of the man who transcends the physical world and governs his own body with absolute mastery, itself a mirror image of God: a vicious anthropological/theological circle."[7] Yet more vicious than the circularity engendered by the infamous role of God in Cartesian knowledge is the anthropo-theological circle of human and divine freedom. This circle is not logical and epistemic, but

[7] Warren Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power*: *Spinoza and His Contemporaries* (London: Verso, 1999), 39.

ontological and existential, a mirroring of human and divine will that distorts human freedom.[8] Throughout this Spinozan analysis I will follow the index of effectivity of the Cartesian configuration of freedom, showing that it causes an intensification of the sad passions, separates power from its operation, and limits human freedom to the self.

[8] Cartesian freedom serves as the model in my analysis, but such an anthropotheological mirror is also operative, for example, in Bacon's uneven and Leibniz's windowless mirrors. Both thinkers render the human being transcendent to and sovereign over nature on the ground of the human-divine specularity. In his *Monadology*, Leibniz contends that ordinary souls differ from human minds insofar as "souls, in general, are living mirrors or images of the universe of creatures, but that minds are also images of the divinity itself, or of the author of nature, capable of knowing the system of the universe, and imitating something of it in their schematic representations of it, each mind being like a divinity in its own realm" (G.W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, eds. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1989), 224.

Part I
Chapter 1

"Like God": Freedom and Self in the Philosophy of Descartes

> Now free will is in itself the noblest thing we can have, since it makes us in a way equal to God and seems to exempt us from being his subjects; and so its correct use is the greatest of all goods we possess; indeed there is nothing that is more our own or that matters more to us.
>
> –Descartes, Letter to Queen Christina[9]

In his earliest extant writings, Descartes proclaims, "The Lord has made three marvels: something out of nothing; free will; and God in Man."[10] Though in his later writings he will qualify the first of these marvels as continuous and relegate the third to the realm of faith, through the entirety of his philosophy Descartes is committed to the marvel of free will. It can even be said that the Cartesian conception of free will expresses the other marvels through itself: the will is free insofar as it has the capacity to act "from nothing" other than itself and this capacity manifests, in a sense, "God in man." In the *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes proclaims, "It is only the will, or freedom of choice, which I experience as so great that I can't make sense of the idea of its being even greater: indeed, my thought of myself as being somehow like God depends primarily upon my will."[11] Descartes specifies the similitude as "image and likeness." As he states in a letter to Mersenne, written just before the publication of the *Meditations*, "it is principally because of the infinite will within us that we can say that God has created us in his image."[12] In this chapter I will examine this image-relation of Cartesian freedom. For Descartes there is both a strict homology and an ontological divide between

[9] CSMK: 326; AT V: 85.
[10] CSM I: 5; AT X: 218. These earliest writings are, of course, contained in the infamous "notebook" included in the inventory of Descartes' writings at the time of his death, referred to and heavily drawn from by Descartes' first biographer, Adrien Baillet, and extant as a copy made by G.W.F. Leibniz.
[11] CSM II: 40; AT VII: 57.
[12] CSMK: 141; AT II: 628.

human and divine will. When Descartes affirms the connection, indeed the sameness, between human and divine freedom, he simultaneously posits the irreducible difference between them. In the Fourth Meditation Descartes claims that human and divine will are the same *in se;* in the Sixth Replies to the *Meditations* he claims, "the way in which [freedom of the will] exists in God is quite different from the way in which it exists in us."[13] This dis-similarity institutes a specularity of the human and the divine, or what I will call the anthropo-theological mirror of Cartesian freedom. Human freedom is always and only made in the image of divine freedom, an approximation of perfection for which it is absolutely responsible, but which it can never attain.

As we will see, Descartes' concept of human freedom mirrors this anthropo-theological mirror. The relation of human to God becomes a relation of the human to itself. I will show that this internalization of the anthropo-theological mirror follows from a division within the self that conditions the self-relation of freedom. Against the claim that Descartes has an inconsistent, incoherent or polemical conception of freedom, in Section 1 I will argue that Cartesian freedom is best understood as self-determination, a relation of the self to itself which mirrors that of the human relation to the divine. In Section 2, I will engage in an anatomy of the self of self-determination. I will show that the formal nature of the sovereign self, the faculty of the will, becomes the standard against which actual volition is measured. Like the human being made in the image of God, in the Cartesian configuration of freedom the human being is the same as but ontologically divided from itself. The human being is, as we will see, the subject of its subjection; in its self-determination, it is sovereign over and subordinate to itself.

[13] CSM II 291; AT VII432.

Section 1. Freedom as Self-Determination

> As for animals that lack reason it is obvious that they are not free, since they do not have the positive power to determine themselves; what they have is a pure negation, namely the power of not being forced or constrained.
>
> –Descartes, Letter to Mesland [14]

Although – or perhaps because – Descartes appeals to the self-evidence of human freedom throughout his writings, he never offers a systematic account of it. This has led commentators to charge Descartes with an inconsistent, incoherent, or even polemical concept of freedom. Against Descartes' own methodological counsel, I will directly take on the topic of freedom in order to show that Descartes has a consistent and coherent concept.[15] In this section I will present the conceptual tension that has generated the controversy. I will then turn to the various interpretive strategies for dealing with this tension. These generally fall into two camps: Those who consider Descartes to be inconsistent in his use of the concept of freedom and those who consider Descartes' concept of freedom to be incoherent. After a discussion of these interpretive strategies, I will show that there is a consistent and coherent way of reading Descartes' concept of freedom as self-determination.

[14] CSMK 234; AT IV: 117.

[15] It is Gueroult who observes, "This is evidently a way of doing things that is repugnant to the spirit and letter of Descartes' doctrine. 'To proceed by topics,' writes Descartes, 'is only good for those whose reasons are all unconnected;' it is impossible 'to construct good proofs in this way'" (Martial Gueroult, *Descartes' Philosophy Interpreted According to the Order of Reasons*, trans. Roger Ariew (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xx.) Because Descartes himself will argue that the experience and self-evidence of freedom is not subject to proof, I hope to develop the structural reading that Descartes does not.

A Consistent and Coherent Concept

The alleged difficulty in the Cartesian concept of freedom is captured in one of the few texts in which Descartes defines human freedom. In The Fourth Meditation of his *Meditations on First Philosophy* Descartes states "the will or freedom of choice (*voluntas sive libertas arbitrii*)"[16]

> simply consists in the ability to do or not do something (that is, to affirm or deny, to pursue or to avoid); or rather, it consists simply in the fact that when the intellect puts something forward for affirmation or denial or for pursuit or avoidance, our inclinations are such that we do not feel we are determined by any external force. In order to be free, there is no need to be inclined both ways; on the contrary, the more I incline in one direction – either because I understand that the reasons of truth and goodness point in that way, or because of a divinely produced disposition of my inmost thoughts – the freer is my choice.[17]

This definition exposes the alleged conceptual difficulties because Descartes appears to be offering not one, but two concepts of freedom. In the first formulation, what comes prior to the "or rather," freedom is the absolute power to elicit one of two contraries, or the power to do otherwise;[18] in the second formulation, what follows the "or rather," freedom is a matter of

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[16] I follow the CSM translation of *arbitrii* as "of choice," but it is worth noting that *arbitrium* (from *arbiter*) not only has the more general sense of one who goes to or approaches (from *beto*, *adbito*) something as spectator or witness, but also has the Roman juridical sense of one appointed by authority or law to inquire into and settle a cause, e.g. a judge, and, finally, connected to this juridical sense, the sense of the authority of the master over slave. The use of "choice" easily loses such connotation, but we will see below that subjection is an essential aspect of the Cartesian configuration of freedom.

[17] CSM II 40; AT VII 57

[18] Descartes explicitly uses the formulation "the power to do otherwise" in the *Principles of Philosophy* I.37 and his letter to Mesland from May 2, 1644, both of which I will analyze more extensively below. The concept of freedom as the power to do otherwise has precedent in Scholastic philosophy. For an excellent analysis of the connection between the Descartes' concept of freedom and that of Duns Scotus, see Lilli Alanen, "Descartes on the Will and the Power to Do Otherwise" in *Emotions and Choice from Boethius to Descartes*, eds. Henrik Lagerlund and Mikko Yrjönsuuri (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 279–98. The Scotistic conception also resonates with the Jesuit tradition, as seen in the work of Molina and Suarez. In the Second Disputation of his *Concordia*, Molina states, "That agent is said to be free who, all the requisites for acting having been posited, can act or not act, or so perform one action that he is still able to do the contrary." In his Nineteenth *Disputatio*, Suarez specifies that the ability to do otherwise involves two acts in creaturely agents: first the power to will or not to will, what

degree, measured against the elicitation of the true. The tension between these formulations appears to consist in the following: On the first formulation, the will is free if and only if it has the power to determine itself in two directions; on the second formulation, the will is free if and only if it is determined in one direction, namely, that of truth.

Commentators have long tried to resolve or to demonstrate the impossibility of resolving the tension between these two formulations of freedom. Those who consider Descartes to be inconsistent in his use of the concept of freedom often maintain that there is a clear development in his work. It has been argued that Descartes changed his concept of freedom as early as the French translation of the *Meditations*[19] or as late as the *Principles on First Philosophy*[20] or the 1645 Letter to Mesland.[21] Yet from the definition in the *Meditations* cited above, we can see that both conceptions appear in one text, so no such developmental account can be cogent. Or as Anthony Kenny has so succinctly put it, "I see no reason for thinking that at the age of forty-nine Descartes underwent a spectacular conversion." [22]

Rather than contest each of the developmental interpretations, then, I propose that it would be more productive to engage the second interpretive camp, which claims that Descartes' formulation of freedom is consistently incoherent. This interpretation focuses on the conceptual difficulty outlined above, suggesting that even though Descartes consistently invokes both

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he refers to as freedom of contradiction; second, the exercise of this power to will this or that object, what he refers to as the freedom of contrariety. We will see in in Ch. 1 Section 2 below that Suarez's distinction between the power of freedom and its exercise anticipates important aspects of the Cartesian account of the self.

[19] Jean-Marie Beyssade, "Descartes on Freedom of the Will," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 13 (1988), 81-96.

[20] Tad Schmaltz, *Malebranche's Theory of the Soul: A Cartesian Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Ch. 6.

[21] Ferdinand Alquie, *La Decouverte Metaphysique de l'Homme chez Descartes*, 2 ed. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), 289.

[22] Anthony Kenny, "Descartes on the Will," in *Cartesian Studies*, ed. R.J. Butler (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1972), 31.

conceptions of freedom, these conceptions are mutually exclusive, and so Descartes must in fact be committed to only one.[23] The source of debate in this literature, then, regards just which side Descartes is committed to throughout his work.

Here I will examine Anthony Kenny's articulation of the difficulty. Even though he represents only one side of the debate, his approach is both foundational and illustrative. In his essay "Descartes on the Will," Kenny cleanly cuts the two formulations in the passage cited above along the lines of the Humean distinction between *freedom of indifference* and *freedom of spontaneity*, respectively.[24] According to Kenny's use of this Humean distinction, freedom of indifference means "we are free in doing something if an only if it is in our power not to do it"

[23] Most of these discussions fall into the compatibilist–incompatibilist debate. The history of Anglophone Descartes literature seeks to interpret Descartes as either a compatibilist, that is, of the position that volitions are free even if they are determined by external causes, or an incompatibilist, that is, of the position that volitions are free if and only if they are not determined by external causes. Most compatibilist readings of Descartes argue, in keeping with the passage cited above, that volition is determined: 1. by God (Michael Della Rocca, "Judgment and Will" in *The Blackwell to Descartes' Meditations*, ed. Stephen Gaukroger, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006) 142-159; 2. by clear and distinct perceptions (Kenny, "Descartes on the Will"; Charles Larmore, "Descartes' Psychologistic Theory of Assent," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 1 (1984), 61-74; John Cottingham, "Descartes and Voluntariness of Belief," *Monist: An International Quarterly Journal of General Philosophical Inquiry* 85:3 (2002), 343-360; John Carriero, *Between Two Worlds: A Reading of Descartes'* Meditations, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 240-264); 3. By both (Vere Chappell, "Descartes's Compatibilism" in *Reason, Will, and Sensation: Studies in Descartes' Metaphysics*, ed. John Cottingham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 177-190. The incompatibilists argue that for Descartes there is an absolute freedom of the will, as expressed in the first formulation: Robert Imlay, "Descartes and Indifference," *Studia Leibnitiana* 14 (1982), 87-97; Randal Marlin, "Cartesian Freedom and the Problem of the Mesland Letters," in *Early Modern Philosophy: Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Politics*, ed. Georges J. D. Moyal and Stanley Tweyman (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1985), 195–216; Georges Moyal, "The Unity of Descartes' Conception of Freedom" *International Studies in Philosophy* 19 (1987), 33-5; Joseph Keim Campbell, "Descartes on Spontaneity, Indifference, and Alternatives," in *New Essays on the Rationalists*, ed. Rocco J. Gennaro and Charles Huenemann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 179–99; Alanen, "Descartes on the Will"; Daniel Kaufman, "*Infimus gradus libertatis?* Descartes on Indifference and Divine Freedom" *Religious Studies* 39 (2003), 391–406. Though I agree with the incompatibilist reading, and my reasons for doing so will be made clear in the next Section, this compatibilist-incompatibilist debate is not the focus of my interpretation of Cartesian freedom, for both underestimate the importance of the self in the Cartesian configuration of freedom and so oversimplify this configuration.

[24] Kenny develops a similar interpretive strategy in Ch. 8 of his *Descartes: A Study of His Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1968). His argument in that book is framed in terms of the kinds of ideas, and so I will make use of the essay, where the argument is specifically framed in terms of freedom.

and freedom of spontaneity indicates "we are free to do something if and only if we do it because we want to do it."[25] Kenny interprets the "or rather" in the passage so as to eradicate the first formulation altogether. He argues that for Descartes "freewill often does consist in liberty of indifference, but that sometimes it consists only in liberty of spontaneity, *and that is all that is essential to it*."[26] That is to say, according to Kenny's interpretation of Cartesian freedom, the power to do otherwise is neither necessary nor sufficient for human freedom. Kenny thus resolves the alleged incoherence in the Cartesian concept of freedom by doing away with so-called freedom of indifference. He goes on to argue that both the *Principles* and the Letters to Mesland of 1644 and 1645, some of the most in-depth discussions of freedom in Descartes' extant writings, are "a piece" with the concept of freedom as spontaneity.

Kenny's argument is based on the position that freedom of spontaneity is compatible with determination by clear and distinct perceptions. On this account, one acts freely – even "more" freely – when one is determined to judge clear and distinct perceptions as true because one wants the true. On this interpretation the will is *voluntarily necessitated* by reasons. Kenny's interpretation is motivated by the following worry: "To abandon the theory that clear and distinct perception necessitates the will is to call in question the whole validation of reason

[25] Kenny, "Descartes on the Will," 17. Kenny's reading of the Humean distinction is itself questionable. Hume's liberty of spontaneity is arguably a negative conception of freedom, according to which freedom is defined in terms of being free *from* impediment. For further discussion of the negative conception of freedom, see the discussion of Hobbes in Chapters 3 and 4 below. Kenny's interpretation seems to move beyond this negative conception, especially when he uses spontaneity in a positive conception of voluntariness, a conception which itself begs the determinist question. This difficulty aside, the use of the Humean distinction is further problematic not only because of Descartes' anomalous use of "indifference," something Kenny himself recognizes, but more so because the Humean notion of spontaneity does not involve an innate inclination of the will toward truth, something necessary for the Cartesian account, as will be shown below. Indeed, though Kenny spends much of the essay on the novelty of Descartes' notion of judgment as an act of the will rather than the intellect, he does not explore the fact that in the writings after the *Regulae* Descartes consistently identifies reason itself with the activity of the will more than with the intellect. See, for example, Part One of *The Discourse on the Method*, where Descartes equates reason and "the power to judge the true from the false." (CSM I: 111; AT VI: 2).

[26] Kenny, "Descartes on the Will," 18, my italics.

in which the *Meditations* culminates."[27] In order to salvage Descartes' rationalism, then, Kenny argues that the Cartesian self cannot act contrary to the rational weight of clear and distinct perceptions. The freedom to do otherwise is thereby rendered accidental to Cartesian freedom.

There are many who disagree with Kenny, but maintain that the Cartesian conception of freedom is necessitated on other grounds. There are also those who disagree with Kenny because they maintain that for Descartes freedom really is freedom of indifference. These disagreements, though compelling in their own right, are not as significant for my argument as the general strategy they all use. The strategy is an either-or approach to the question of Cartesian freedom. Despite the disagreements in the literature, there is an overwhelming agreement that there is a conceptual difficulty in the Cartesian formulation of freedom. All commentators therefore resort to the claim that Descartes must be committed to only one of these formulations in order to be coherent (even if these commitments changed over the course of his writings).

I contend that a careful analysis of the concept of freedom as self-determination will show that this difficulty is only an apparent one. Let me first present my interpretation in outline. I maintain that both formulations of freedom coherently express the Cartesian configuration of freedom as self-determination.[28] There are two aspects of freedom as self-

[27] Kenny, "Descartes on the Will," 29. Ragland argues that while Kenny saves Descartes' rationalism, he cannot explain Descartes' commitment to the analogy between human and divine freedom (C.P. Ragland, "Descartes on the Principle of Alternative Possibilities*," Journal of the History of Philosophy* 44:3 (2006), 377-394). If, as I have proposed, human freedom is the mirror-image of divine freedom, and for Descartes, a radical divine voluntarist, will has priority over intellect, then Descartes is consistent in privileging the power to do otherwise over a reason determined by the clear and distinct ideas of the intellect.

[28] Commentators seldom take up the Cartesian concept of self-determination except in only one of these senses. Lamore is one of the few commentators to explicitly take up the terminology of self-determination, but he takes it only in the negative sense, as freedom from external determination, not inclination toward truth. Ragland uses both "the ability to do otherwise" (or what he calls, using Harry Frankfurt's formulation, the principle of alternative possibilities) and "self-determination" to mean "freedom from outside constraint," a strange collapsing of the positive to the negative sense.

determination: The first is what we can consider *the positive formulation of self-determination*, for it expresses what Descartes in the 1645 letter to Mesland calls "a real and positive power to determine oneself;"[29] the second is what we can consider the *negative formulation of self-determination*, for it expresses that the free will is *not* determined by anything other than itself, or, in the words of the *Meditations*, "that when the intellect puts something forward for affirmation or denial or for pursuit or avoidance, our inclinations are such that we do not feel we are determined by any external force."[30] I further maintain that both aspects are necessary to adequately express the Cartesian configuration of freedom. According to this configuration, the self is *both* free to do otherwise *and* always and only free to the degree that it measures up to the truth. Cartesian freedom just is this dual-relation of the self to itself, a freedom of the will, which, according to Descartes, distinguishes the human being from both automaton and animal and makes the human being like God.[31]

I contend the appearance of inconsistency or incoherence, and the ill-fated debate that follows from this appearance, is the consequence of the failure to recognize the ambiguity in the self of self-determination.[32] Self-determination involves *both* the power of the will to determine itself *and* the exclusion of determination by that which is not itself in each of its determinations. These two aspects of self-determination map on to two different senses of the Cartesian self. As we will see, the Cartesian self is at one with itself, a substantially unified self, but it is also

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[29] CSMK 234; AT IV 112.

[30] CSM II 40; AT VII 57. Here Descartes claims that one *feels* one is not determined by external causes. There are two ambiguities operative here – that between the I and the will and that between freedom and the feeling of freedom. I will analyze both of these below.

[31] See Article 37 of the *Principles* (CSM I: 205; AT VIIIa: 18) and the 1644 letter to Mesland, cited as the epigram to this section (CSMK 234; AT IV: 117).

[32] Gueroult agrees that the Cartesian conception of freedom is "completely coherent. And we can observe no evolution of thoughts about this matter from the Meditations to the Letter to Mesland" (Gueroult, *Descartes' Philosophy*, 234). Instead of identifying the source of the apparent contradiction in the ambiguity of the self as I do, Gueroult argues that it is grounded in the ambiguity of Descartes' use of "indifference."

divided from itself, and so never completely itself. What is at stake, then, in the Cartesian configuration of freedom is the proper delimitation of the Cartesian self. Before going into an extensive analysis of what I call the anatomy of the Cartesian self in Section 2 below, I want to clarify what this shift in interpretive framework means for Cartesian freedom. I will first show that as a thinking substance, the Cartesian I, always exists in relation to itself. Second, I will show that this self-relation, in the active and passive operations of thought, constitutes the foundation of the Cartesian conception of freedom as self-determination. Third, and in conclusion of this section, I will return to the interpretive debate outlined above, and show that it results from a misinterpretation of the self of Cartesian freedom.

Divided Unity

It is well known that the I is the foundation of Cartesian philosophy. For Descartes the I is first and foremost a mind or thinking substance, both in the order of being and in the order of knowing. Despite their methodological differences, the *Discourse*, the *Meditations* and the *Principles* ground the pursuit of truth in the first truth of the *ego*. In the (in)famous words of the *Discourse*, "And observing that this truth, 'I am thinking, therefore I exist' was so firm and sure that all the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics were incapable of shaking it, I decided that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking."[33] The Cartesian self is a substantial unity. The I is that which remains the same in difference: "Is it not one and the same I who is now doubting almost everything, who nonetheless understands some things, who affirms that this one thing is true, denies everything else, desires to know more, is unwilling to be deceived, imagines many things even involuntarily, and is aware of

[33] CSM I: 127; AT VI: 32.

many things which come from the senses?"[34] The self-same mind always returns to itself in its modal variation. No matter the difference that it experiences within itself, it always remains itself. As Descartes puts it in the Synopsis which prefaces the *Meditations*, "Even if all the accidents of the mind change, so that it has different objects of the understanding and different desires and sensations, it does not on that account become a different mind."[35] The self-same nature of the self as a thinking thing allows the self to function as the epistemological ground of the Cartesian science. As a self-same substantial unity, this ground is, according to Descartes, unshakeable.

Perhaps because of this methodological function, the substantial unity of the I tends to dominate the interpretation of the Cartesian self. But if we turn to Descartes' definition of the 'thought' of the thinking thing, then we will come to appreciate that the unity of the thing is itself divided. I see this division operative in two crucial senses: 1) In the self-relation constitutive of awareness (*conscientia*), or thought itself and 2) In the active and passive powers of thinking. In explicating the I as a thinking thing, Descartes reveals the self-relation inherent to the substantial unity of the mind. In the geometric exposition of the *Meditations* Descartes provides in the Second Replies, Descartes defines thought as "everything within us in such a way that *we are immediately aware (*conscius*) of it.*"[36] Descartes offers a similar definition in the *Principles*, where he states, "By the term 'thought,' I understand everything we are aware of as happening within us *insofar as we have awareness (*conscientia*) of it.*"[37] In defining thought in terms of awareness (*conscientia*), Descartes indicates that the thinking thing is always a self-relating thing. In its awareness, the thinking thing involves a relation to itself; as *con-scius*, it

[34] CSM II: 19; AT VII: 29.
[35] CSM II: 10; AT VII: 14.
[36] CSM II: 113; AT VII: 160, my italics.
[37] CSM I: 195; AT VIIIA: 7, my italics.

thinks with itself. I contend that this awareness inherent to thought introduces a division within the substantial unity of the I. Awareness, as *self*-awareness, suggests that the thinking thing is both itself and other to itself in thought.[38]

To be clear, for Descartes knowledge of this self-relation is not reflective or discursive in the technical sense of being the result of deductive reasoning. Rather, it is *immediate* and *self-evident*. In his Sixth Replies, Descartes clearly states,

> It is true that no one can be certain that he is a thinking or that he exists unless he knows what thought is and what existence is…It is quite sufficient that we should know it by that *internal awareness which always precedes reflective knowledge*. *This inner awareness of one's thought and existence is so innate in all men* that, although we may pretend we do not have it if we are overwhelmed by preconceived opinions and pay more attention to words than to their meaning, we cannot help but have it.

Or, as he will say further on in this Reply, "We cannot fail to constantly experience within ourselves that we are thinking."[39] In the Latin edition of the *Principles*, Descartes refers to the "I am thinking, therefore I exist" as "a piece of knowledge," while the French translation of a few years later refers to it as an "inference." This translation perfectly captures the epistemic status of the first truth of the Cartesian science: It is absolutely certain and so is something known through itself but the force of this certainty lies in an immediacy not subject to deductive reason. This immediacy of the thinking thing to itself, the experience the thinking thing has of itself as thinking, is therefore a truth that is *self-evident*. Descartes explicitly asserts this self-

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[38] See Note 2 above for a discussion of the translation of the Latin "se" as self. For an argument that there is no such conscious self in the philosophy of Descartes, see Etienne Balibar, *Identity and Difference: John Locke and the Invention of Consciousness* (London: Verso, 2013), 2-28. Balibar argues, "without Descartes there would not have been any invention of *conscience* in French (and before it 'consciousness' in English), not because he invented it, but because it emerged as a response to difficult problems posed by the interpretation of his doctrine" (Balibar, *Identity and Difference*, 13).

[39] CSM II: 288; AT VII: 427; my italics. This particular passage is clarified in *Conversation with Burman*, where Descartes is reported to have said "implicitly it is always presupposed and prior. But it does not follow that I am always expressly and explicitly aware of its priority, or that I know it before my inference. This is because I am only attending to what I experience within myself " (CSMK 333; AT V: 147). See also CSMK: 331; AT V: 138.

evidence in the Fourth Set of Replies: "The fact that there can be nothing in the mind, insofar as it is a thinking thing, of which we are not aware, seems to me to be self-evident."[40] It is therefore clear that the substantial unity of the self alone does not function as ground of the Cartesian science; the immediate and self-evident awareness of itself constitutes the epistemological relation of the Cartesian self to itself in this science.

Thus we can see the first sense in which the Cartesian self is both unitary and divided. As a thinking thing the I always exists in relation to itself. Thinking involves awareness and as such it involves a relation of the I (qua thinking thing) to itself. This self-relation is not a *result* of thinking (qua discursive or deductive thought); it is *constitutive* of thinking. That is to say, the substantiality of the self is constituted by the logic of this unitary division. In order to clarify this logic, let me now turn to the second distinction that Descartes introduces into thought, that of passivity and activity, which, as we will see, serves to explicate the meaning of the self-relation of the consciousness constitutive of the Cartesian self.

In the *Principles* Descartes proclaims that there are two ways in which the thinking thing can think:

> *We possess only two modes of thinking: the perception of the intellect and the operation of the will*. All those modes of thinking that we experience within ourselves can be brought under two general headings: perception, or the operation of the intellect, and volition, or the operation of the will. Sensory perception, imagination and pure understanding are simply various modes of perception; desire, aversion, assertion, denial, and doubt are various modes of willing.[41]

In this passage, Descartes establishes the fundamental division in thought between perception and willing, the active and passive powers of thinking. In a letter to Regius, Descartes asserts,

[40] CSM II: 171; AT VII: 246.
[41] CSM I: 204; AT VIIIa: 17.

"strictly speaking, understanding is the passivity of the mind and willing is its activity."[42] This distinction between active and passive powers of thinking corresponds to the faculties of the will and the intellect, respectively.[43] The will is the infinite and active faculty of making judgments; the intellect is the finite and passive faculty of perception. Both faculties are involved in the freedom of the thinking thing, but the will and intellect operate actively and passively in thinking. I contend that these faculties constitute the active and, at least in part, the passive aspects of the Cartesian self.[44] The active and infinite faculty of the will expresses *the positive formulation of freedom*, "the ability to do or not do something…a real and positive power to determine oneself."[45] The passive and finite faculty of the intellect constitutes one aspect of *the negative formulation of freedom*, that against which the will must determine itself as free. In Section 2, The Anatomy of the Will, I will fully explain the positive and negative

[42] CSMK III: 1182; AT 3: 372. See also CSMK 232; AT IV 113.

[43] The relation between the faculties engenders a more complex mental economy of perceptions. Here the Cartesian mind can be said to be divided again between clear and distinct perceptions and confused and obscure perceptions. It is important to note that this distinction is not reducible to that between true and false judgments. Although it is indeed the case that clear and distinct perceptions alone admit of true judgment, confused and obscure perceptions do not only admit of false judgment, but also suspension of judgment. It is the power to suspend judgments which allows even confused and obscure judgments to be under the dominion of the will. As we will see in Section 2 below, the active power of the faculty of the will is expressed not only in the affirmation of true judgments, but also in the suspension of judgment altogether. Indeed it is not the affirmation of truth, but principally the avoidance of error that, according to Descartes "constitutes man's greatest and most important perfection" (CSM II 43; AT VII 62).

[44] Although I will argue in Ch. 2 that there is a hypostatization at work here, it is important to emphasize that these faculties of thought do not constitute two distinct substances for Descartes. As Descartes explicitly states in the Fourth Reply, "I did not say these faculties were things, but carefully distinguished them from things or substances" (CSM II: 158; AT VII: 224). To consider the faculties of thinking as distinct substances is to revert to the Scholastic model Descartes overturns. Though Descartes recognizes their distinction, he argues that, as he formulates it in the Sixth Reply, "the thing that wills and the thing that understands are one and the same in virtue of a *unity of nature*," a unity guaranteed by the being of thought (CSMII: 286; AT VII: 423). Below I will argue that even though Descartes denies that faculties are substances, they are still things that ground the self. But for now this division of thought into active and passive faculties does provide a useful framework for interpreting the self-relation inherent to the thinking thing. If the Cartesian self is both unitary and divided, then we should interpret this division in terms of the fact that self is related to itself as both active and passive faculties.

[45] CSMK 234; AT IV 112.

aspects of self-determination involved in Cartesian freedom. For now, I would like to show how my interpretation sheds light on the alleged difficulties in the Cartesian concept of freedom.

According to my analysis, freedom manifests itself in the thinking thing as self-determination, a relation of the self to itself, a relation in which the self is both active and passive. This analysis allows us to see that the appearance of incoherence in the concept of freedom actually results from an ambiguity in the self of self-determination. The first aspect of freedom, the positive formulation of self-determination, refers to the power *to do* otherwise, that is, the capacity to act inherent to the active faculty of the will. Here the self is the *active* subject of thought, what I will call the sovereign self. The second aspect of freedom, the negative formulation of self-determination, expresses, as Descartes says, "that we do not feel we are determined by any external force." Here the self is that which must be excluded from determination, or that which I will call the subordinate self. The interpretive key is that these are two aspects of the same self; in its freedom, the self of the positive formulation subjects the self of the negative formulation. When Descartes claims that "in order to be free, there is no need to be inclined both ways," he does not contradict the positive power of self-determination described in the first formulation. Rather, Descartes indicates that any judgment is an act of self-determination, and so must involve *both* the active power of the will *and* be measured against it. In its self-determination the sovereign self subjects the other aspects of the self to the standard of the nature of itself. When Descartes claims that one is "freer" in being inclined in the direction of the true, then, he is simply saying that the human being is more or less free to the extent that its action is in accord with its own sovereign nature, that is, the absolute power of self-determination. The freedom of degree expressed in the second formulation simply expresses the extent to which any particular volition is consistent with the nature of the will. As

Gueroult states in his brief, yet forceful dismissal of "the accusation that Descartes upheld contradictory doctrines or that his thought evolved with respect to the matter [of freedom]": "A faculty goes through exercises that must be determined by clear and distinct ideas without being abolished by them, because it tends to be determined in the most internal fashion, and the choice that depends on clear and distinct ideas is the most internal choice, meaning it is the most consonant with its own nature."[46] We will fully explore this internal nature in the next Section, but it is already clear that the two formulations do not contradict each other; rather, they are a coherent expression of the Cartesian configuration of freedom as self-determination. In each judgment, in each elicitation of the true, the actual determination is always measured against that absolute power of determination. In its freedom, the Cartesian self is measured against itself.

Section 2. The Anatomy of the Cartesian Self

> He was slenderly stored with books, because he understood they were not true, the Mathematical only excepted; wherefore being asked by a friend, whether he had a library, and desired to show it, lifting up the cloth, he discovered to him a calf dissected; behold, saith he, my library!
>
> –Adrien Baillet, *The Life of Monsier Des Cartes* [47]

In the last Section I argued that Descartes has a consistent and coherent concept of freedom as self-determination. Not only is the first formulation of freedom not in contradiction with the second, moreover, the Cartesian configuration of freedom requires *both* aspects of self-determination. I have further shown that the ostensible contradiction in Descartes' conception of

[46] Gueroult, *Order*, 234.
[47] Adrien Baillet, *The Life of Monsier Des Cartes Containing the History of his philosophy and works: as also the most remarkable things that befell him during the whole course of his life*, trans. S. R. (London: R. Simpson, 1693).

freedom follows from the ambiguity in the self of self-determination. Like the dissected calf that was said to constitute Descartes' library, we have seen that the Cartesian self is a divided unity. The self is at once that which determines itself with absolute freedom and that which is measured against the power of self-determination in each judgment. In this Section I am going to further examine the anatomy of the Cartesian self whose freedom manifests itself as subjection. I will first explain the structure of the sovereign self, the absolute power that expresses the positive formulation of self-determination, which Descartes identifies with the faculty of the will. The dissection of the will allows us to see its nature and disposition, that is, its infinity and veridical proclivity. As will become clear in this discussion, the sovereign self is distinct from other aspects of the self, which together constitute the subordinate self. The other aspects of the self, specifically the intellect and the body, express the negative formulation of freedom, or that against which the sovereign self must determine itself. The sovereign self manifests its freedom only in subjecting the subordinate self. In conclusion of this chapter, we will see the full implications of this analysis for the anthropo-theological mirror, the specularity of human and divine freedom at the center of the Cartesian configuration of freedom.

The Sovereign Self

Despite the disputations that have emerged around the Cartesian concept of freedom, it is agreed that for Descartes human freedom is voluntariness. In the Third Replies, Descartes asserts, "If we simply consider ourselves, we will all realize in the light of our own experience that voluntariness and freedom are one and the same thing."[48] Cartesian freedom (*libertas*) is always indexed to freedom of the will (*voluntas*). Descartes identifies the active power of

[48] CSM II: 134; AT VII: 191. See also CSM I: 205; AT VIIIa: 18 and CSMK III 234; AT IV 116.

thinking with the faculty of the will, giving ontological and epistemological priority to the will as *potestas*, a capacity for judgment, over the will in its *operatio*, or the actual judgments it effects. Thus the power and nature of the will is distinct from the actual determinations of the will. In *Comments on a Certain Broadsheet*, Descartes explains, "the term 'faculty' denotes nothing but a potentiality."[49] As a "potentiality," a capacity that Descartes affirms of all human beings as human beings, the will stands behind and outside of every judgment; it functions as a universal to every particular judgment. The sovereign self is therefore identified first and foremost with the faculty of judgment, with the activity, infinity, and veridical proclivity that constitute the nature of this faculty, not with actual judgments.

The difference between the power of the will as a faculty for judgment and the exercise of the will is most manifest in the suspension of judgment. For Descartes the positive power of the will manifests itself not only in affirmation and denial, but also in refraining from affirmation and denial. There is no question of the centrality of suspension of judgment in the Cartesian configuration of freedom. The freedom to withhold the operation of the will appears first in both the analytic and the synthetic expositions of Descartes' first philosophy. The systematic doubt of the First Meditation ends in the self-certainty of the freedom to withhold judgment and the *Principles* begins with the freedom to suspend judgment. For Descartes, even in the face of doubt, "we nonetheless experience within us the kind of freedom which enables us always to refrain from believing things which are not completely certain and thoroughly examined."[50] It becomes clear, then, that the sovereign self is not only the power to affirm or to deny, as suggested in the definition given in the Fourth Meditation, but also the power to suspend judgment, that is, the power to determine oneself to not exercise judgment. Descartes

[49] CSM I: 305; AT 8b: 361.
[50] CSM 194; AT VIII 6.

maintains that the will is more true to its nature in refraining from judgment than in exercising erroneous judgment. Indeed, it is the avoidance of error that, according to Descartes in the *Meditations*, "constitutes man's greatest and most important perfection."[51]

Even the lowest degree of perfection, what Descartes terms indifference, presupposes the power of the will to determine itself from itself. Descartes defines indifference as "that state of the will when it is not impelled one way rather than another by any perception of truth or goodness."[52] As a "state" of the will, indifference cannot be conflated with the power of the will itself, but instead presupposes that power. Being the lowest grade of freedom, the state of indifference still involves a manifestation of the positive power of the will, for, as one epistolary formulation has it, "the lowest degree of freedom is that by which we determine ourselves to the things to which we are indifferent."[53] Indifference is, as it were, the state of the will in which it is furthest from its ownmost nature, from its sovereign self. Yet even in the least degree of freedom, even when it turns away from its nature, Descartes presupposes the faculty of the will as a power to determine itself from itself.

This power of self-determination follows from the will as the *active* and *infinite* power of judgment, the sovereign self of the Cartesian configuration of freedom. In Section 1 above I

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[51] CSM II 43; AT VII 62.

[52] CSMK 245; AT IV 173. The primacy of the will as faculty over act helps to explain Descartes' unusual use of "indifference." According to traditional Scholastic usage, the freedom of the will is directly proportional to the indifference of the will. According to Cartesian usage, the freedom of the will is inversely proportional to indifference of the will. In the Scholastic tradition indifference is essential to freedom because it indicates that the will is not determined to one or the other of two contraries, or, it has the power to do otherwise. Descartes recognizes the "common usage" of the term, and he is taken to task by "various philosophers, theologians, and geometricians" for his anomalous usage, not only in the Objections, but also in multiple epistolary exchanges. In the Sixth Replies, Descartes argues that indifference is not essential to human freedom, "since not only are we free when ignorance of what is right makes us indifferent, but we are also free – indeed at our *freest* – when a clear perception impels us to pursue some object" (CSM II: 292; AT VII: 433). In Descartes' response we see that the inverse proportionality of freedom and indifference follows from the direct proportionality of freedom and truth.

[53] CSMK: 233; AT IV: 112.

emphasized the *active* aspect of the will, for this is the primary division Descartes introduces into thought, and so into the thinking thing itself. The sovereignty of the will further manifests itself in the *infinite* nature of the will. According to Descartes, the will can be said to be infinite in two senses: 1) in its scope and 2) as an absolute power. In the *Principles*, Descartes argues that the will "in a certain sense can be called infinite, since we observe that its scope extends to anything that can possibly be an object of any other will – even the immeasurable will of God." In the same Article, Descartes affirms, "the extremely broad scope of the will is part of its nature."[54] As opposed to the finite intellect, which is limited in its perceptive capacity, the will can affirm or deny *any* possible object. That is to say, there is no idea beyond the reach of the will's judgment.

The infinite scope of the will is infinite only "in a certain sense" because it is not infinite in the strict sense, but is, in Descartes' terminology, indefinite.[55] The absolute power of the will, on the other hand, is infinite in the strict sense. Importantly, Descartes introduces the contested definition of human freedom by affirming both the sameness and difference between divine and human will:

> For although God's will is incomparably greater than mine, both in virtue of the knowledge and power that accompany it and make it more firm and efficacious, *and also in virtue of its object, in that it ranges over a greater number of items*,

[54] CSM I: 204-205; AT VIIIa: 18.

[55] In Article 26 of the *Principles*, Descartes draws a distinction between the infinite and the indefinite. The indefinite is defined in terms of the limits of the human intellect: "For since we are finite, it would be absurd for us to determine anything concerning the infinite…[I]n the case of anything in which, from some point of view, we cannot discover a limit, we shall avoid asserting that it is infinite, and instead regard it as indefinite" (CSM I: 202; AT VIIIa: 15). The ostensible limitlessness of the indefinite is directly indexed to the limit of the intellect. The indefinite is therefore a negative attribution, a definition that expresses what the intellect *cannot* do. The infinite is defined in terms of the infinite thing itself and, as Descartes claims in Article 27, is a designation reserved for God: "For in the case of God alone, not only do we fail to recognize any limits in any respect, but our understanding positively tells us that there are none" (Ibid.). The definition of the infinite, therefore, expresses the positive nature of the infinite thing. The infinity of the infinite is understood – even if not grasped – by the finite mind. On the distinction between grasping and understanding the infinite, see the First Replies (CSM II: 81; AT VII: 112).

> nevertheless it does not seem any greater than mine when considered as will in the essential and strict sense. *This is because* the will simply consists in our ability to do or not to do something.[56]

In this passage it is clear that there is no parity of scope between human and divine will; it is equally clear that the infinity of the will as an *absolute* power of affirmation and denial, that is, a power not conditioned by any prior cause, explicates "the essential and strict" nature of the homology. And so it is not on account of the scope of the will that the human being bears "the image and likeness of God"; it is only as an unconditioned power of judgment that human and divine will are the same *in se*. Thus the infinity that is reserved "for God alone" pertains to the human will as an unconditioned power of judgment.

For Descartes, the will is not only active and infinite by nature, but it also tends toward the true and good. The veridical proclivity of the will is essential to its nature, as Descartes attests in the Sixth Replies: "As for man, since he finds that the nature of all goodness and truth is already determined by God, *and his will cannot tend toward anything else*, it is evident that he will embrace what is good and true all the more willingly, and hence more freely, in proportion as he sees it more clearly."[57] On my analysis of freedom as self-determination, the will is inclined in one direction, that of truth, by nature and it is responsible for making judgments in accord with this nature. This veridical proclivity does not compromise the absolute infinity the will. Descartes repeatedly affirms that the will is *both* free *and* inclined toward truth. He states this axiomatically in the synthetic exposition of the *Meditations* provided at the end of the Second Replies: "The will of a thinking thing is drawn voluntarily and freely (for this is the essence of the will), but nevertheless inevitably, towards a clearly

[56] CSM II: 40; AT VII: 57, my italics.
[57] CSM 292; AT VII 433, my italics. What I call veridical proclivity is similar to what Gilles Deleuze calls the "good will" in the dogmatic image of thought that recurs throughout the history of philosophy. See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

known good or truth."[58] To say that the will is drawn by nature toward truth does not mean the will is *absolutely* necessitated by truth. Rather, the will is drawn, to use Descartes' own terminology, with a *moral* necessity, that is, it *ought* to affirm the truth by its very nature. As Descartes states in the 1645 letter to Mesland, the will is self-determining in both true and false judgments:

> I do not deny that the will has this positive faculty [to pursue or to avoid, to affirm or to deny]. Indeed, I think it has it not only with respect to those actions to which it is not pushed by any evident reasons on one side rather than on the other, but also with respect to all other actions; so that when a very evident reason moves us in one direction, although *morally* speaking we can hardly move in the contrary direction, *absolutely* speaking we can. For it is always open to us to hold back from pursuing a clearly known good, or from admitting a clearly perceived truth, provided we consider it a good thing to demonstrate the freedom of our will by doing so.[59]

The only difference between these acts of the will, according to Descartes, is that the will *more easily* determines itself toward the true, what Descartes, in the same letter, calls "a greater facility to determine oneself."[60] The "facility" with which the will affirms clear and distinct perceptions, then, results from the fact that such a judgment agrees with the nature of the faculty of judgment. As Descartes explains it to Mesland, "If we follow the course which appears to have the most reasons in its favor, we determine ourselves more easily; but if we follow the opposite, we make more use of that positive power; and thus we can always act more freely in those cases in which we see much more good than evil than in those cases which are called

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[58] CSM II: 116; AT VII: 166. The use of "inevitably" in this passage is taken by Kenny as evidence that for Descartes human beings must assent to clear and distinct ideas and so that there is no absolute freedom (Kenny, "Descartes on the Will"). This term is far from decisive, since in the letter to Mesland, Descartes specifies that the "necessity" of the will to affirm the truth is a moral one. Kenny further emphasizes Descartes' use of "*multi*" instead of "*omni*" in places where Descartes writes about the power to affirm or deny, a diction especially prominent in the late *Principles*. But if, as I have argued, the will is free not only in its affirmation and denial, but also, even most fundamentally, in the suspension of judgment, then Descartes' diction is perfectly consistent with the absolute power of the will.

[59] CSMK: 245; AT IV: 173.

[60] Ibid.

adiaphora or indifferent."[61] Rather than read the absolute power and veridical proclivity of the will as voluntary necessitation, as Kenny does, I think it is important to recognize this ambiguity to be constitutive of the Cartesian self, a self that is always and never fully its sovereign self, and so also constitutive of Cartesian freedom.

The Subordinate Self

So far I have argued that the sovereign self, the self expressed by the positive formulation of self-determination, should be identified with the faculty of the will. I have shown that the will is a power (*potestas*) that is not exhausted by its operation, but, as a faculty, stands outside its volitions. I have also shown that by nature, the will is active, infinite, and inclines toward truth. I have further suggested that the nature of the will does not determine its volitions with absolute necessity, but only inclines the self toward truth with a moral necessity. I hope now to explore the full implications of this claim for the other aspects of the Cartesian self. As an inclination, the veridical proclivity of the will can be contested by other inclinations. The contest of inclinations indicates that the positive aspect of self-determination, the sovereign self constituted by the power to affirm, deny, or suspend judgment altogether, is under threat by external causes. Indeed, the Cartesian self – in its full ambiguity – is the site of this contest of inclinations. Because the determination of the self is contested, it is the case that in addition to *the positive formulation of self-determination*, according to which the will manifests its freedom through itself, we must also explicate the *negative formulation of self-determination*, such that the power of self-determination also requires the exclusion of external causes. These external

[61] CSMK: 245; AT IV: 174.

causes can be outside the self, including other bodies, (evil) minds, or God.[62] But given my interpretation of freedom as self-determination, I suggest that what is really at stake in Cartesian freedom is the way in which the will excludes determination by other aspects of the self, those which Descartes deems external to the will, namely the intellect and the body. According to Descartes, these aspects of the self should be subject to the will, but constitute a threat to its sovereignty, and so together constitute the subordinate self. I will address each of these in turn.

We have seen that for Descartes the intellect is the *passive* and *finite* faculty of perception, the other aspect of the primary division within thought. Many commentators do not perceive the intellect to be in conflict with the will.[63] There are indeed many passages in which Descartes appears to maintain that the perceptions of the intellect – at least the clear and distinct perceptions – are themselves sovereign over the will. But the language that Descartes uses in such passages is of the utmost importance. As I argued above, the power of a clear and distinct perception to "incline," "draw," "move," or even "impel" and "compel" the will is not the same as a power to *determine* the will with necessity. Indeed there is not a single passage in which Descartes claims that the truth "determines" or "necessitates" the will. Rather, the language is

[62] Some commentators argue that God does determine the will. For example, Della Rocca argues that for Descartes human beings are determined by God, but that this determination does not undermine human freedom. He offers a non-standard form of compatibilism, a compatibilism of ignorance, where human actions are determined by God, but that divine determination is compatible with human freedom because humans nonetheless experience themselves as free (Della Rocca, "Judgment and Will," 154). I maintain that Cartesian self-determination also excludes determination by God. This exclusion can be said to be the purpose of the Fourth Meditation and Articles 29-36 of *The Principles of Philosophy*, which, as discussed above, read like an epistemological theodicy. In the *Principles*, Descartes argues that even if we cannot reconcile freedom of the will with the preordination of God, we cannot doubt the freedom of the will because the divine will is beyond the limits of human knowledge and so cannot enter into philosophical reasoning. I will return to the antinomy of free will and divine preordination in my discussion of the anthropo-theological mirror in Chapter 2.

[63] As Cottingham– who is one of the many compatibilist commentators who think the will is determined by clear and distinct perceptions – has put it, "Being determined to believe what is true when the intellect has perceived fully adequate support for these truths represents the ideal state of the epistemic agent; it is not this kind of state that is threatening to our conceptions of ourselves as free, but rather the vacillating state when we are unable to perceive evidence clearly" (Cottingham, "Descartes and Voluntariness," 351).

always consistent with the veridical proclivity described above. Thus, as we have already seen, even when the will is "compelled" by clear and distinct perceptions, Descartes clarifies that this is only with a moral necessity.[64]

I maintain that Descartes considers the intellect external and so subject to the will, or sovereign self. As explained in Section1 above, the faculties of the intellect and the will are the passive and active powers of thought. Descartes' position regarding the relation between these faculties is especially clear in his exchange with Gassendi. In the Fifth Objections, Gassendi attacks the ostensible voluntarism of the Fourth Meditation. Gassendi argues that the will is not free in the sense Descartes claims because the will is in fact dependent on the intellect. He puts forth the following intellectualist arguments: 1) The will is not absolute since its power of affirmation and denial is determined by the intellect; 2) The will does not have an infinite scope because its judgment is conditioned by the scope of the intellect; 3) If anything, the scope of the intellect is broader than the will because there are many perceptions that we do not affirm or deny. Rather than respond directly to each of these arguments, Descartes points to the fact that in his objections, Gassendi himself presupposes that the will is independent of and sovereign over the intellect. His response is worth quoting at length:

> You deny that we can guard against making mistakes because you refuse to allow that the will can be directed to anything which is not determined by the intellect; but you admit that we can guard against persisting in error. Now this would be quite impossible *unless the will had the freedom to direct itself, without the determination of the intellect, towards one side or the other*; and this you have just denied. If the intellect has already determined the will to put forward some false judgment, then what is it, may I ask, that determines the will when it

[64] Even in one of the most compelling passages in support of an intellectualist interpretation, that from the Fourth Meditation in which Descartes claims, "I could not but judge that something which I understood so clearly was true," he subsequently reverts to the language of "inclination," thus indicating that Descartes uses "could not but" in the moral not the absolute sense: "But this was not because I was compelled to judge so by any external force, but because a great light in the intellect was followed by a great inclination in the will, and thus the spontaneity and freedom of my belief was all the greater in proportion to my lack of indifference" (CSM II: 41/AT VII: 59).

> first begins to guard against persisting in error? If it is determined by itself, then it can after all be directed towards an object which the intellect does not impel it towards – which you denied and which is the sole point in dispute.[65]

Although in this passage Descartes addresses all perceptions insofar as they are in the intellect, not clear and distinct perceptions in particular, the absolute power of the will to determine itself in relation to the intellect is affirmed. Indeed, Descartes' anti-intellectualism holds for both confused and obscure and clear and distinct ideas, as is evident from the way in which he continues his argument: "If on the other hand it is determined by the intellect, then it is not the will that is guarding against error; all that happens is that just as it was previously directed towards a falsehood set forth by the intellect, now it happens, purely by chance, to turn towards the truth because the intellect presents the truth to it."[66] Here Descartes explicitly interprets the intellect as an *external* cause with regard to human freedom. Were the intellect to determine judgment through itself, the freedom and responsibility of the self would be undermined. The passive, finite power of the intellect can determine truth only "purely by chance" and so has no place in the sovereign conception of the self.

The absolute power of the will to determine itself in relation to the intellect is also emphasized in the 1645 letter to Mesland cited above.[67] Descartes' claim that the will has the power to determine itself "with respect to all other actions" is a clarification of his position, stated in a letter from 1644, which made it seem that the intellect was not only external to the will, but also that it was sovereign over it: "For it seems to me certain that a great light in the intellect is followed by a great inclination in the will; so that if we see very clearly that a thing is good for us, it is very difficult – and, on my view, impossible, as long as one continues in the

[65] CSM II 260; AT VII 378, my italics.
[66] Ibid.
[67] CSMK III 246; AT IV 173.

same thought – to stop the course of our desire."[68] In this passage Descartes is not just clarifying the language of the Fourth Meditation; he is using the same language verbatim. As stated above, in the letter of 1645 Descartes explains that this "impossibility" is moral, not absolute. This epistolary explanation of the controversial passage in the *Meditations* makes it clear that the intellect does not determine the will even in the cases of clear and distinct perceptions. Those who believe that the intellect determines the will in cases of clear and distinct perceptions are simply mistaking facility of judgment for determination of judgment.[69] As I argued above, by "facility" we must understand that self-determination is consistent with the veridical proclivity of the will. Or in Gueroult's words, "the choice that depends on clear and distinct ideas is the most internal choice, meaning it is the most consonant with its own nature."[70] Because the will is inclined toward truth by nature, it more easily makes judgments about clear and distinct perceptions. This facility should not be confused with absolute necessitation. Rather, it is consistent with the concept of freedom as self-determination, according to which volitions are measured against the sovereign self.

But the intellect is not the only aspect of the subordinate self in the Cartesian configuration of freedom. In the *Passions of the Soul* Descartes reinforces the constitutive passivity of the perceptions in the intellect, referring to perceptions as passions in the general sense, a passivity which he claims is caused by their relation to the body: "I note that we are not aware of any subject which acts more directly on our soul than the body to which it is joined. Consequently we should recognize that what is a passion in the soul is usually an action in the

[68] CSMK: 233; AT IV: 116.
[69] "But freedom considered in the acts of the will at the moment when they are elicited…consist simply in ease of operation; and at that point freedom, spontaneity and voluntariness are the same thing. It was in this sense that I wrote that I moved towards something all the more freely when there were more reasons driving me toward it; for it is certain that in that case our will moves itself with greater facility and force" (CSMK III 246; AT IV 173).
[70] Gueroult, *Order*, 234.

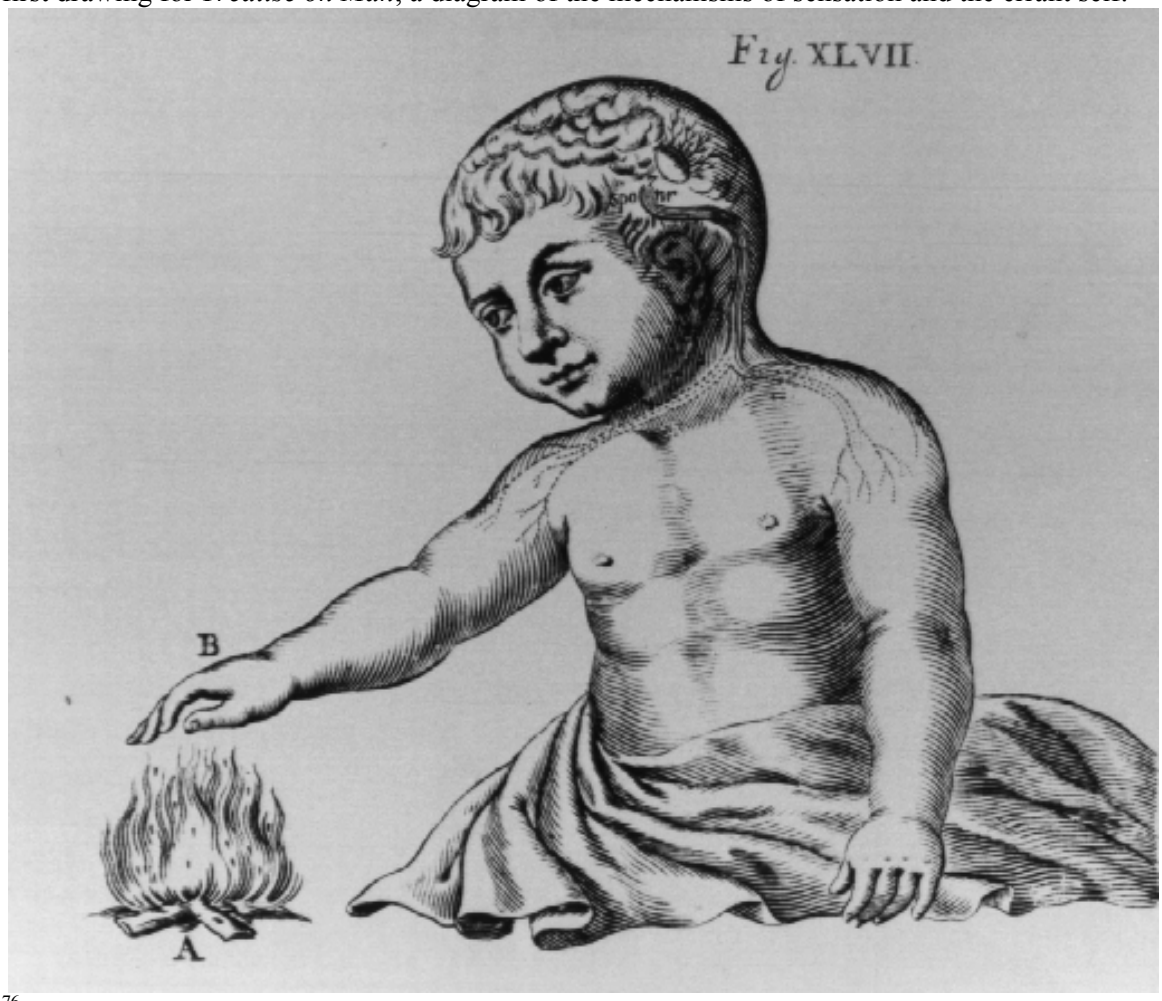
body."[71] In the *Conversation with Berman* Descartes is reported to have claimed, "The body has an obstructive effect on the soul."[72] This report coheres with Descartes' philosophical account of the relation between the mind and the body. Though the human being is in the order of reasons first and foremost a mind, the human being is by nature a union of mind and body. As Descartes explains in the Sixth Meditation, "By my own nature in particular I understand nothing but the totality of things bestowed on me by God. There is nothing that my own nature teaches me more vividly than that I have a body."[73] Though they are really distinct, the human being, when considered in its totality, is composed of mind and body. Descartes' characterization of the union of mind and body is infamously vexed and a full treatment of this difficulty is beyond the scope of this project. For my purposes it is sufficient to point out that in their relation, the body is conceived as external to the will, often even that *against which* the will should make its determinations, and that in the Cartesian configuration of freedom the will has ultimate dominion over the body, or is subordinate to the sovereign self. As Montag explains in his analysis of the *Passions*, "For Descartes, however, the self that one must be able to command is the other irreducibly present in the self, where the outside resides in the deepest recesses of the interior…The struggle for command identifies the body as the element both inside and outside the self that is not merely a resident alien but an internal alien who must be subdued."[74]

In Article 71 of the *Principles*, entitled "The chief cause of error arises from the preconceived opinions of childhood," Descartes identifies the body as a threat to the sovereign

[71] CSM I: 328; AT XI: 328.
[72] CSMK: 336; AT V: 149.
[73] CSM II: 56; AT VII: 80.
[74] Warren Montag, "Commanding the Body: The Language of Subjection in *Ethics*, III, P2S" in *Spinoza's Authority Volume I: Resistance and Power in Ethics*, eds. A. Kiarina Kordela and Dimitris Vardoulakis, New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2018), 153.

self: “It is here that the first and main cause of all our errors may be recognized. In our early childhood *the mind was so closely tied to the body* that it had no leisure for thoughts except those by means of which it had sensory awareness of what was happening to the body.”[75] The preconceived opinions encoded by the body are, as Descartes puts it in the Second Replies, “the first and most important reason for our inability to understand with sufficient clarity the customary assertions about the soul and God.”[76] In the *Discourse*, the *Meditations*, and the *Principles* Descartes suggests that the mind is habituated to thinking through the senses. Even the primary notions, which are innate and self-evident, are obscured by the mental habits

[75] CSM I: 218; AT VIIIa: 35, my italics. These childhood preconceptions are captured perfectly in the first drawing for *Treatise on Man*, a diagram of the mechanisms of sensation and the errant self:



[76] CSM II: 94; AT VII: 121.

resulting from the mind's union with the body: "[the primary notions] conflict with many preconceived opinions derived from the senses which we have got into the habit of holding from our earliest years."[77] First philosophy therefore requires that the mind turn away from the body and systematically doubt "the basic principles on which all our former beliefs rested,"[78] namely, the senses.

In the *Passions of the Soul* Descartes distinguishes between three different kinds of passions, or perceptions which have their cause in the body: those which refer to external objects; those which refer to the body; and those which we refer to the soul, that is, passions in the strict sense.[79] It is not necessary to treat each of the passions separately, for in Article 41 of the same text, entitled "The power of the soul with respect to the body," Descartes claims, "the will is by its nature so free that it can never be constrained."[80] Of course, Descartes does not need to make such an explicit proclamation. If the body is the source of the preconceived opinions to which the self is habituated, and it is in withdrawing from the senses, turning away from the body, that these preconceived opinions are overturned, then the entire Cartesian project is conditioned on the unconditioned power of the will over the body, the power of self-determination through the will and against the body.[81]

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[77] Ibid.
[78] CSM II: 2; AT VII: 18.
[79] Cf. CSM I: 336-337; AT XI: 345-348. Passions, which "refer to the soul," are constitutively corporeal, for 1) They have their cause in the body, as indicated by the taxonomy just described and 2) They have their effect in the body. See *Passions of the Soul*: "*The principal effect of the passions*. For it must be observed that the principal effect of all the human passions is that they move and dispose the soul to want the things for which they prepare the body" (CSM 343; AT XI: 359).
[80] CSM 343; AT XI: 359.
[81] Even in the case of the passions in the strict sense, over which the soul only has an indirect control, through a kind of counter-habituation, Descartes claims this control is absolute: "There is no soul so weak that is cannot, if well-directed, acquire an absolute power over its passions" (CSM I: 348; AT XI: 368).

From this discussion we can see that the sovereign self, identified with the faculty of the will, does not constitute the entirety of the Cartesian self, but that in its freedom, in its self-determination, the sovereign self relates to – is even in contest with – the subordinate self, specifically the intellect and the body. The intellect and body no doubt constitute the nature of the human being, but their relation is that of sovereign and subordinate. That is to say, in the Cartesian configuration of freedom the self is the subject of its subjection.

The Subject of Subjection

In Section 1 I argued that the Cartesian self is a divided unity and I showed how the division within the self led to the appearance of a contradiction in the Cartesian conception of freedom. In this Section we have come to better appreciate the implications of this division for the Cartesian conception of freedom as self-determination by determining the ambiguity of the self. The self of self-determination both determines itself and is determined by itself. I have argued that the sovereign self, the self that determines, should be identified with the active and infinite power of the will, which is inclined by nature toward truth and has an absolute power of determination in judgment. I have further argued that the other aspects of the Cartesian self, specifically, the passive, finite intellect and the body, or the subordinate self, are absolutely subject to the sovereign self. Though the intellect and the body incline, agitate, move, dispose and compel, they do not determine the self. Cartesian freedom is the determination of the self through its sovereign self, over and against all other inclinations of the self.

Thus in its self-determination we can say that the Cartesian self is the subject of its own subjection. The self or subject[82] here functions in the dual sense outlined by Althusser in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)": "In the ordinary use of the term, subject in fact means 1) A free subjectivity, a center of initiatives, author of and responsible for its actions; 2) A subjected being, who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission."[83] We have seen that the first sense of the subject, or what I call the sovereign self, lies in the absolute power of the faculty of the will. Freedom is the subjection of every aspect of the self that conflicts with the veridical proclivity of the sovereign self. The subject in the second sense, what I call the subordinate self, consists principally in the intellect and body. As Althusser explains, "There are no subjects except by and for their subjection. That is why they 'work all by themselves.'"[84]

Given this analysis, we are now in a better position to understand the anthropo-theological mirror constitutive of the Cartesian configuration of freedom. In the Introduction to this chapter, I explained the specular relation between human and divine freedom. The homology of human and divine will is expressed by the absolute power of the will to determine itself. It is well known that Descartes is a radical divine voluntarist, that is, the Cartesian God creates not only being, but also truth *ex nihilo*. As he states in the 1644 letter to Mesland, "even

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[82] In *The Passions of the Soul*, Descartes himself uses "subject" to refer to the ambivalence of the unitary division of the self: "I note that whatever takes place or occurs is generally called by philosophers a "passion" with regard to the subject to which it happens and an "action" with regard to that which makes it happen. Thus, although an agent and a patient are often quite different, an action and a passion must be a single thing which has two names on account of the two different subjects to which it may be related" (CSM I 328; AT XI 328). In this passage, Descartes divides "one and the same thing" according to the active and passive "subjects to which it may be related;" that is, the division of the self is presented in terms of two different subjects.

[83] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)," *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (London: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 182.

[84] Ibid.

if God has willed that some truths should be necessary this does not mean that he willed them necessarily; for it is one thing to will that they be necessary, and quite another to will this necessarily, or to be necessitated to will it."[85] Some commentators have even argued that this absolute power of the will is the primary divine attribute of the Cartesian God.[86] Made in the mirror-image of God's will, we have seen that for Descartes the human will is the unconditioned, first cause of its own actions. Yet even as he upholds the homology of the absolute power of the will, Descartes also always insists on the absolute distance between human and divine freedom. Descartes sometimes explains this distance in terms of the scope of the will; at others, it lies in the human and divine essence; in yet others, he explains it in terms of the distinct relation to the same object, truth.[87] But no matter the articulation of the dis-similarity, the anthropo-theological mirror that constitutes its structure is always the same: the image-relation institutes a sameness that can never be actual. In this chapter I have tried to show that this specularity occurs also in the human's relation to itself. In its freedom the human self-relation mirrors the human-divine relation; the Cartesian self is "like God" to itself.

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[85] CSMK: 235; AT IV: 118. See the April 1630 letter to Mersenne for one of the earliest formulations of this radical divine voluntarism (CSMK: 22-23; AT I: 144-146)..

[86] See Jean-Luc Marion, *On the Ego and On God: Further Cartesian Questions*, trans. Christina Geschwandter (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), Chapters 6 and 7. Marion argues that the primacy of omnipotence excludes God from belonging to the univocal order of being and from being subject to eternal truths.

[87] In Descartes' Sixth Replies, he explains that the difference between human and divine will is not in their object, truth, but in the specific form of their relation to that object. Though varied in dogma and discipline, the authors of the Sixth Objections agree in their opposition to the Cartesian account of freedom given in the *Meditations*. The authors, who identify freedom with indifference in the Scholastic usage, dispute Descartes' claim that indifference is an imperfection of the will. If the essence of freedom is immutable, and divine freedom involves indifference, then, they argue, human freedom must also involve indifference. Descartes responds, "The way freedom of the will exists in God is quite different from how it is exists in us," and explains that true is the proper object of both divine and human will, but that the human will is inclined toward the true that God has determined. As a divine volitionist, Descartes' God has a constitutive will. The human will, on the other hand, is inclined toward its cause, that is, the will of God, and so can only affirm or deny what the divine will has constituted. Therefore, Descartes argues, "it is obvious that the more clearly [the human being] sees what is good and true the more willingly and thus freely he will embrace it" (CSM II: 292; AT VII: 433).

The division of and contest within the self engenders the need for self-mastery, that is, the mastery of the sovereign self over other aspects of the self. As he explains in *The Passions of the Soul*, free will "renders us in a certain way like God by making us masters of ourselves, provided we do not lose the rights it gives us through timidity."[88] The sovereign self, which consists in the absolute power and veridical proclivity of the will, is the formal nature against which the actions of the will are measured. According to Descartes, the way one fares in this contest is the measure of one's freedom. As Descartes puts it in *The Passions*, "It is by success in these conflicts that each person can recognize the strength or weakness of his soul."[89]

[88] CSM I: 387; AT XI: 445.
[89] CSM I: 346; AT XI: 366.

Part I
Chapter 2

God, Human, and Stone: A Spinozan Critique of Cartesian Freedom

> So those who confuse the divine nature with the human easily ascribe human affects to God, particularly so long as they are also ignorant of how those affects are produced in the mind.
>
> – Spinoza, E1p8s

> To find the material with which to construct a theory of the guarantee, we must turn to Spinoza.
>
> –Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards a Theory)"[1]

In Chapter 1, I argued that the Cartesian configuration of human freedom is best understood as self-determination, an internalization of the human-divine mirror. This analysis is consistent with Spinoza's own account in the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*, where he geometrically elucidates Cartesian freedom to mean "the will is free to determine itself" (CPPp15d). This Spinozan formulation expresses the ambiguity of the self of Cartesian freedom, a freedom in which the human being is the subject of its subjection, both sovereign over and subordinate to itself. We saw that this ambiguity follows from the divided unity that is the Cartesian self. The sovereign subject is identified with the absolute freedom and power of the will, the veridical nature of which constitutes the standard against which all other aspects of the self are measured. From a Spinozan perspective the Cartesian configuration of freedom is imaginative but really ruinous for life. In this Chapter I will elucidate the truth of this illusion, elucidating both the logic of the imagination that causes the illusion of free will and the disempowering effects that follow from it. Spinoza concludes his geometric demonstration of the impossibility of free will with the claim that his doctrine of freedom without free will is "of

[1] Althusser, "Ideology," 181.

use for life (*ad usum vitae*)," indicating that it "contributes, to no small extent, to the common society" (E2p49). In each Section I will seek to explicate this extent by exposing the damaged life engendered by the Cartesian configuration of freedom, one that Spinoza overcomes in the undoing of its image.

Throughout this Chapter, I will analyze the Cartesian configuration of freedom using Althusser's account of ideology from which I drew my articulation of the ambiguity of the Cartesian subject. This is not only because Althusser argues that the theory of ideology has its origins in Spinoza, but also because according to Althusser, "all ideology is essentially speculary."[2] Although Althusser makes this claim in a reading of Feuerbach, whom, he further argues, provides the first philosophical description of ideology, I maintain that, because of the anthropo-theological circle that constitutes it, the Cartesian configuration of freedom provides a model of the function of ideology.[3] In his seminal essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)," Althusser develops a theory of ideology that explains the reproduction of the conditions of production, arguing that ideology is eternal, material, and consists in the imaginary relation to real conditions of existence.[4] Although each of these aspects of the Althusserian theory of ideology have their Spinozan sources and

[2] Althusser, "On Feuerbach," *The Humanist Controversy and Other Writings (1966-1967)*, ed. Francois Matheron, trans. G.M. Gosharian (London: Verso, 2003), 128.
[3] See also Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power*, Chapter 2, Sharp, *Politics of Renaturalization*, Chapter 2., and Juan Domingo Sanches Estop, "Beyond Legitimacy: The State as an Imaginary Entity in Spinoza's Political Ontology" in *Spinoza's Authority Volume I: Resistance and Power in Ethics*, eds. A. Kiarina Kordela and Dimitris Vardoulakis, New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2018, 87-111. These are among many contemporary thinkers who also make extensive use of Althusser in their analysis of Spinoza, though they do not focus their analysis on Descartes as I do in this Chapter.
[4] Of course Althusser does not use eternity in an early modern sense, but to indicate that ideology is omnihistorical, or has an immutable structure that functions throughout all of history. Althusser argues that ideology is material insofar as it exists in and through institutional apparatuses and their practices. Finally, the imaginary relation to the real conditions of existence explains the way in which ideology is always an illusion/allusion, or that the conditions of existence themselves are not imaginary, but that the relation to those conditions are imagined. That is, in keeping with Spinoza's ontology of the imagination, ideology produces real effects.

resonances, the most pertinent to the discussion of the Cartesian configuration of freedom are what Althusser identifies as the "quadruple system of interpolation," or the four moments in the function of ideology in the process of subjectivation in general:

> 1) the interpellation of individuals as subjects;
> 2) Their subjection to the Subject;
> 3) The mutual recognition of subjects and Subject, the subjects' recognition of each other, and finally the subject's recognition of himself;
> 4) The absolute guarantee that everything really is so, and that on the condition that the subjects recognize what they are and behave accordingly, everything will be alright.[5]

In Chapter 1 we have already discovered and explained the ambiguity of the Cartesian subject referred to in the first and second moments, by which the Cartesian self is the subject of its own subjection. According to Althusser, the ambiguity of the subject is "the decisive central term on which everything else depends"[6] because the other mechanisms of ideology, universal recognition and absolute guarantee, follow from it. In this Chapter I will show that these same mechanisms are also at work in the Cartesian configuration of freedom. But, as Althusser further suggests, in order to construct a *theory* of the guarantee, that is, in order to explicate its causes, we must turn to Spinoza. [7]

I will begin my Spinozan analysis from Spinoza's own account of Cartesian freedom in the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*. In the first two Sections I will show that the self and the freedom of Cartesian self-determination are produced by the imaginative mechanisms of presence and hypostatization. In Section 1 I will examine the *absolute* character of the Cartesian configuration of freedom. Insofar as it is posited as an immediate and self-evident truth, the Cartesian self and its freedom are the effect of the present-ing constitutive of imagination. This mechanism presents the object of the imaginative idea as present, as given without cause. The

[5] Althusser, "Ideology," 181.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.

effect of this mechanism is that the idea is not conceived as an effect, but as absolute, or without prior cause. Indeed, like all mutilated ideas, Cartesian free will presupposes a presence that covers over the causes that produce it. In tracing the index of effectivity of this imaginative presence, we will see that in its self-determination the Cartesian self is absolutely responsibility for itself. The ethical implication of this absolute responsibility is, from a Spinozan perspective, the multiplication of wretchedness, the doubling of the sad affects in the experience of blame and repentance.

In Section 2 we will see that the substantiality of the Cartesian self is produced by the hypostatic tendency of the imagination. In erasing difference and conflating singularities, the hypostatic mechanism produces the faculties with which Descartes identifies the sovereign and subordinate aspects of the self. This imaginative mechanism, which denegates multiplicity, makes things of *entia imaginationis*, and it has, from a Spinozan perspective, destructive ethical effects. In privileging *potesas* over *potentia*, the Cartesian configuration of freedom separates power from its actuality, a model of human agency that imagines agency without effect.

In Section 3 I will explore the full implications of the specularity of human and divine freedom outlined in Ch. 1. In that chapter I argued that the Cartesian configuration of freedom involves an anthropo-theological mirror insofar as human self-determination mirrors the speculary relation between human and God. We saw that in Descartes' own image of this relation the human being is made in the image of God and so can function as God to itself. But through a Spinozan analysis it will become clear that the Cartesian image of this image-relation is distorted. It is not that the human being mirrors God, but that there is a certain, as Badiou

calls it, reversibility between God and human that serves a more fundamental function:[8] the Cartesian God is made in the human being's own imaginative self-conception, which the image of God guarantees. That is, in the Cartesian configuration, human freedom is (re)produced and guaranteed by the anthropo-theological mirror. This guarantee of the Cartesian configuration of freedom is the effect of the appropriative mechanism of the imagination, by which the imagination imagines *ideatum* in its own image. But in grounding freedom in the anthropo-theological mirror, the Cartesian configuration of freedom limits freedom to the self, cutting the self off from those relations that are constitutive of and empowering for it.

Section 1. Universal Recognition: The Spurious Absolute

> For my part, unless I contradict my consciousness, i.e. contradict reason and experience, and unless I encourage prejudices and ignorance, I deny that I can think, by any absolute power of thinking…
>
> – Spinoza, Ep 58

In the Preface to *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*, Lodewijk Meyer, Spinoza's friend and editor, makes it clear that Spinoza's position is not the same as Descartes'. The primary example used to illustrate the difference between Spinoza and Descartes is free will:

> So let no one think [Spinoza] is teaching here either his own opinions, or only those which he approves of. Though he judges that some of the doctrines are true, and admits that he has added some of his own, nevertheless there are many that he rejects as false, and concerning which he holds quite a different opinion.
>
> An example of this – to mention only one of many – is what is said concerning the will in the *Principles* Ip15s and in the Appendix, II.12, although it seems to be proved with sufficient diligence and preparation (CPPpref).

[8] Citing Descartes, Badiou claims, "We could say that the essence of classical metaphysical humanism is the construction of a predicate which is undecidable between the human and the divine" (Alain Badiou, *The Century* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 168).

Although Meyer presents free will as "one of many" examples of the difference between the philosophers, for Spinoza freedom is the exemplary imaginative idea. Imaginative freedom of will is exemplary because it exemplifies the structure of all mutilated, erroneous ideas.[9] Both free will and mutilated ideas are "like conclusions without premises" (E2p28); they exclude and so cover over the causes by which they are produced. As Spinoza explains, "a thing we imagine to be free must be perceived through itself, without others" (E3p49), that is, it must be perceived as absolute. We have seen that Descartes holds the human will to be absolutely free because it is infinite, in the strict sense that it has no prior cause. In this Section we will see that the absolute character of this imagined freedom from prior causes is itself caused by imaginative presence, or the tendency of the imaginative idea to posit its *ideatum* as present. Because the imaginative idea presents the imagined as if present, the imagined appears immediate and self-evident. This is what, following Althusser, we can call the obviousness of Cartesian freedom.

One of Spinoza's epistolary interlocutors, an anonymous friend of Spinoza's friend Schuller, mistakes Spinoza's concept of freedom for Cartesian free will. In stating his agreement with this conception, he appeals to the obviousness of his own free will, affirming "that we can use the exercise of our reason most freely – i.e. absolutely" (Ep 57). In response, Spinoza asserts his difference from Descartes and his interlocutor, asking Schuller, "I'd really like to know what consciousness he is talking about, if it's not what I explained in the example

[9] This structural homology of absolute free will and mutilated ideas goes some way toward explaining why Spinoza uses absolute free will as the primary example of error: "In p17 I explained how error consists in the privation of knowledge. But to explain the matter more fully, I shall give [NS: one or two examples]: men are deceived in that they think themselves free [NS: i.e. they think that, of their own free will, they can either do a thing or forbear doing it], an opinion that consist only in this, that they are conscious in their actions and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined. This, then, is their idea of freedom – that they do not know any cause of their actions" (E2p17s).

of the stone" (Ep 58). Spinoza uses the "example of the stone" to explain the nature of the existence and action of singular things:

> Suppose a stone receives, from an external cause which strikes against it, a certain quantity of motion, by which it afterward will necessarily continue to move, even though the impulse of the external cause ceases. This perseverance of the stone in motion, then, is compelled, not because it is necessary, but because it must be defined by the impulse of the external cause. What I say here about the stone must be understood concerning any singular thing, however composite it is conceived to be, and however capable of doing many things: each thing is necessarily determined by some external cause to exist and produce effects in a fixed and determinate way.
> Next, conceive now, if you will, that while the stone continues to move, it thinks, and knows that as far as it can, it strives to continue moving. Of course, since the stone is conscious only of its striving, and not at all indifferent, it will believe it is very free, and that it perseveres in motion for no other cause than because it will to. This is that famous human freedom everyone brags of having, which consists only of this: that men are conscious of their appetite and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined (Ep 58).

In what follows we will see that the freedom that Descartes claims to be made in the image of God is also really nothing more than the freedom of a stone. Like "the perseverance of the stone in motion" (Ibid.) imaginative presence perseveres in positing the freedom of the will, rendering it an obviousness. Beginning from Althusser's notion of obviousness, then, I will show that from a Spinozan perspective, this imaginative mechanism causes the spurious absolute of Descartes' lapidary freedom. I will then explain how this lapidary freedom in turn causes the unfreedom of blame and repentance.

The Obviousness of Obviousnesses: Imaginative Presence

> [Spinoza] was the first man in the world to have proposed…a theory of the opacity of the immediate.
>
> – Althusser, *Reading Capital*[10]

In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards a Theory)," Althusser presents a "theoretical theatre," a scene of socialization in which the individual is interpolated only insofar as it always already recognizes itself as the subject of interpolation. According to the Althusserian theory, ideology (re)produces that to which it refers; it does not act on a pre-existing individual but activates the subject as subject of ideology. Ideological subjection is the making of the subject that recognizes itself as the subject it has been made to be. This is the universal recognition that Althusser refers to in the third of the four moments of ideological subjectivation: the ideological subject recognizes itself and others as non-ideological subjects. Althusser explains that this recognition functions "automatically," as if it is spontaneous and natural. Recognition of and by the subject of interpolation operates through what Althusser calls obviousness: "It is indeed a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so because these are obviousnesses) obviousnesses as obviousnesses that we cannot fail to recognize and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying out, 'That's obvious! That's right! That's true!'"[11]

In Chapter 1, we saw that the self of Cartesian self-determination is an obviousness, or in Descartes' language, an immediate and self-evident truth. Although it appears that in the order of reasons the self is the result of radical methodological doubt, Descartes makes it clear that it is not a result because it does not follow from deductive reasoning. Rather, the self must

[10] Althusser, *Reading Capital,* 16.
[11] Ibid, 172.

be understood as an immediate and self-evident truth. As Descartes explains in the Sixth Replies, "It is quite sufficient that we should know it by that internal awareness which always precedes reflective knowledge."[12] That is to say, the Cartesian self is transparent to itself. In the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*, Spinoza points to the self-transparency and obviousness of the Cartesian subject: "But what we must note here, above all else concerning this foundation, is that this formula – *I doubt, I think, therefore I am* – is not a syllogism in which the major premise is omitted" (CPPprol). For Descartes the freedom of the will is also an obviousness. In its internal awareness the Cartesian subject experiences its freedom as *immediate* and *self-evident*. It is immediate in the sense that it is not reflective or discursive, that is, it is not the result of deductive reasoning. This immediacy explains why Descartes counts freedom among the first principles, as he explicitly states in a letter to Mersenne, written just prior to the publication of the *Meditations*: "You are right to say that we are as sure of our free will as of any other first principle; for this is certainly one of them."[13] Here we should recall Althusser's claim that "obviousnesses are always primary." Indeed, in the order of reasons, Descartes affirms the freedom of the will prior to the affirmation of the self in both the *Meditations* and the *Principles*. The first Meditation ends in doubt, but also – and because of this doubt – in the affirmation of free will: "I shall stubbornly and firmly persist in my Meditation; and even if it is not in my power to know any truth, I shall at least do what is in my power, that is, resolutely guard against assenting to any falsehoods, so that the deceiver, however powerful and cunning he may be, will be unable to impose on me in the slightest degree."[14] The French edition is even clearer, for in it Descartes asserts that despite "the powerful and well thought-out reasons"

[12] CSM II: 288; AT VII: 427.
[13] CSMK 161: AT III: 259.
[14] CSM II:15; AT VII:23.

for doubt, "nevertheless it is in my power to suspend my judgment."[15] In Article 39 of the *Principles*, entitled *That the freedom of the will is self-evident*, Descartes, much like Althusser's subject in the street, "cries out," as if naturally, inevitably, "That there is freedom in our will, and that there are many things which we can choose either to believe or not to believe, is so evident that it must be numbered among the primary and absolutely common notions which are innate to us."[16] That is to say, the obviousness of freedom is never in question for Descartes. This is why, in reply to Hobbes, who protests in his Objections to the *Meditations*, "the freedom of the will is assumed without proof," Descartes asserts this obviousness *as* an obviousness, appealing to what Althusser would call "everyday consciousness": "On the question of our freedom I have made no assumptions beyond what we all experience within ourselves. Our freedom is very evident by the natural light."[17]

Speaking for Spinoza in the Preface to the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy,* Meyer protests, echoing Hobbes, "Indeed, in asserting these things – as is evident from the *Discourse on Method*, Part IV, the Second Meditation, and other places – Descartes only assumes, but does not prove that that the human mind is a substance thinking absolutely" (CPPpref). From a Spinozan perspective, Cartesian self-evidence is evidence of a lack of evidence; it is an

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[15] Ibid.

[16] CSM I: 206; ATVIIIa: 20. J-M Beysadde focuses on Article 39 when he explicitly takes up the question of the status of the free will in the order of scientific knowledge. He concludes, "If I am right in leaving the assertion of the free will in the sphere of *notitia principiorum*, in considering it as a first notion, and not as a theorem or proposition of science, then it must be granted that this assertion is to be counted among the self-evident things and fails to have any particular preeminence within the edifice of science" (Beyssade, "Descartes's Doctrine of Freedom," 92). Although I do think there is an argument for the primacy of freedom in the order of reasons in both the *Meditations* and the *Principles* I do not here deal with this specific question, but only the common immediacy and self-evidence of first principles.

[17] CSM II 134; AT VII 191. The self-evidence of freedom is stated more dramatically in the Fifth Replies: "These are the sorts of things that each of us ought to know by experience in his own case, rather than having to be convinced of them by rational argument; and you, O Flesh, do not seem to attend to the actions the mind performs within itself. You may be unfree if you wish, but I am certainly very pleased with my freedom since I experience it within myself" (CSM II 260; AT VII 378).

assumption without proof. This might be considered an unfounded charge against Descartes, whose entire philosophical project seeks to establish philosophy on an indubitable foundation. It could even be said that Descartes' radical doubt is directed explicitly against the obviousness of obviousnesses, a refusal of those presuppositions of childhood and education that lead humans to err. But Spinoza is skeptical of Descartes' so-called skepticism. Cartesian doubt assumes the freedom to doubt, a doubt Descartes does not doubt, but takes as an obviousness. From a Spinozan perspective, Descartes persists in the false idea of the absolute freedom of the will because there is no idea to cause him to perceive its falsity: "When we say that a man rests in false ideas, and does not doubt them, we do not, on that account, say that he is certain, but that he does not doubt them, or that he rests in false ideas because there are no causes to bring it about that his imagination waivers [NS: or to cause him to doubt them]"(E2p49). When Spinoza indicates the cause of error, he explains, "the mind does not err from the fact that it imagines, but only insofar as it is considered to lack an idea that excludes the existence of those things that it imagines to be present to it" (E2p17s). That is to say, Cartesian free will is thought that involves a lack of thought, an affirmation of the presence of the power of thinking that does not think, or excludes, the causes of this power. As Spinoza explains in the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*, "Men think themselves free because they are conscious of their volitions and their appetite, and do not think, even in their dreams, of the causes by which they are disposed to wanting and willing because they are ignorant [of those causes]."

In the Scholium to E3p2 Spinoza claims that those who perceive themselves to act from free will are like those who "dream with eyes open." As Klein argues, "From a Spinozan perspective, the Cartesians' worry that they are dreaming with open eyes is indeed justified, though not for the reasons they suppose….Having lost the ability to distinguish between dreams

and reality, sleep and waking, the Cartesians have fallen into confusion."[18] In the *Ethics* Spinoza also likens the belief in free will to the belief of babies, cowards, madmen, and drunks:

> So the infant believes he freely wants the milk; the angry child that he wants vengeance; and the timid, flight. So the drunk believes it is from a free decision of the mind that he speaks the things he later, when sober, wishes he had not said. So the madmen, the chatterbox, the child and a great many people of this kind believe they speak from a free decision of the mind, when really they cannot contain their impulse to speak (E3p2s).

Of course Descartes could explain the false belief such figures have about their own actions. From a Cartesian perspective, they believe themselves to be free because they are mistaking the subordinate self for the sovereign self; it is the body, not the free will, which causes their tears, flight, anger, and intoxicated words.[19] In Letter 58, Spinoza invokes the same figures in his refutation of free will, but adds the example of the stone cited above, concluding, "This is that famous human freedom everyone brags of having, which consists only of this: that men are conscious of their appetite and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined" (Ep 58). On Spinoza's analysis, the Cartesian configuration of human freedom, which is supposed to be made in the image of God, is no different than the motion of a stone, which for Spinoza is determined through and with the infinite nexus of causes that follows from the necessary,

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[18] Klein, "Dreaming with Eyes Open,"150. Klein reads the phrase "dreaming with eyes open" as a summary of Spinoza's critique of Descartes' philosophy as such. In addition to providing a comparative analysis of imagination in Descartes and Spinoza and elucidating Spinoza's critique of Descartes' free will, Klein argues that there is a positive sense of dreaming with eyes open to be found in Spinoza, namely, grasping dreaming and imagination as natural, which enables an ethically and politically constructive response to them. As I've argued in the Introduction, it is certainly true that for Spinoza the imagination is natural, necessary, true in itself, and productive of effects. But to argue that the ethical response to the logic of the imagination is a mode of dreaming with eyes open seems to misrepresent the fundamental opposition between intellect and imagination that Klein otherwise explicates so well (Klein, "Dreaming with Eyes Open").

[19] Cf. *Principles* I. 47, "In our childhood the mind was so immersed in the body that although there was much that it perceived clearly, it never perceive anything distinctly" (CSM I: 208; AT VIIIA: 22); *Passions* I.28 "the passions are to be numbered among the perceptions which the close alliance between the soul and the body render obscure (CSM I: 339; AT XI: 350).

immanent self-causation of God *sive* Nature. That is to say, from a Spinozan perspective, Cartesian freedom is more lapidary than divine.

Most commentators follow Spinoza's critique of Cartesian freedom this far: human beings are aware of their ideas, but they are unaware of the causes of their ideas. But I contend that such analyses share the problem they seek to elucidate: they do not inquire into the cause of the perception of an uncaused cause. For Spinoza we must also ask, what is the imaginative mechanism that (re)produces "a substance thinking absolutely," that is, freedom as self-determination, a cause without any prior cause? As Althusser observes, "More than this mark of self-evidence what matters is the explanation of the mechanism that produces it."[20] We can begin to address this question by turning to the mechanism of imaginative presence, that is, the tendency of the imagination to posit its *ideatum* as present. This is the first sense in which we can say, with Althusser, that for Spinoza "the image is inherently hallucinatory."[21] When Spinoza defines the imagination in E2p17, he asserts "the affections of the human body whose ideas present external bodies *as present* to us, we shall call images of things. And when the mind regards bodies in this way we shall say that it imagines" (E2p17s; my italics). In defining imagination Spinoza explains that through themselves imaginative ideas posit the imagined as present. This present-ing functions to present the *ideatum* as given, immediate, and self-evident. For Spinoza there is a kind of inertia to imaginative ideas, by which they continue to present their *ideatum* as present until that presence is excluded by other ideas. The is the presence of an absence involved in imaginative thought. As Spinoza explains, "The human body can undergo many changes, and nevertheless retain impressions, or traces of the object (on this see 2post5) and consequently, the same images of things" (E3post2). It is what Althusser would call the

[20] Louis Althusser, "Marx in his Limits," in *Philosophy of the Encounter Later Writings, 1978-1987*, eds. Francois Matheron and Oliver Corpet, trans. G.M. Goshgarin (London: Verso, 2006), 135.
[21] Louis Althusser, "On Feuerbach," 136.

"tenacious obviousness" with which the image presents the imagined.[22] The tenacity of this present-ing lies in the conatus of all singular things, including imaginative ideas, to persevere in being (E3p7). Given the identity of mind and body, the force of the presence of imaginative ideas in the mind is the same as the force of the body of which the mind is an idea. Spinoza explains this force in the so-called Physical Digression: "a body in motion moves until it is determined by another body to rest; and a body at rest also remains at rest until it is determined to motion by another" (E2pl3c).

This imaginative presence, or positing of the imagined as if present, in not in itself erroneous for Spinoza, but it becomes erroneous insofar as it excludes the ideas "that exclude the existence of those things that it imagines to be present to it" (E2p17s). The Latin translated as "excludes" is "*secludit*," which means the imaginative idea is erroneous or mutilated insofar as it is secluded, or cut off from the causes that exclude its presence. In this way the imaginative idea persists in positing the imagined as if present, even when not present. Thus the present-ing mechanism involves not only the presence of an absence, but also the absence of a presence. In the propositions that immediately follow his definition of imaginative thought, Spinoza explains that imaginative ideas are reinforced and perpetuated through the associations of the individual in its arrant encounters: "each of us will pass from one thought to another, as each one's associations has ordered the images of things in the body" (E2p18s). Because the imaginative mechanism of presence (re)produces the idea until other ideas exclude its presence, for Spinoza imagination is/becomes memory (E2p18s). The inertia of the imaginative mechanism becomes a kind of associative momentum, whereby the presence of the *ideatum* is strengthened and unwavering in its givenness, its immediacy and self-evidence.

[22] Althusser, "Ideology," 181.

Given this analysis, we can see that from a Spinozan perspective Descartes rests in the obviousness of the free will because of this "hallucinatory" tendency of imaginative ideas to assert the presence of their *ideatum* through themselves. The immediacy and self-evidence of the self and its freedom in the Cartesian configuration is experienced as if natural, obvious. It is not that, according to Spinoza, Descartes is wrong to imagine the self as a cause, but insofar as this imagination is excluded from that which excludes its causes, insofar as it is isolated from the causal nexus of which it is a part, it is a mutilated and erroneous image of the self and its freedom. What is an effect, it takes as a cause; what is a result, it takes as absolute ground. In free will, the imaginative mechanism of presence reproduces the presence of the self to itself, both in its "immediate" self-transparency and in its return to its "self-sameness" in the difference of its perceptions. In Althusserian terms, we can say the self-presence presupposed by Cartesian self-determination is a re-cognition that ensures the recognition of the subject as Subject, or free subject.

"Twice Wretched": The Lack of Power Born of Absolute Responsibility

> And because they think themselves free, these notions have arisen: praise and blame, sin and merit.
>
> –Spinoza, E1app

In its immediate and self-evident self-presence the Cartesian configuration of freedom presupposes the absolute responsibility of the self for itself. In the Fourth Meditation, entitled *Truth and Falsity*, Descartes takes on the question of epistemic responsibility. As is well known, the Fourth Meditation reads like an epistemological theodicy. After having demonstrated the existence of God in the Third Meditation and affirming that God is not a

deceiver in the opening of the Fourth Meditation, Descartes proceeds to exonerate God from responsibility for human error. This exoneration hinges on the relation of the thinking thing to itself, of the sovereign to the subordinate self. Specifically, Descartes argues, "The privation which constitutes the essence of error…lies in the operation of the will insofar as it proceeds from me, but not in the faculty of the will which I received from God, nor even in its operation, insofar as it depends on him."[23] It is in the misuse of the will, in its extension beyond the limits of the intellect, that the human being errs. The errant self not only fails to keep the will within the bounds of the intellect, but it also and more importantly fails to act in accord with its ownmost nature. The errant self is a failure absolutely responsible for its own failure. Of course we need not wait until the Fourth Meditation to understand that for Descartes the human being has such an absolute responsibility. The *Discourse* affirms both the universality of "the power of judging well and of distinguishing the true from the false" and the responsibility that all have to "apply it well."[24] Even the exemptions for modest and immodest minds that Descartes puts forth in the *Discourse* are entirely missing from both the *Meditations* and the *Principles*, which command every seeker of truth to doubt everything at least once in the course of their life. The epistemic responsibility of the self for itself, then, is a presupposition of the Cartesian project. This ground of Cartesian science itself stands on the groundless ground of freedom engendered by the anthropo-theological mirror. As Descartes declares in a 1647 letter to Queen Christina: "Now free will is in itself the noblest thing we can have, since it makes us in a way equal to God and seems to exempt us from being his subjects; and so its correct use it the greatest of all goods we possess; indeed there is nothing that is more our own or that matters more to us."[25]

[23] CSM II: 41; AT VII: 60.
[24] CSM I: 111; AT VI: 2.
[25] CSMK III: 326; AT V: 85.

Spinoza, of course, argues that there is no exemption from the necessity of God *sive* Nature. The human will, like the motion of a stone, is determined through its immanent, relational self-production: "A thing which has been determined to produce an effect has necessarily been determined in this way by God; and one which has not been determined to produce an effect by God cannot determine itself to produce an effect" (E1p26). Insofar as absolute responsibility presupposes the absolute freedom of the self, the power to cause without prior cause, from a Spinozan perspective we can say it is the result of imaginative presence.[26] Beyond showing the imaginative causes of absolute responsibility, though, Spinoza seeks to undo its disempowering effects. Part of showing the "use" of his doctrine of his doctrine of freedom without free will "for life" (E2p49s) consists in showing the uselessness of the doctrine of absolute responsibility.[27] The ethical import of the doctrine of free will for life is not merely that it involves a lack of knowledge, but that absolute responsibility engenders absolute blame, a blame that turns both inward toward and outward from the self. In his recent "The Ethics in The *Ethics*," Carrierro claims that even though "Spinoza thinks the erroneous belief in free will colours our attitude toward ourselves and others in certain ways…these effects, while real, are not the principal things that bind us to one another affectively."[28] But insofar as Spinoza identifies the affects human beings have toward those they imagine to be free as "the greatest affect of all," this claim cannot be correct. I consider it to be of primary ethical importance for

[26] In denying absolute responsibility Spinoza does not do away with responsibility, despite the charges of his detractors, both among his contemporaries and ours (See, for example, Curley, "Kissinger, Spinoza, Genghis Khan" in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Don Garrett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Even as a "mutilated" cause, the individual is still a partial cause; but it is *only* a partial cause. The denial of absolute responsibility relocates responsibility to the nexus of causes, that is, the broader social and historical conditions that determine each individual (E1p29). As Gatens and Lloyd have argued, on Spinoza's analysis, "the loci of responsibility shift from individuals to social practices and institutions" (Gatens and Lloyd, *Collective Imaginings*, 72).
[27] See E1 Appendix, E2p49s, and E4p18s.
[28] John Carrierro, "The Ethics in The *Ethics*" in *Essays on Spinoza's Ethical Theory*, eds. Matthew Kisner and Andrew Youpa (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 39.

Spinoza to explain the disempowering effects of praise and blame, those "affects of joy and sadness accompanied by the idea of human virtue or weakness as a cause" (TP II.24).

In the *Passions of the Soul*, Descartes makes it clear that because they are caused by the corporeal animal spirits, all affects, or as he prefers to call them emotions, belong to the subordinate self. Passions are strictly external and so subject to the sovereign self. But in the final article of Part II of the *Passions* Descartes formulates a notion of internal emotions, those which are caused by oneself.[29] For Descartes the only emotion consistent with freedom is generosity, the self-esteem born of awareness and proper use of free will. Descartes claims the individual is the absolute cause of generosity because it is a reflection on being an absolute cause. As he explains, "I see only one thing in us which could give us reason for esteeming ourselves, namely, the exercise of our free will and the control we have over our own volitions. For we can reasonably be praised and blamed only for actions that depend upon this free will."[30] Together with divine providence, Descartes claims the godlike self-mastery constitutive of generosity is the only remedy against the vain desires of the subordinate self. Itself a species of wonder, we are returned to Descartes' three marvels, for, as he explains, "It may be said, however, that these causes are so marvelous …that each time we consider them afresh they are a source of new wonder."[31] In an activity resembling Aristotle's God more than his own, Descartes claims that the misdeeds of others are trivial compared with the absolute power of the free will which contemplates itself: "all these things seem to be very unimportant by contrast with the virtuous will for which alone they esteem themselves."[32]

[29] See CSM I: 386; AT XI: 440.
[30] CSM I: 387; AT XI: 445.
[31] CSM I: 387; AT XI: 453.
[32] Ibid. See also CSM I: 384; AT XI: 446.

Spinoza also considers the inward turn of free will. He argues that the image of free will causes the intensification of the sad affects in the experience of repentance. Spinoza defines repentance as "a sadness accompanied by the idea of some deed we believe ourselves to have done from a free decision of the mind" (E3 def.aff.xxvii). Instead of "[prompting] us to do better on another occasion," as Descartes claims, Spinoza contends that repentance doubles the sad affects.[33] In being repentant one not only suffers the sadness of that which one regrets but regret itself is a further sadness suffered because one imagines oneself to be the sole cause of that effect. This is why Spinoza argues "repentance is not a virtue…instead he who repents what he has done is twice wretched, or lacking in power" (E4p54). Spinoza therefore opposes repentance to his own notion of generosity, the joy that comes with reflecting on one's own power of acting that increases that power of acting through cooperative, collective causation. As Nietzsche reminds us in *The Genealogy of Morality*, Spinoza defines repentance as "opposite to gladness" (E3p18s2). Nietzsche appeals to Spinoza in order to argue that the internalization of blame, which he calls bad conscience, is heir to free will: "For millennia, wrongdoers overtaken by punishment felt no different than Spinoza did with regard to their 'offence': 'something has gone unexpectedly wrong here' not 'I ought not to have done that.'"[34] As Nietzsche so strikingly observes, without the absolute responsibility of free will, sadness is registered and maybe even rebuked, but it is not intensified, or a wretchedness born of the thought of oneself as the cause of wretchedness.

In conflating an imagined self-presence with the infinite nexus of causes that condition any action, the myth of free will also intensifies the sad affects directed toward others,

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[33] CSM I: 396; AT XI: 472.

[34] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 56. For a compelling argument that Spinoza influences Nietzsche's arguments in the *Genealogy*, see David Wollenberg, "Nietzsche, Spinoza, and the Moral Affects" in *The Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 51:4 (2013), 617-649.

specifically passionate love and hate, which Spinoza defines as an increase and decrease in power accompanied by the idea of an external cause (E3def.aff.vi and vii). While actions that are imagined to be necessary are conceived as being the effect of one among a multiplicity of causes, that which is imagined to be absolutely self-determining like the Cartesian subject, is imagined to act through itself alone, "without the others" (E3p49s). Necessity dissipates the intensity of the affects through the distribution of causation in the nexus of determination. But imaginative freedom attributes causal power solely to the individual, cutting it off from other causes. And because imagined freedom is more intense than necessity, it is even more intense than those things that are imagined to be merely possible or contingent (E4p11). This illuminates the intensity of the affects that humans beings have toward each other: "Because men consider themselves to be free, they have a greater love or hate toward one another than toward other things" (E3p49s). I will discuss the full implications of imaginative freedom for human sociality in my discussion of the Hobbesian configuration of freedom in Chapter 4 below, when I will examine not only passionate love and hate, but also the envy and desire for mutual destruction they produce. But at this point it should be clear that the Cartesian configuration of freedom is destructive of social relations; in conceiving other human beings as the sole cause of their actions, the affects associated with them overpower the other affects. It is as if what Althusser calls "the subjects recognition of each other, and finally the subjects recognition of itself" in the process of ideological subjectivation is not only "mutual recognition" but also mutual disempowerment. Indeed, because it is directed both internally and externally we can say that the double-wretchedness produced by absolute responsibility in the experience of repentance is itself double. We now understand some of the negative ethical effects of what Descartes identifies as the positive formulation of self-determination, of the

absolute responsibility that comes with being "a real and positive power to determine oneself." [35] I will now further examine the imaginative mechanism at work in producing the faculty of the will with which Descartes identifies this wretched self, the hypostatic mechanism that in its co-ordination with imaginative presence effects the "individual, distinguishable, and (naturally) irreplaceable" subject of Cartesian freedom.[36]

Section 2. The Spurious Subject

> So the thing to note here, above all, is how easily we are deceived when we confuse universals with singulars, and beings of reason and abstractions with real beings.
>
> –Spinoza, E2p49s

In the discussion of obviousness we have seen that free will is an exemplary mutilated idea because it has the same structure as all mutilated ideas: it obscures the causes that produce it by presenting its *ideatum* as present through itself. But it might be said that because of this homology, imaginative presence does not fully explicate the specificity of the imaginative configuration of Cartesian freedom. In order to further explicate Cartesian freedom we must more closely scrutinize the self of Cartesian self-determination. In Chapter 1 we saw that Descartes identifies the sovereign self with the will, giving ontological and epistemological priority to the will as a faculty. In its capacity for affirmation, denial and – above all – suspension of judgment, the Cartesian will is a faculty distinct from its exercise. In this Section, I will explain Spinoza's position that the will "and similar faculties are either complete fictions or nothing but metaphysical beings, *or* universals, which we are used to forming from particulars" (E2p48s). Although Descartes explicitly argues that the will is not a thing, we will

[35] CSMK: 234; AT IV: 112.
[36] Althusser, "Ideology," 173.

see that for Spinoza, the faculties are *entia imaginationis* produced by the hypostatic mechanism, that is, the tendency of the imagination to conflate distinct singularities in universals that are themselves conflated with things.[37] We will further see that this mechanism orders and connects thought and being in such a way so as to separate power from its effect, a concept of power that engenders impotence.

The Hypostatic Mechanism

Returning to the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*, it is clear that even in this early text Spinoza understood the faculty of the will to be an effect of imagination. In the Preface, Meyer asserts that for Spinoza the faculty of the will "must be numbered among the fictions, or at least among those notions which men have formed because they conceive things abstractly, like humanity, stone-hood and other things of that kind" (CPPpref). In order to better understand this assertion, we can turn to the first proposition referenced in Meyer's dis-identification of Spinoza and Descartes. In CPPIp15, Spinoza explicates the Cartesian position that "error is not something positive." For Descartes, error is not something positive because, as we have seen, in its infinity, the will extends beyond the finite limits of the intellect into, in a sense, nothing. In extending beyond the being of its perceptions, the erroneous judgment reaches into non-being.

[37] I use the term hypostatization not because I think the Cartesian configuration of freedom falls within the Stoic or Neo-Platonic context in which this term emerges and becomes fixed in the philosophical lexicon, but because it captures the operation by which, in Spinozan terms, affections of the imagination are taken as things. In his archeology of this concept, Agamben explains, "While in the Aristotelian apparatus singular existence was the presupposition given, in the hypostatic ontology it is now something that must be achieved or effectuated" (Giorgio Agamben, *The Use of Bodies*, ed. Werner Hamacher, trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 145). As I showed in Chapter 1, the Cartesian apparatus breaks from this tradition because it operates both according to a presupposition, that is, the immediate and self-evident existence of the self, and in its freedom, this self is something that must be achieved.

Beyond the failure of correspondence between the volition and perception, there is a non-coincidence of the errant self with itself, of the particular volition with the innermost nature of the sovereign self. As Spinoza explains, Cartesian error "can be nothing but a privation of the proper use of liberty" (Ibid.)[38] In the Cartesian configuration of freedom, "the proper use of liberty" is the affirmation of clear and distinct perceptions or the suspension of judgment regarding confused and obscure perceptions. As Spinoza explains,

> So the whole imperfection of freedom will consist solely in the privation of the best freedom, which belongs to our nature and is in our power. It is said to be a privation because we are deprived of a perfection that is proper to our nature; but [it is said to be] error because we lack the perfection through our own fault, insofar as we do not contain the will within the limits of the intellect to the extent that we can (Ibid.)[39]

Spinoza clearly sees that in the Cartesian configuration of freedom, every actual volition is measured against the faculty of the will insofar as that faculty constitutes the standard of "proper use." But beyond this, Spinoza also sees that the will can only function as this standard insofar as it is imagined to stand outside of and above individual volitions. That is, the will can only be identified with the sovereign self because the will is a faculty.

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[38] Although Spinoza affirms the absolute power of the mind to determine itself in the Cartesian configuration of freedom, against my interpretation in Chapter 1, Spinoza considers this compatible with what he calls "the necessary assent" of clear and distinct perceptions. He explains Descartes' position by arguing, "Nor has [God] given us (as everyone discovers in himself) any faculty of holding back from or not assenting to those things we perceive clearly and distinctly" (CPPIp14). I believe that I have provided enough textual evidence in Part I to defend my disagreement with Spinoza's reading of Descartes on this point and I consider it more important that Spinoza recognizes freedom as self-determination.

[39] Spinoza confirms this reading of the nature of the sovereign self explicitly in the other reference cited in the Preface: "Next, it must be noted that, although the soul is determined by external things to affirming and denying something, it is not so determined as if it were compelled by external things, but it always remains free. For no thing has the power of destroying its essence. So what the soul affirms and denies it affirms and denies freely, as is explained sufficiently in the Fourth Meditation" (*CM* II. 12). In Chapter 1 argued that the divided unity of the self follows from the very nature of thought (as self-conscious and involving both volition and perception). In *Metaphysical Thoughts* Spinoza argues that the freedom of the will follows from the nature of thought itself: "…Hence if anyone asks why the soul wills this or that, or does not will this or that, we shall reply because the soul is a thinking thing, i.e. a thing which, of its own nature, has the power of willing and not willing, of affirming and denying. For this is what it is to be a thinking thing" (CM XII).

In further explicating the distinction between Descartes and Spinoza, Meyer writes that for Spinoza,

> the will is not distinct from the intellect, much less endowed with that freedom Descartes ascribes to it; that the faculty of affirming and denying is a mere fiction; that affirming and denying are nothing but ideas; and that the rest of the faculties, like the intellect, desire, etc., must be numbered among the fictions, or at least among those notions which men have formed because they conceive things abstractly, like humanity, stone-hood and other things of that kind (CPPpref).

Again we see Spinoza's charge that Cartesian freedom is merely lapidary, that the alleged absolute power of the will to affirm, deny, and suspend judgment is nothing more than a fiction like stone-hood. But in the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* this charge remains one in a merely prefatory list. In order to fully understand Spinoza's critique of the hypostatization involved in the Cartesian configuration of freedom, we must turn to the *Ethics*. The anonymously published *CPP* is in full agreement with Spinoza's posthumously published *Ethics*, but in the *Ethics*, specifically E2p48 and 49, Spinoza fully demonstrates his claim. Della Rocca is correct to say that E2p49s is "not only a crystallization of much of Spinoza's philosophy of mind and metaphysics, but it is also a crystallization of his multi-faceted anti-Cartesianism."[40] I will only focus on one facet of this proposition, namely, Spinoza's claim, "In the mind there is no absolute faculty of willing and not willing, but only singular volitions, namely this and that affirmation, and this and that negation" (E2p49d).[41] Following Meyer in

[40] Michael Della Rocca, "The Power of an Idea: Spinoza's Critique of Pure Will," *Nous* 37:2 (2003), 200.

[41] I can point to two more of these facets: First, in a fundamental sense, Spinoza rejects absolute freedom of will on the grounds of his immanent, relational ontology. For Spinoza, a volition, like any mode, is not determined by itself alone, but is determined by another mode, which itself is determined by another mode *ad infinitum* (E1p28). We saw above that the Cartesian self wrests itself from the infinite nexus of causes in part because imaginative presence posits the self and its freedom as present through themselves, as obviousnesses. Thus Wolfson is correct to suggest Spinoza's rejection of free will follows from his determinism:

the Preface to the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*,[42] I will analyze the argument in the *Ethics* in terms of the Cartesian and Spinozan conceptions of mind. As we saw in Chapter 1, for Descartes the human mind is a substance; it is a divided unity, but a unity that is substantial because it is not dependent on any other being (except God) for its existence. For Spinoza, the human mind is neither a substance nor divided; it is a mode of thinking (E2p11), itself composed of a multiplicity of ideas (E2p15).

When Descartes identifies the sovereign self of Cartesian self-determination with the faculty of the will, Spinoza would claim he has succumb to the hypostatic tendency of the imagination. The faculty of the will is a hypostatization of singular volitions, a misrecognition of modes for a supra-modal universality: "the will is a universal being, or idea, by which we explain all the singular volitions, that is, it is what is common to them all" (E2p49s). In enumerating the kinds of thinking, Spinoza observes that imaginative thought forms universals "in a way that is mutilated, confused, and without order for the intellect" (E2p40s2). Indeed, the Cartesian faculty of the will and the sovereign self with which he identifies it are produced in the same way as all universals by the imaginative apparatus: "because so many images (e.g. of men) are formed at one time in the human body that they surpass the power of imagining – not

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> [Free will] would break up the continuity and the necessary concatenation of causes in the process of nature. It would imply, as he puts it in Preface of the Third Part of the *Ethics*, that 'man disturbs rather than follows her [nature's] order.' It would set the mind and the body free from the universal order of nature, from God; it would make them act independently of the infinite series of causes that proceed from God; and it would thus virtually declare them to be causes of themselves like God (Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza* Vol. II, 110).

Second, there are important ontological implications for the nature of thought itself. Spinoza argues that an idea and its affirmation are one and the same thing (E2p49) on the grounds that ideas, as modes, or Nature existing in a certain and determinate way, are active, not passive "like mute pictures" (E2p49s). This is why Spinoza defines an idea as "a concept of the mind," in order to indicate the idea is "an action of the mind" (E2def3). This position undercuts Descartes' account of the fundamental passivity of perceptions – and so of the faculty of the intellect that is their hypostatization.

[42] "Though our Author [Spinoza] admits, of course, that there is a thinking substance in nature, he nevertheless denies that it constitutes the essence of the human Mind" (CPPpref).

entirely, of course, but still to the point where the mind can neither imagine slight differences of the singular men" (E2p40s1). The limit of the imagination produces an effect that it does not think as a limit and *entia imaginationis* are perceived as things. Here we run into the limit of conceiving of universals as just another item in the list of illusions, as DeDeugd and Deleuze and Guattari do. The illusions themselves are not things, but are perceived as things through the hypostatic mechanism of the imagination. If in the Spinozan ontology, the unity of the mind lies in the characteristic relation (*ratio*) of the multiplicity of ideas, the Cartesian self is produced by the erasure of this multiplicity. The imagination, Spinoza claims, thinks the imagined "confusedly without any distinction" (Ibid.). Through the hypostatic mechanism the determinate becomes indeterminate and the different becomes the same. In the words of Nietzsche, who saw in Spinoza a precursor, "Every concept comes into being by making equivalent that which is non-equivalent…by dropping these individual differences arbitrarily, by forgetting those features which differentiate one thing from another…we do know of numerous individualized and hence non-equivalent actions which we equate with each other by omitting what is unlike."[43] On the Spinozan account this is not true of all concepts, but only of imaginative concepts that forget the multiplicity that exceeds them. We have seen that in the "tenacious obviousness" born of imaginative inertia and the association of ideas, imagination is memory. But it is also always forgetting. Imaginative forgetting occurs in two ways: in forgetting the causes that produce it and, as we now see, it is a forgetting of modal difference, an erasure of both external and internal multiplicity and relationality. This forgetting is perhaps what Althusser refers to when he explains that "one of the effects of ideology is the practical

[43] Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings,* eds. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Spiers (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 145.

denegation of the ideological character of ideology by ideology," which, he tells us, "Spinoza explained two centuries before Marx, who practiced it but without explaining it in detail."[44]

Separating Power from Action: The Impotence of the Power Not to Act

> By God's power ordinary people understand God's free will and his right over all things which are…Again, if it were agreeable to pursue these matters further, I could also show here that power which ordinary people fictitiously ascribe to God is not only human, but also involves lack of power.
>
> –Spinoza, E2p3s

The hypostatization of the will presupposed by the Cartesian configuration of freedom configures human existence in a way that separates power from its effect. In hypostatizing volitions into the faculty of the will, in identifying the sovereign self with this faculty, Descartes formulates the self as a power that is distinct from its operation, that is, as a power that can *not* act. In grounding freedom in the faculty of the will, Descartes reduces action to capacity; in distinguishing each volition from the faculty, and privileging suspension of judgment, Descartes separates freedom from its exercise. As if smashing both sides of the anthropo-theological mirror, Spinoza's critique of this image of the will as a *facultas* begins with his critique of the God in whose image that will is imaginatively made. For Spinoza the divine voluntarism of the Cartesian God, which is supposed to indicate the omnipotence of God, in fact renders God impotent. Spinoza inaugurates the critique of absolute divine will after demonstrating that God acts through the necessity of his nature alone (E1p17). In the Scholium he continues,

> Others think God is a free cause because he can (so they think) bring it about that the things which we have said follow from his nature (i.e. which are in his power) do not happen or are not produced by him…So they prefer to maintain that God is indifferent to all things, not creating anything except what he has

[44] Althusser, "Ideology," 175.

> decreed to create by some absolute will…Indeed – to speak openly – my opponents seem to deny God's omnipotence (E1p17s2).

Spinoza argues that absolute indifference of divine will undermines God's omnipotence because it implies that God understands things that God does not or cannot create. Here we come directly to Spinoza's concept of power, which lies behind the critique. Spinoza maintains that the essence of God is power because from the necessity of God's nature alone God produces himself and all things (E1p34). That is to say, for Spinoza, power is efficacy and so to be able *not* to produce effects is a lack of power. Against Descartes' radical voluntarism Spinoza contends that "God's omnipotence has been *actual* from eternity and will remain in the same actuality to eternity" (E1p17s). The argument of E1p17s2 is corroborated in E1p33s2, where Spinoza argues that there is not only impotence in not producing, but there is also impotence in producing things in a way other than they are. In a letter to Arnauld, Descartes claims, "I do not think we should ever say of anything that it could not be brought about by God. For since every basis of truth and goodness depends on his omnipotence, I would not dare to say that God cannot make a mountain without a valley, or bring it about that 1 and 2 are not 3."[45] But for Spinoza, to claim that the world could be other than it is implies that the divine nature could also be other than it is, which even Descartes would have to admit is absurd. The "absurdity" of this position again follows from Spinoza's identification of power with operativity. Because God is the immanent cause of things, God's essence is at stake in God's production of the world. For Spinoza, God causes himself in the same way in which he causes all things: "from the given divine nature both the essence of things and their existence must be inferred; and in a word, God must be called the cause of all things in the same sense in which he is called cause of himself" (E1p25s).

[45] CSMK: 358-359; AT V: 224.

Spinoza's objections to Descartes' divine voluntarism elucidate his critique of the hypostatic mechanism in *human* freedom. Spinoza declares, "Freedom is a virtue or power. Whatever convicts man of weakness can't be related to his freedom. A man can't be called free on the grounds that he can not exist, or that he can not use his reason; only insofar as he has the power to exist and produce effects…can he be called free" (TP II.7). That is to say, insofar as the Cartesian sovereign self is conceived as a *facultas*, that is, first and foremost as a *potestas* or a capacity, it has no *potentia*. In separating the faculty from its operation, Descartes alienates the will from its efficacy. For Spinoza power exists only in its activity, only through its exercise (E3p9 and E3def.aff). This is why Spinoza identifies the essence of the human being as desire, or the *conatus*, the power of acting, insofar as it is determined to exist and produce the effects. This is the real sense in which the human being expresses God's nature in a certain and determinate way (E2p10). Power is not a possession that can be held in reserve but is the actual essence of the human being. Thus *to be able* to act or not to act, as in the Cartesian image of the faculty of the will, is not power. The disempowerment of the human being can be seen in particular in suspension of judgment. What Sartre calls Descartes' "doctrine of refusal,"[46] Spinoza would deem a doctrine that refuses human power. To the Cartesian claim that human beings experience their freedom of will in the suspension of judgment, Spinoza replies "by denying that we have a free power of suspending judgment." (E2p49s).[47] To prioritize suspension of judgment is to affirm power of what is a lack of power and, even worse, to affirm a cause where there is a lack of effect. Beyond the critique of doubt as the result of ignorance, then, suspension of judgment separates power from action. Mirroring his critique of the

[46] Jean-Paul Sartre, "Cartesian freedom" in *Critical Essays (Situations I*), trans. Chris Turner (New York: Seagull Books, 2010), 516.
[47] It is worth noting that the examples Spinoza uses in the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* to argue *for* the Cartesian position are the same example he uses in the *Ethics* to argue against it: the perception of a winged horse and Buridan's ass.

Cartesian God, it is clear that from a Spinozan perspective the suspension of judgment, which holds power in reserve, is actually a suspension of knowledge and power. In concluding the Spinozan critique of the Cartesian configuration of freedom, I will offer a closer analysis of the function of this mirror-relation between God and human.

Section 3. A Theory of the Guarantee: The Anthropo-theological Circle

> But as we have said, the less men know nature, the more easily they can feign many things, such as, that trees speak, that men are changed in a moment into stones and springs, that nothing becomes something, that even Gods are changed into beasts and into men, and infinitely many other things of that kind…
> Evidently they say that…the soul can, by its own force alone, create sensations or ideas, which are not of things; so they consider the soul, to some extent, like God.
> Next they say that we, or our soul, has such a freedom that it can control us, or itself, and indeed, its own freedom.
>
> –Spinoza, TIE 60

Because imaginative ideas can only be excluded by ideas that exclude their existence, according to Spinoza, two mutually contradictory imaginative ideas can persist together. In this regard it is worth noting that for Descartes the obviousness of human freedom is not excluded by the absolute power of the will of God, in whose image that freedom is made. Although Descartes identifies the contradiction between human freedom and the preordination of God, he claims that even in the face of "the difficulties" involved,

> We have such close awareness of the freedom and indifference which is in us, that there is nothing that we can grasp more evidently or more perfectly. And it would be absurd, simply because we grasp one thing, which we know must by its very nature be beyond our comprehension, to doubt something else of which we have an intimate grasp and which we experience within ourselves.[48]

[48] CSM I: 206; AT VIIIa: 20. See also CSMK: 277; AT IV: 332.

But in the Cartesian configuration of freedom, we have seen that these mutilated ideas do not merely mutually persist; they mutually reinforce each other. When it recognizes its own freedom, the Cartesian self recognizes itself in the image of God. In Montag's words, this is "the mirror-game of recognition that guarantees the free will of God-man."[49] In Chapter 1 I explained this mirror-game at work in the Cartesian configuration of freedom. For Descartes, human freedom is possible because the human will is made in the image of the divine will: in its self-determination the sovereign self is god to the subordinate self. But for Spinoza neither humans nor God have absolute freedom of will. There is no human free will: The faculty of the will is produced by the hypostatic mechanism of the imagination and its alleged freedom is nothing but imaginative presence which posits the causal power of the will while excluding the causes that produce it. Neither, for Spinoza, is there divine free will: the will is not substance, but a mode (E1p32). Indeed, Spinoza maintains that the belief that God has a free will is a "great obstacle to science" (E1p33s2). In this Section I will show how Spinoza eliminates this obstacle, focusing on the prejudice that institutes and guarantees the specularity of the Cartesian configuration of freedom: the appropriative mechanism of the imagination, by which the human being imagines things according to its own constitution. As we will see, the Cartesian God is made in the image of the human being's imaginative self-conception, and, more importantly, the specularity of human and divine freedom serves as a guarantee of the (re)production of the Cartesian self and its freedom.

[49] Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power*, 40.

Everything Really Is So: Imaginative Appropriation

> Of course I know there are many who think they can demonstrate a supreme intellect and free will pertain to God's nature. For they say they know of nothing they can ascribe to God more perfect than what is the highest perfection in us.
>
> – Spinoza, E1p17c2

In the Appendix to Part One of the *Ethics*, Spinoza gives a genealogy of what Deleuze calls the theological illusion: "And where consciousness can no longer imagine itself to be the first cause, nor the organizer of ends, it invokes a God endowed with understanding and volition, operating by means of final causes or free decrees in order to prepare for man a world commensurate with his glory and his punishments."[50] The Appendix is an attempt to deconstruct and denaturalize the anthropocentric and anthropomorphic God through a history of its causes. Spinoza explains, "All the prejudices that I here undertake to expose depend on this one: that men commonly suppose that all natural things act, as men do, on account of an end; indeed they maintain that God himself directs all things to some certain end, for they say that God has made all things for man, and man that he might worship God" (E1App). Many commentators take the fundamental prejudice indicated in this passage to be the illusion of final causes, namely, that all natural things act *on account of an end*. This reading is, to a significant extent, correct; Spinoza works through and systematically dismantles the alleged ends of God *sive* Nature, concluding "all final causes are nothing but human fictions" (Ibid.). Spinoza argues that the illusion of final causes becomes a mode of arguing not *ad impossibile* but *ad ignorantiam*: "For example, if a stone has fallen from a roof onto someone's head and killed him, they will show, in the following way, that the stone fell in order to kill the man…they will not stop asking for the causes of causes until you take refuge in the will of God, i.e. the

[50] Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 20.

sanctuary of ignorance" (Ibid.). Just as imaginative free will is nothing more than a lapidary freedom, so the teleological illusion imposes ends on all of Nature, stone and God alike.

But such a reading of the fundamental prejudice productive of the theological illusion is problematic. First, many commentators presuppose that human beings actually do act for ends.[51] This is untenable not only because of the arguments of the First Part, according to which all finite beings are modes of the "Nature" the ends of which have been debunked, but even more so because of the arguments that follow in the Second through Fifth Parts, where Spinoza reduces human ends to appetites (E4d7). Second, and more important for my purposes, the illusion of final causes does not help elucidate the Cartesian configuration of freedom, since for Descartes the will of God is inscrutable. Descartes excludes final causes from natural speculation on the theological grounds that God's ends are impenetrable to the human intellect. As Descartes states in Part One of the *Principles*, "When dealing with natural things we will, then, never derive any explanations from the purposes which God or nature may have had in view when creating them <and we shall entirely banish from our philosophy the search for final causes>. For we should not be so arrogant as to suppose that we can share in God's plans."[52] Descartes rests in an altogether different sanctuary, but one which Spinoza would also deem "a sanctuary of ignorance" (E1app).

Beyond the teleological prejudice, then, I maintain that the fundamental prejudice operative in this image of God is the appropriative mechanism of the imagination. That is,

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[51] See Edwin Curley, "On Bennett's Spinoza: The Issue of Teleology" in *Spinoza: Issues and Directions*, eds. Edwin Curley and Pierre-Francois Moreau (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 39-52; Michael Della Rocca, "Spinoza's Metaphysical Psychology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Don Garrett (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 192–226; Don Garrett, "Teleology in Spinoza and Early Modern Philosophy," in *New Essays on the Rationalists*, eds. Rocco J. Gennaro and Charles Huenemann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 310–35; Martin Lin, "Teleology and Human Action in Spinoza," *Philosophical Review* 115:3 (2006): 317-354.

[52] CSM I: 202; AT VIIIA: 15.

human beings believe that all natural things act "*as [they] do*" and so imagine things according to their own constitution (Ibid., my italics). In his genealogy, Spinoza shows appropriation is at work in the image of God: "they had to infer that there was a ruler or a number of rulers of nature, endowed with human freedom, who had taken care of all things for them and made all things for their use. And since they never heard anything about the temperament of these rulers *they had to judge it from their own*" (E1app, my italics).[53] As Spinoza explains, this imaginative tendency is more than prejudice: "Thus this prejudice was changed into superstition and struck deep roots in their minds" (Ibid.). The analysis in the Appendix of Part One is in agreement with Letter 56, where Spinoza gives an appropriative explanation of the imaginative God, not in the image of a conscious stone, but that of a talking triangle: "I believe that a triangle, if it could speak, would likewise say that God is eminently triangular, and a circle that God's nature is eminently circular. In this way each would ascribe to God its own attributes, assuming itself to be like God and regarding all else to be ill-formed" (Ep 56). In this letter it is clear that the imaginative God is the result of the human being imagining God (eminently) in its own image. This is consistent with what Balibar calls an "anthropomorphic transposition, attributing to God patterns of behavior drawn from our experience of relationships between men. In doing so, these patterns are idealized, stripped of any human limitation or finitude."[54] This anthropomorphic transposition, he argues, serves "Spinoza as a prototype of the imagination, that inadequate knowledge of natural relationships, which is the necessary

[53] Imaginative appropriation is also at work in how individuals imagine other individuals: "If they cannot hear them from another, nothing remains for them but to turn toward themselves, and reflect on the end by which they are usually determined to do such things; so *they necessarily judge the temperament of other men from their own temperament*" (E1App; my italics). This will go some way toward explaining the imitation of the affects (E3p27), but I will save a more complete discussion of the imaginative determination of sociality for Chapter 4.
[54] Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, 14.

consequence of man's relative impotence."[55] But like the readings of the free will that do not explain the cause of the image of an uncaused cause and the emphasis on final causes in readings of the Appendix, Balibar's explanation takes humans as a *cause* rather than as *cause and effect*.

I will begin by saying more about the cause. It is clear that the Cartesian God is not simply a transposition of the human being, but specifically of the human being's imaginative self-conception. In order to explain this transposition we should examine the corollary that immediately precedes Spinoza's definition of the imagination. Just before defining imagination, Spinoza states, "The ideas which we have of external bodies indicate the condition of our own body more than the nature of the external bodies" (E2p16c2). He continues, "I have explained this by many examples in the Appendix of Part I" (Ibid.). The image of the human-God exemplifies the confusion constitutive of inadequate ideas, that is, the conflation of internal and external causes partial and idiosyncratic to one's own constitution. For Spinoza, imaginative ideas involve external bodies but do not explicate them (E2p18s). As Spinoza puts it, "When the human mind regards external bodies *through ideas of the affections of it own body,* we say that it imagines" (E2p26; my italics). If the logic of the imagination is the order and connection of imaginative ideas, then the appropriative tendency makes that order and connection one's own. This appropriative tendency expresses the arrant nature of the imagination, the way in which its associations are idiosyncratic and *vaga* (E2p18s). The appropriative mechanism not only imagines a God in one's own imaginative self-conception; it is also at work in judgments regarding good and evil (E1app; E3p39s), order and disorder (E1app), beauty and ugliness, and

[55] Ibid. Of course Balibar is not the only commentator to identify such a transposition. Jean-Paul Sartre observes, "If [Descartes] conceived divine freedom as very similar to his own, then it is his own freedom, as he would have conceived it without the fetters of Catholicism and dogmatism, that he speaks when he describes God's freedom. There is an obvious phenomenon of sublimation and transposition in this" (Jean-Paul Sartre, "Cartesian Freedom," 523).

perfection and imperfection (E1app and E4pref). As Spinoza explains, "That is why we have such sayings as 'So many heads, so many attitudes,' 'everyone finds his judgment more than enough,' and 'there are as many differences of brains as palates'" (E1app). Such judgments, Spinoza declares, "show sufficiently that each one has judged things according to the disposition of his brain; or rather has accepted affections of the imagination as things" (Ibid.). Here we see the "resonance and reverberation,"[56] as Deleuze and Guattari call it, or the co-ordination between imaginative mechanisms. The appropriative mechanism explains the vagrancies of the universals formed by the hypostatic mechanism: "But it should be noted that [universals] are not formed by all in the same way, but vary from one to another, in accordance with what the body has been more often affected by, and what the mind imagines or recollects more easily…each will form universal images of things according to the disposition of his body" (E2p40s1). Even the repentance born of absolute responsibility is subject to the appropriative mechanism: "According as each one has been educated, so he either repents a deed or exults at being esteemed for it" (E3def.aff.xxvii). As with the hypostatic mechanism, where there is difference, the appropriative imagination engenders similitude, but similitude to itself. Even if its arrant associations move between images that have "no likeness" (E2p18s), as a word has no similarity to that to which it refers, the appropriative mechanism imagines things to be like itself. In the case of the imaginative God, the appropriative mechanism imagines a being in its own imaginative self-image.

But the Cartesian God is not only the imaginative effect of the imaginative Cartesian self. The imaginative Cartesian self is also an effect of the Cartesian God. Returning to Montag, we must say that the anthropo-theological circle is not a mere transposition of human freedom, but, more accurately, "The mirror mirrors another mirror mirroring it; there is no origin in this

[56] Deleuze and Guatari, *What is Philosophy?,* 50.

relation in that what is reflected is itself a reflection of what reflects it."[57] This reversibility and undecidability better explains the way in which the Cartesian subject is (re)produced as the subject it is made to be. To fully understand the anthropo-theological mirror constitutive of Cartesian freedom, then, it is not enough to show that the human made in the image of God is actually the God made in the image of the human; we must also explain *how* that image of God guarantees that image of the human. That is, it is not enough to engage in a counter-inversion of God and human. Because the mirror-effect, the reversibility of God and human in the Cartesian configuration of freedom, is internal to its structure, we must also explain the function of the specularity. As Althusser explains in response to the ideological conception of ideology,

> If this characteristic of inversion is internal to the ideological, we can deduce from it no practical conclusion that can identify the transformation or elimination of the ideological through a counter-inversion. Or rather, we may consider that the practice of inversion does not affect the ideological, since it really reinforces the structure of the ideological by acknowledging it.[58]

Returning to Althusser's theory of ideology, then, we should recall that obviousness requires "the absolute guarantee that everything really is so."[59] The guarantee is confirmation, affirmation, in a word, evidence of the self-evident. In Descartes' philosophy, God functions as this guarantee and so ensures the (re)production of the Cartesian self.

If we consider the infamous Cartesian epistemological circle, the function of the guarantee is clear. In the *Meditations*, Descartes demonstrates the existence of God through the validity of clear and distinct perceptions, but the existence of God in turn guarantees that these perceptions are valid. I maintain that this circularity is also at work in the anthropo-theological mirror of Cartesian freedom. In Descartes' philosophy the obviousness of freedom is guaranteed by the will of God proven to exist through freedom of the will. Beyond the veracity of clear and

[57] Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power*, 39.
[58] Althusser, "On Feuerbach," 129.
[59] Althusser, "Ideology," 181.

distinct judgments, the non-deceptive God functions as a guarantee of the veridical nature of the will. Indeed the veracity of clear and distinct judgments follows from the more basic claim about the nature of the will. For Descartes, the veridical proclivity of the will both depends on and inclines toward God. In a 1645 Letter to Princess Elizabeth, Descartes asserts, "our mind is finite and so created as to conceive as possible the things which God has wished in fact to be possible, but not to be able to conceive as possible things which God could have made possible, but which he has nevertheless wished to make impossible."[60]

The dependence is striking in the epistemological theodicy required by the order of reasons. Under the hypothesis of the evil genius, Descartes' philosophy seems fated to solipsism or, at best, a world consisting of self and deceptive creator. The veracity of the will is only affirmed beyond its self-affirmation through the existence of a non-deceptive God. Because God is a not a deceiver, the human will can be said to be inclined by nature toward truth. As Descartes formulates it in the *Principles*, "God is not a deceiver and so the faculty of perception which he has given us *cannot incline to falsehood*; and the same goes for the faculty of assent…the fact that we fall into error is a defect in the way we act or the use we make of our freedom, not a defect in *our nature.*"[61] As we saw, for Descartes the errant self does not have an imperfect nature but fails to coincide with its proper nature, that is, the sovereign self that through itself inclines toward truth. In the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* Spinoza summarizes this Cartesian position, notably in a section entitled "Liberation from all doubt," as follows: "The faculty of distinguishing the true from the false, which is in us, has been created and is continuously preserved by God" (CPPIp14).

[60] CSMK 235; AT IX 118.
[61] CSM I: 207; AT VIIIA: 21, my italics.

Moreover, the veridical proclivity that depends on the will of God also aspires toward the will of God. That is to say, the inclination toward truth is an inclination toward the will of God that, because Descartes is a divine voluntarist, constitutes truth. As he explains it to a 1647 letter to Chanu, "Our knowledge seems to be able to grow by degrees to infinity, and since God's knowledge is infinite, his is the goal to which ours strives."[62] Thus in the anthropo-theological mirror of Cartesian freedom, the human will approximates the constitutive will of God but always and only through its freedom from the will of God. God is posited as the cause of freedom in the order of being, but the order of reasons presupposes that freedom and the existence of God guarantees it. Following this analysis, then, we can see that the appropriative mechanism has a double function: it conceives existence according to its own imaginative self-conception and it guarantees this imaginative self-conception. It is this double function that explicates the anthropo-theological circle of the Cartesian self and its freedom.

The Limits of the Absolute: Freedom of the Will Confined to the Will

In his essay "Cartesian Freedom," Sartre observes,

> To all the philosophers who set themselves up as [freedom's] defenders, we may ask a preliminary question: in respect of what special *situation* have you experienced your freedom?…Descartes' primary experience wasn't one of creative freedom *ex nihilo*, but of autonomous thought, which, by its own power, discovers intelligible connections between existing essences. This is why we Frenchman, who have been living by Cartesian freedom for three centuries, implicitly understand 'free will' as the practice of independent thought rather than the production of a creative act.[63]

We have seen that for Descartes human beings are free to the extent that they are like God and so are free from the will of God, but what is the extent of this freedom? In claiming that the

[62] CSMK: 309; AT IV: 608.
[63] Sartre, "Cartesian Freedom," 498-499.

mind is responsible for its own judgment, and that each judgment is measured against the faculty of the will, Descartes not only exculpates God, he also indicates the proper dominion of the human being within divine creation, namely, as Sartre recognizes, its own thought. Given this analysis, Montag is certainly correct to claim that the anthropo-theological mirror constitutive of Cartesian freedom is "a more vicious circle" than Descartes' infamous epistemological circle. Despite Descartes' claim that the will is "by its nature so free that it can never be constrained,"[64] from a Spinozan perspective Cartesian freedom is itself a constraint. Specifically, the alleged absolute freedom of the will is not absolute because it is limited to the self, to the relation of self-determination.[65]

This limit is expressed in the distinction that Descartes asserts between that which depends on the will and the totality of that which does not depend on the will, which he calls fortune. Although in the *Discourse* Descartes argues, in very Baconian language, that advances in knowledge will "make ourselves, as it were, the lords and masters of nature,"[66] the reign of human freedom is clearly circumscribed by the will, as indicated in the same text:

> My third maxim was always to try to master myself rather than fortune, and change my desires rather than the order of the world. In general I would become accustomed to believing that nothing lies entirely in our power except our thoughts, so that after doing our best in matters external to us, whatever we fail to achieve is absolutely impossible so far as we are concerned.[67]

Though this maxim is presented as provisional in the *Discourse*, Descartes reaffirms it in a letter to Queen Christina and the *Passions of the Soul*, which he would dedicate to her two years later: "*except for matters [divine providence] has determined to be dependent on our free will,* we must consider everything that affects us to occur of necessity and as it were by fate, so that it

[64] CSM I: 343; AT XI: 359.
[65] Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power*, 39.
[66] CSM I: 143; AT VI: 62.
[67] CSM I: 124; AT VI: 26.

would be wrong for us to desire for things to happen in any other way.[68] In defining freedom in terms of the power over the self Descartes limits the power of the human being to itself. In reducing human freedom to self-determination, Descartes separates the human being not only from its action, but also from its world. Outside of what he calls "a firm will to do well," a different world, a better world, lies beyond Cartesian freedom.[69] Descartes' admonishment of "those meddlesome and restless characters who, called neither by birth nor by fortune to the management of public affairs, are forever thinking up some new reform" in the *Discourse* confirms this. As he continues, "My plan has never gone beyond trying to reform my own thoughts and construct them upon a foundation which is all my own."[70] This Cartesian doctrine of the power of the will being limited to the will, reinforced by the moral code of Part Three of the *Discourse*, is not adequately explained by Descartes' political prudence before the State and Church or undone by the universality of the I; it is a piece with his philosophy.[71] Descartes' claims in the *Discourse*, worked out more extensively in the *Passions of the Soul*, recalls Althusser's comment on the reproduction of the subject of ideology: "they recognize the

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[68] CSM I: 380-381; AT XI: 439-440. See also letter in which Descartes explains that the highest good is reserved to the good will:

> In trying to decide this question [of the supreme good], my first observation is that we should not consider anything as good, in relation to ourselves, unless we either possess it or have the power to acquire it...[the supreme good of each individual] consists only in a firm will to do well and the contentment which this produces. My reason for saying this is that I can discover no other good which seems so great or entirely within each man's power. For the goods of the body and of fortune do not depend entirely upon us; and those of the soul can only be reduced to two heads, the one being to know, and the other being to will, what is good. But knowledge often remains beyond our power; and so there remains only our will, which is absolutely within our disposal (CSMK III: 325; AT V: 84).

[69] CSMK III: 325; AT V: 84.

[70] CSM I: 118; AT VI: 14-15.

[71] For a reading of Descartes as both a philosophical and political radical, see Antonio Negri, *Political Descartes: Reason, Ideology, and the Bourgeois Project*, trans. Matteo Mandarini and Alberto Toscano (London: Verso Books, 2007).

existing state of affairs, that 'it really is true that it is so and not otherwise,' and that they must be obedient to god, to their conscience, to the priest, to de Gaulle, to the boss…etc."[72]

Because for Spinoza the self is a characteristic relation, determined by and determining of its relation with other beings, its self-determination is always manifested through these relations. In his relational ontology, Spinoza defines singularity collectively: "By singular things I understand things that are finite and have a determinate existence. And if a number of individuals so concur in one action that together they are the cause of one effect, I consider them all, to that extent, as one singular thing" (E2d7). In this definition we are reminded that for Spinozan power is operative, that is, exists in the production of effects. But we also see that action involves acting collectively *with* others. To confine the power of the self to itself, then, is to confine power as such. It is to disempower the self that is empowered only through its relation with others. In Part II we will turn to yet another image of freedom, that of Hobbes, in which social empowerment is again limited not to the will, but in the exclusion of collectivity that comes with the negative community of Hobbesian sociality.

[72] Althusser, "Ideology," 181.

Part II

The Hobbesian Configuration of Freedom: The Sociality of Imaginative Determination

> Free from necessitation no man can be.
>
> –Hobbes, *Treatise on Liberty and Necessity*

> All things have been determined from the necessity of the divine nature to exist and produce an effect in a certain way.
>
> –Spinoza, E1p29

As with – and often in conjunction with – Descartes, commentators tend to treat the relation between Hobbes and Spinoza as one of influence. Curley has alleged "Descartes' unsatisfactory and programmatic ventures in [psychology and moral philosophy] posed problems for Spinoza, problems to which he found solutions in Hobbes."[1] Others have referred to Hobbes as Spinoza's "teacher" and Spinoza as "a modified Hobbesian."[2] There are certainly "affinities," as both Hampshire and Sacksteder call them, between the two thinkers.[3] Indeed, Spinoza and Hobbes can even be said to have a similar critique of the Cartesian configuration of freedom. In his Objections to the *Meditations*, Hobbes protests that Descartes assumes the freedom of the will "without proof," while elsewhere he proclaims, "This 'dominion over itself' and 'determining itself' are confused and empty words."[4]

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[1] Curley, *Behind*, 87.

[2] William Sacksteder, "How Much Hobbes Might Have Spinoza Read," *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 11:2 (1980), 31. In a later article, Sacksteder makes much the same claim, suggesting, "There is more congeniality than usually admitted in Spinoza's borrowings from Hobbes," (Sacksteder, "Spinoza's Attributes, Again: A Hobbesian Source," *Studia Spinozana: An International and Interdisciplinary Series* 3 (1987), 125); Yirmiyahu Yovel, "Incomplete Rationality in Spinoza's *Ethics*," in *Spinoza on Reason and the "Free Man*," eds. Yirmiyahu Yovel and Gideon Segal (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 31.

[3] Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism*, 77; Sacksteder, "How Much Hobbes," 27.

[4] CSM II: 133; AT VII: 190; Hobbes, *Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance* in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, Vol. V, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1841), 35. Hereafter cited as *Questions* Number, page.

I take as the point of departure for this Part the fact that both Hobbes and Spinoza deny freedom of the will on the grounds of the necessary determination of all that exists. More than the relation of influence or affinity, though, I am interested in what we can call the Hobbes and Spinoza conjunction. Starting with their contemporaries, the names of these philosophers became synonymous with blasphemy, heresy, and atheism, in short, with moral monstrosity. In the year of Hobbes' death, Thomas Pierce, Dean of Salisbury and chaplain to Charles II, published *A Decade of Caveats*, in which he calls *Leviathan* "the greatest Monster in all the World, excepting only the author of it."[5] *Leviathan* was proposed to Parliament for conflagration in 1652, 1654, and 1657[6] and *De Cive* was subject to a decretum in Rome in 1654.[7] Around this same time, Spinoza was subject to what Nadler has called, "the harshest writ of *herem*, or religious and social ostracism, ever pronounced." [8] The *herem*, by which Spinoza was excommunicated from the Jewish community of Amsterdam in 1656, refers to reports of "the abominable heresies that [Spinoza] practiced and taught and about his monstrous deeds."[9] Already in 1666 a Committee of the English House of Commons on "Laws against Atheism, Profaneness, Debauchery, and Swearing" was charged with examining "in particular…the Book of Mr. Hobbes, called *The Leviathan*" and by 1674 the Court of Holland issued a general decree forbidding the "printing, distributing or selling" of both Hobbes' *Leviathan* and Spinoza's

[5] Cited in Jon Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan*: *The Reception of the Religious and Political Ideas of Thomas Hobbes in England 1640-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 335. This is the most thorough record of the responses to Hobbes' *Leviathan*. Parkin suggests that Pierce coined the designation "the Monster of Malmesbury," which would be used to refer to Hobbes for decades to come.
[6] Although immediately upon its publication in 1651, *Leviathan* was met with Royalist, Republican, and the Royal Society's repudiation, Parkin argues that 1666-1675 is the period of "the creation of the popular image of Hobbes as the archetypal atheist philosophers and Leviathan as the handbook of irreligion and amorality" (Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan*, 238).
[7] Howard Warrender, "Editor's Introduction," in *De Cive The Latin Version*, ed. Howard Warrender (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1983), 21.
[8] Steven Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell: Spinoza's Scandalous Treatise and the Birth of the Secular Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 8.
[9] Cited in Ibid, 7.

Theological-Political Treatise.[10] In 1678 Henry Moore would be among the first to use the Hobbes-Spinoza conjunction, referring to "course grain'd philosophers as those Hobbians and Spinozians, and the rest of that rabble [who] slight religion and the Scriptures."[11]

Israel argues that by the late seventeenth-century Spinoza "to a considerable extent came to replace Hobbes as the chief intellectual bogeyman and symbolic head of philosophical deism and atheism in Britain and Ireland, as well as on the continent,"[12] but the Hobbes-Spinoza conjunction can still be found in Leibniz's *Theodicy* in the early eighteenth-century. Leibniz focuses his censure on the monstrous implications of the philosophers' affirmation of absolute necessity:

> After all, I think one must not reproach any but the adherents of Hobbes and Spinoza with destroying freedom and contingency; for they think that which happens is alone possible and must happen by a brute geometrical necessity. Hobbes made everything material and subjected it to mathematical laws alone; Spinoza also divested God of intelligence and choice leaving him a blind power, whence all emanates of necessity.[13]

Leibniz suggests that what is most monstrous about Hobbes and Spinoza is that they do not admit of monstrosity. Against the Aristotelian and Scholastic traditions, according to which monsters are the "failure of purpose in nature"[14] and so belong "to the class of things contrary to nature,"[15] for Hobbes and Spinoza nothing is contrary to nature. As we have already seen, there can be no monsters in Spinoza's immanent ontology because, as he states plainly, "Nature has no end set before it" (E1app.). Against those who suggest that "nature never intends the

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[10] Noel Malcolm, "Editorial Introduction." *Leviathan* Vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 153.; Ibid., 297.
[11] Cited in Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 376.
[12] Ibid., 603.
[13] G.W. Leibniz, *Theodicy*, ed. Austin Farrar (Chicago: Open Court, 1990), 371.
[14] Aristotle, *Physics* II.8 in *The Complete Works of Aristotle* Vol. I, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 340.
[15] Aristotle, *Generation of Animals* IV.4 in *The Complete Works* Vol. I, 1195.

generation of a monster,"[16] Hobbes protests, "the universe, as one aggregate of things natural, hath no intention."[17] In their affirmation of strict determinism both are committed to the position that, as Leibniz rightly notes, "that which happens is alone possible."

But as we will see in this Part, despite Leibniz's claim that only Hobbesians and Spinozans can be charged with "destroying freedom," the Hobbes-Spinoza conjunction does not include freedom. Even though both thinkers deny free will, they do not affirm the same conceptions of determination – or of freedom. As we will see, for Hobbes there is only extrinsic determination. Even the desire that constitutes the will is for Hobbes mechanistically determined from without. In Chapter 3 I will explain the Hobbesian configuration of freedom and show its connection to his infamous account of sociality. In Section 1 I will argue that the Hobbesian configuration of freedom is relational. We will see that for Hobbes freedom involves both the relation of the will to the extrinsic, material chains of necessity and the non-relational relation of impediments to the will. In Section 2 I will show that the Hobbesian configuration of freedom entails Hobbes' lupine conception of sociality. For Hobbes, the non-relational relation constitutive of freedom excludes a direct, mutual relation of empowerment between humans. Human beings, both in the state of nature and the State, are only related to each other through a non-relational relation, manifest in their solitary, diffident, and fearsome condition.

In Chapter 4 I will develop a Spinozan critique of the Hobbesian configuration of freedom by exposing the mechanisms of the imagination that produce it. It will become clear that Hobbesian freedom is the effect of the comparative, mortal, and exclusionary mechanisms of the imagination. Throughout my Spinozan analysis I will trace the index of effectivity of

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[16] John Bramhall, *A Vindication of True Liberty from Antecedent And Extrinsicall Necessity* in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, Vol. V, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1841), 231. Hereafter cited as *Defense*, No., page.
[17] Thomas Hobbes, *Questions* XVII, 237.

these mechanisms, showing the determinate ways in which Hobbes' extrinsic concept of freedom is disempowering, that it denies the singular and the common, forging a sociality of the fear of death that denies life and undermines the collective power required for freedom. In conclusion, I will show how this critical analysis of the Cartesian and Hobbesian images of freedom allow us to glean the true problem of freedom that they mutilate, that "answer," as Althusser puts it, "which does not correspond to any question posed."[18] We will see that for Spinoza freedom does not consist in individual freedom or in the negative community of individuals in their freedom from each other, but, as his immanent, relational ontology dictates, in acting in affinity with others.

[18] Althusser, *Reading Capital*, 28.

Part II
Chapter 3

The Monster of Malmesbury: Freedom and Sociality in the Philosophy of Hobbes

> [T]hey that approve a private opinion call it Opinion; but they that mislike it, Haeresie.
>
> – Hobbes, *Leviathan*[19]

> And all the Brave *Socratick Race,*
> Whose *Monuments* Time can't deface,
> Shall live, when *Hobbes* shall have his Doom
>
> – Abraham, "To Mr. Hobbes"[20]

In 1680, less than a year after Hobbes's death, Cowley Abraham anonymously published a broadside entitled *The True effigies of the monster of Malmesbury, or Thomas Hobbes in his proper colours*. It begins, "I Desire thou shouldst understand that the Author of the following Verses against Mr. *Hobbes,* about Twenty Years since conceived that *Indignation* against him, and that *Hatred* of his *Illogical* and *Atheistical Genius* which he has here Exprest." The prose preface to the poem "To Mr. Hobbes" begins with indignation at Hobbes' "conceit" that humans have no idea of God, which Abraham deems equivalent to the claim that there is no God. As he writes in the poem, "So doth the Poets wit suit with his *Theme*: He that will *Hobbes* Applaud must first *Blaspheme."* In addition to Hobbes's denial of the idea of God, the hateful blasphemies that Abraham condemns in both prose and verse are Hobbes's denial of free will and his affirmation of the necessary determination of all things, that is, those doctrines that form the Hobbes-Spinoza conjunction. Indeed, Abraham could just as easily be writing of

[19] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 73. Hereafter cited as *Leviathan* chapter, page number.
[20] Abraham Cowley, *The True Effigies of the Monster of Malmesbury, or Thomas Hobbes in His Proper Colours* (London: 1680), http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A63515.0001.001/1:2?rgn=div1;view=fulltext (accessed July 8, 2017).

Spinoza as of "that *Monster,* the Father of the *Leviathan*" when he pens the lines, "His *Captive-Darkned* Soul cann't see, What 'tis to have our Souls set free, From the Black Chains of dire NECESSITIE."

But I maintain it is the nature and effects of these chains of necessity that constitute the decisive disjunction between Hobbes and Spinoza. Each philosopher's determinism institutes a radically different mode of relationality between finite beings. In this Chapter I will examine the specifically Hobbesian mode of determination. In Section 1, focusing on the debate with Bishop Bramhall, I will argue that Hobbes's concept of freedom should be understood as a relational concept. Hobbes consistently defines liberty in terms of what is not, as the absence of impediments to action. Most commentators follow Hobbes's own claim that his is a negative definition of liberty: "If the word defined signify an absence or negation, I hope [one] would not have me define it by a presence or affirmation. Such a word is liberty."[21] But in order to fully grasp the Hobbesian configuration of freedom, we should examine the determinate mode of relationality such a negative conception presupposes. Hobbesian freedom is fundamentally defined in terms of the agent's relation with that which is external to itself. The Hobbesian configuration of freedom is doubly extrinsically determined: The first moment of extrinsic relation lies in the material determination of action, which Hobbes refers to as "an innumerable number of chains [of causes] joined together."[22] These chains are the totality of necessary and sufficient external causes for action. But for Hobbes an action can only be said to be free insofar as we also consider the relation of these chains to the second moment of relation, namely, the relation of the agent to external causes that do *not* impede it. More than a negative concept of

[21] Hobbes, *Questions* XXV, 372.
[22] Thomas Hobbes, *Treatise of Liberty and Necessity* in *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity*, ed. Vere Chappell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Hereafter cited as *Treatise* Number, page.

liberty, then, we will see that the Hobbesian configuration of freedom consists in a non-relational relation.

In Section 2 I will turn to the mode of sociality that follows from this concept of liberty. Commentators tend to agree that it is Hobbes's atomism, that is, the ontological primacy of the individual, which engenders the nasty and brutish nature of Hobbesian sociality. As Hampton has put it, for Hobbes "human beings are individuals first and social creatures second."[23] MacPherson has even gone so far as to credit Hobbes with an epochal shift, claiming, "Individualism, as a basic theoretical position, starts at least as far back as Hobbes."[24] I do not contest the methodological and ontological importance of the individual in Hobbes's philosophy, but I will show that it is the specific mode of relation in Hobbesian sociality that produces the individual *as* individual. The Hobbesian human being is indeed an ontological unit, but, as indicated in the discussion of liberty, the individual is always in relation to other individuals. When understood socially, Hobbesian freedom is mutually exclusive; human beings are only free insofar as they are *not* impeded by external causes, especially, on Hobbes's analysis, by other human beings. The Hobbesian concepts of freedom and human nature

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[23] Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 6.

[24] C.B MacPherson, *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1. Of course just what kinds of individualism or atomism Hobbes espouses is a matter of debate. Strauss reads Hobbes not as a possessive individualist but as a "specifically modern," moral individualist, whose "morality is the morality of the bourgeois world" (Leo Strauss, *Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 121). Oakeshott claims, "Hobbes's starting point as a moralist was with the unique human individuality" (Michael Oakeshott, *Hobbes on Civil Association* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 79. Ryan agrees with Oakeshott in reading Hobbes as a "moral and intellectual" individualist because of the "logical tie" between Hobbes' epistemological anti-authoritarianism and his political philosophy (Alan Ryan, "Hobbes and Individualism," in *Essays on Early Modern Philosophers: Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Vere Chappell (New York: Garland, 1992), 207). Ashcraft, on the other hand, argues, "Hobbes has for too long suffered from the misdirected accusation of atomism" (1088) on the grounds that his so-called individualism should be understood in terms of its historical and cultural context, namely, as an ideological weapon forged from the Aristotelian and colonial assumptions of his opponents (Richard Ashcraft, "Hobbes 'Natural Man:' A Study in Ideology Formation," *Journal of Politics* 33 (Nov 1971), 1088).

engender a mode of sociality that is lupine, a fierce and fearsome relation between humans determined by "Deceipt and Violence."[25] We will therefore see that the "solitary" existence of the Hobbesian subject is the result of the non-relational relation constitutive of Hobbesian freedom.

Section 1. A Relational Account of Hobbesian Freedom

> But then the Mighty *BRAMHAL* comes, and takes his Arms away,
> Shews that this *Painted Shield's not fit for Fight, but Play,*
> Strikes down the Monster, doth to All his *Ugly Shape* display.
> – Abraham, "To Mr Hobbes"

In the closing lines of the preface of *The True Effigies of the Monster of Malmesbury*, Abraham turns to "another of Mr. *Hobbes*'s wicked Conceits," the denial of the freedom of the will. Abraham proclaims,

> The *Spring* and Original of all Sin is *SELF-WILL,* Sin being an *Aversion* from GOD, whilst the Will of the Creature Affects It self, and not the Will of the Creator, as the *Prime Motive* in its Tendency or Inclination. Mr. *Hobbes* may call this *Non-sense,* or what he pleases; but he shall quickly Know that 'tis a Truth of the greatest Importance.[26]

Abraham points to Hobbes' denial of free will as one pillar of his monstrosity, but as we have already seen, he was not the first to charge Hobbes with monstrosity. Among the first to do so was John Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, with whom Hobbes engaged in an extended debate on the nature of the will and human freedom in the 1640s and 1650s. Well before Pierce coined the name "the monster of Malmesbury" Bramhall condemned *Leviathan* as "*Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum*."[27] Parkin argues that in addition to Hobbes's Oxford

[25] Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive The English Version,* ed. Howard Warrender (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 24. Hereafter cited as *De Cive*, chapter and article.
[26] Abraham, *True Effigies*
[27] Bramhall, *Defense*, Epistle to Reader, 26.

opponents, Wallis and Ward, Bramhall's attacks on Hobbes's philosophy "would do much to structure the hostility aimed at Hobbes for the rest of the century."[28] When Hobbes finally decided to defend himself against such hostilities, he turned to Bramhall, asserting, "I have been publicly injured by many of whom I took no notice, supposing that that humour would spend itself; but seeing it last, and grow higher in this writing I now answer, I thought it necessary at last to make of some of them, and first this Bishop, an example."[29] When Hobbes made annotations to the 1647 edition of *De Cive* and formulated a defense in the Appendix to the 1667 Latin edition of *Leviathan*, he was responding directly to Bramhall.[30] Bramhall therefore proves to be one of the most significant of Hobbes's interlocutors, especially for an analysis of the Hobbesian configuration of freedom.

Hobbes met Bramhall when in self-exile in Paris in 1645 through William Cavendish, then Marquess of Newcastle. After a parlor discussion on the topic of free will, Newcastle urged both men to formulate their positions in writing. Within months Bramhall penned a letter outlining his views on free will, which would come to be known as *Discourse of Liberty and Necessity*.[31] Hobbes provided an epistolary reply to Newcastle in the following year to which Bramhall responded with his own *Vindication of True Liberty from Antecedent and Extrinsical Necessity,* which Hobbes, it seems, did not deem worthy of reply. Although in his "Verse Life" Hobbes would take credit for printing the "Treatises that stung The Bishop Bramhal, in our Mother-Tongue,"[32] the original correspondence between the theologian and the philosopher was

[28] Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan*, 155.
[29] Hobbes, *Questions* XXXVIII, 455.
[30] For the historical evidence regarding *De Cive*, see Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan*, 41. For the evidence regarding *Leviathan*, see Malcolm, "Editorial Introduction," 155.
[31] I will follow Chappell in using Hobbes's and Bramhall's epistolary reference to the text as a "discourse" on liberty and necessity.
[32] Thomas Hobbes, "The Verse Life" in *The Elements of Law: Human Nature and De Corpore Politico*, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 261.

never intended for publication. But through the surreptitious efforts of Hobbes's private French translator, John Davies of Kidwelly, Hobbes's reply was, without his authorization, published in 1654 as *Of Libertie and Necessitie, A Treatise, wherein all controversie concerning Predestination, Election, Free-will, Grace, Merits, Reprobation, &c. is fully decided and cleared, in answer to a treatise written by the Bishop of Londonderry, on the same subject*.[33] The publication included a preface by Davies, which boasted, "this book, how little and contemptible soever it may seem, contains more evidence and conviction in the matters it treats of, than all the volumes, nay libraries, which the *priests, jesuits*, and *ministers* have, to our great charge, distraction, and loss of time, furnished us with."[34] In response, Bramhall, himself an Anglican priest, felt compelled to publish his unanswered *Vindication* as *A Defense Of True Liberty From Antecedent And Extrinsicall Necessity* in 1655, to which Hobbes responded with *Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance* in 1656. In 1658 Bramhall published the *Catching of the Leviathan, or the Great Whale* as an Appendix to his *Castigations of Mr Hobbes, his last Animadversions in the Case concerning Liberty and Universal Necessity*. This text would again be met with silence, at least in Bramhall's lifetime. Though it would only be published posthumously to both the theologian and the philosopher, Hobbes wrote *An Answer to a Book Published by Dr. Bramhall, late bishop of Derry; called the Catching of the Leviathan* in 1668, some five years after Bramhall's death. In this final text in the debate, Hobbes replies only to the first of three chapters of *Catching*, entitled "That the Hobbian principles are destructive of Christianity and all Religion." Hobbes explains his reason for addressing only this chapter, not those against his political philosophy or the alleged inconsistencies in his other

[33] I will again follow Chappell in referring to Hobbes's letter as "Treatise."
[34] Because it was not authorized, the preface is not included in the Chappell edition. This passage can be found in *Of Liberty and Necessity* in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, Vol. 4, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London: John Bon, 1840), 236. As Chappell points out in her own edition, the Molesworth edition is at many points unreliable because it is true to the version by Kidwelly.

philosophical doctrines: "Because he does not so much as offer any refutation of any thing in my *Leviathan* concluded, I need not to have answered either of them. Yet to the first I here answer, because the words *atheism*, *impiety*, and the like, are words of the greatest defamation possible."[35]

In his autobiographical poem, Hobbes seems to scorn the debate with Bramhall, summarizing it glibly, "And this was the Result proceeding thence, He the School's follow'd, I made use of sense."[36] Commentators have also tended to minimize the debate between Hobbes and Bramhall.[37] Most accounts of Hobbes's concept of freedom concentrate on the definitions provided in the three formulations of his political philosophy: *Elements of Law*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan.* This textual circumscription has generated plenty of controversy: some charge Hobbes with a "confusing" concept of liberty;[38] others claim he "changed" his concept of liberty;[39] yet others simply suggest Hobbes has two concepts of liberty.[40] But I believe that the

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[35] Thomas Hobbes, *An Answer to the Bishop Bramhall's Book, called 'The Catching of the Leviathan'* in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, Vol. 4, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London: John Bon, 1840), 282.

[36] Hobbes, "The Verse Life," 261-262.

[37] Those who do focus on the Hobbes and Bramhall exchange tend to interpret it not as a philosophical debate on the nature of liberty, but instead reduce it to its political, theological, and/or historical circumstances. See, for example, Damrosh's claim that the "true bedrock of [Hobbes] theory of the will" is his horror of civil war (Leo Damrosch, "Hobbes As Reformation Theologian: Implications Of The Free-Will Controversy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40:3 (1979), 349). See also Nicholas D. Jackson, *Hobbes, Bramhall and the Politics of Liberty and Necessity A Quarrel of the Civil War and Interregnum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Jackson argues that the debate between Hobbes and Bramhall is not about the nature of freedom but about the authority of Bishops, the status of the English Church, and the rise of modern science.

[38] See J. Roland Pennock, "Hobbes's Confusing 'Clarity' – The Case of 'Liberty'," *Hobbes Studies,* ed. Keith C. Brown (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 101-116; A.G. Wernham, "Liberty and Obligation in Hobbes," *Hobbes Studies,* ed. Keith C. Brown (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 117-139; David P. Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 62-66; Annabel Brett, *Liberty, Right and Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Ch. 6.

[39] F.C. Hood, "The Change in Hobbes' Definition of Liberty," in *Thomas Hobbes: Critical Assessments*, Vol. III, ed. Preston King (New York: Routledge, 1993), 112-126. In his early work Skinner found no change or inconsistency in Hobbes' concept of liberty (Quentin Skinner, "Thomas Hobbes on the Proper Signification of Liberty," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 40 (1990), 121-151). But in his later work, Skinner argues that Hobbes "not only alters but contradicts his previous line of thought"

debate between Hobbes and Bramhall should not be so readily dismissed. Lasting twenty-three years and outlasting Bramhall, these texts constitute Hobbes's most extensive and focused discussion of freedom. In examining their debate we see that Hobbes consistently explicates freedom as a relational concept, that is, in terms of the agent's relation to external causes. Specifically, he consistently points to two moments of relation in freedom: first, focusing on Bramhall's accusation that Hobbes's liberty is worthy only of spiders, we will see the relation of the agent to that web of antecedent and necessary external causes that determine action; second, focusing on the distinction between the liberty to do what one will and the liberty to will, we will see the non-relational relation to external causes that constitutes an impediment to the agent. Together these two moments of extrinsic relation fully expose the Hobbesian configuration of freedom. Just as Hobbes claims that Bramhall "has mistaken the question"[41] so we will see that a close examination of the debate between the philosopher and the theologian reveals that Hobbes' commentators, too, have often mistaken Hobbesian freedom.

Hobbes's Arachnidan Freedom

> By these causes [that operate freely] it seems he understands only men, whereas I showed before that liberty is usually ascribed to whatsoever agent is not hindered.
>
> –Hobbes, *Questions* III, 49

> That there is no incorporeal spirit, is that main root of atheism, from which so many lesser branches are daily sprouting up.
>
> –Bramhall, *Catching the Leviathan*, 302

(Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 128). Skinner marks the exchange with Bramhall as the moment when Hobbes "repudiates" his earlier concept of liberty, but dismisses its historical significance on the grounds that it was not published until after *Leviathan* (Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, 131).

[40] Phillip Pettit, "Liberty and Leviathan," in *Politics, Philosophy, Economics*, 4:1 (2005), 131–151.

[41] Hobbes, *Treatise* 3, 15.

As if anticipating Spinoza's anonymous epistolary interlocutor in Letter 58, Bramhall begins his *Discourse on Liberty and Necessity* with the words, "Either I am free to write this discourse for liberty against necessity, or I am not free."[42] Bramhall defines freedom as "a liberty from necessity, or rather from necessitation, that is, a universal immunity from all inevitability and determination to one."[43] Gathering "squadrons" of Christian and heathen philosophers "against the enemy" that denies this definition, Bramhall proceeds to cite Scripture and "reason" in support of his position that the human will is free to determine itself.[44] At this early and more congenial stage of the debate, Bramhall does not explicitly charge Hobbes with blasphemy, heresy, or outright atheism. But such charges are anticipated in what he calls the "inconveniencies" that follow from the denial of freedom of the will as he defines it. Bramhall contends that if the will is necessitated, then "interrogations and objurations and reprehensions and expostulations," not to mention "God's chiding," are in vain; [45] he further argues that piety is destroyed, sin is taken away, all commonwealths are undermined, and "there shall be no day of doom."[46]

From the outset Bramhall charges Hobbes with an arachnidan conception of liberty. The first argument Bramhall raises against "the patrons of necessity" is the distinction between "true liberty," which consists in the power of election, and spontaneity, which, he suggests, is consistent with determination to one "as the bees make the honey, and the spiders webs."[47] In the *Discourse* Bramhall will return to this charge, ridiculing Hobbes's definition in the *Treatise*: "Judge then what a pretty kind of liberty it is which is maintained by T.H…such a liberty as in

[42] Bramhall, *Discourse* 3, 1.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Bramhall, *Discourse* 10, 3.
[46] Bramhall, *Discourse* 14, 4.
[47] Bramhall, *Discourse* 6, 2.

brute beasts, as bees and spiders, which do not learn their faculties as we do our trades, by experience and consideration? This is a brutish liberty."[48] Even in the *Castigations*, Bramhall complains that on Hobbes' definition "mere spontaneity usurpeth the place of true liberty."[49] Because he does not initially explicate the terms of the distinction, the complete significance of the charge does not become clear until the *Defense*, where Bramhall defines spontaneity as an action that conforms to the agent's appetite.[50] As he later explains in the *Castigations*, all free actions are spontaneous or voluntary, but not all spontaneous or voluntary actions are free because there is a distinction between sensitive and intellectual appetites: "the one is a natural agent, the other is a free agent. The one acts necessarily, the other acts contingently. The one is determined to one, the other is not determined to one."[51] For Bramhall spontaneity is not equivalent to "true liberty," because it does not always have its foundation in the intellectual appetite, that is, the specifically human power of reason. In standard Aristotelian form, Bramhall proclaims, "Reason is the root, the fountain, the original of true liberty" insofar as reason is the power to deliberate about and indifferently elect or choose contrary possibilities.[52] Reason exempts the human being from the causal order of nature because in deliberation, the rational soul stands outside of material determination. Although he concedes sensitive appetite is "common to brute beasts" Bramhall argues that "election is a rational act and proper only to man."[53] Through their rational capacity for representation and judgment about the natural world, human beings alone can determine their own actions independent of physical causes and have

[48] Bramhall, *Defense* III, 40.
[49] John Bramhall, *Castigations of Mr. Hobbes His Last Animadversions in the Case of Liberty and Necessity* in *The Works of Most Reverend Father in God, John Bramhall, D.D., Sometime Lord Arch Bishop of Armargh, Primate and Metropolitan of All Ireland, with A Life of the Author and a Collection of His Letters*, Vol. IV, (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1844), 209. Hereafter cited as *Castigations*, page.
[50] Bramhall, *Defense* III, 40.
[51] Bramhall, *Castigations*, 225. See also *Castigations*, 440.
[52] Bramhall, *Defense* III, 40.
[53] Bramhall, *Defense* VII, 76.

dominion over themselves and nature.[54] Thus, as he will conclude in the *Castigations*, "the spider's making of her webs to catch flies, the bird's building of her nest therein to lay her eggs"[55] are spontaneous because they conform to the sensitive appetite, but they are not free.

In an important sense, Hobbes would concede that his concept of liberty is arachnidan.[56] The Hobbesian configuration of freedom is not limited to the human being. In the closing section of the *Treatise,* entitled "My opinion regarding liberty and necessity," Hobbes defines liberty as "the absence of all impediments to action, that are not contained in the nature and intrinsical quality of the agent. As for example, the water is said to descend freely, or to have liberty to descend by the channel of the river, because there is no impediment that way; but not across, because the banks are impediments."[57] This definition is consistent with all those Hobbes provides in other works, which are also often exemplified by water.[58] Hobbes's definition of liberty holds for all beings, both inanimate and animate, both human and spider. This aqueous and arachnidan insight forces us to countenance what we might call the first moment of relation in the Hobbesian configuration of freedom, namely, the way in which all beings, including human beings, are subject to material determination by the web of causes. For Hobbes all beings are material: "The world and the parts thereof are corporeal, endued with the

[54] For Bramhall's claim that human beings have right of dominion over nature, especially "beasts," see *Defense* XIV, 166. In *Castigations*, Bramhall argues this right is grounded in the fact that the human being is "made in the image of God" (*Castigations*, 33), an argument that resembles the Cartesian position.
[55] Bramhall, *Castigations*, 263.
[56] I limit my claim to "a certain sense" because, as we will see in Section 2 below, Hobbes does distinguish between humans and animals on the grounds that human beings have the power of speech. This does not entail a distinction between human and animal freedom, because both human and animal freedom lies in the freedom to do what the agent will to do, but it does mean that human freedom can manifest itself in the determinate form of the freedom to do what the agent will to do as articulated in speech.
[57] Hobbes, *Treatise* 29, 38
[58] See *De Cive* IX.9 and *Leviathan* 21, 145. Hobbes does not formally define liberty in *Elements*, but the way in which he does use the terms is also consistent with this definition.

dimensions of quantity, and with figure."[59] Hobbes's repeated rejoinder to Bramhall, "nothing beginneth motion from itself, but from the action of some other agent without itself" follows from this materialism: "For all motion through any determined space, necessarily makes motion through the next space, unless it be hindered by some contrary motion; and then the stop is as necessary as the proceeding would have been."[60] That is to say, for Hobbes all bodies are moved and absolutely determined by external bodies. As he explains in *De Corpore*, the cause of motion of any given body is "something without of it."[61] There is, then, as Frost has rightly noted, "a profound interdependence" at the heart of Hobbes' materialism.[62] To be is to be related to other beings, to be moved by and to move other bodies. No being, even the human being, is exempt from the relations of the concourse of causes and so from what Bramhall calls, horrified, the "chains of necessity."[63] Hobbes openly asserts this in the *Treatise*:

> That which I say necessitates and determines every action, that his Lordship may no longer doubt my meaning, is the sum of all those things which, being now existent, conduce or concur to the production of that action hereafter…Nor does the concurrence of all causes make one simple chain or concatenation, but an innumerable number of chains joined together, not in all parts, but in the first link God Almighty; and consequently the whole cause of an event does not depend on one single chain, but on many together.[64]

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[59] Hobbes, *Questions* XV, 211. Of course by the time that Hobbes wrote *Questions*, he had already stated this in *Leviathan*: "the World, (I mean not the Earth onely, that denominates the Lovers of it Wordly Men, but the Universe, that is, the whole mass of things that are) is Corporeall, that is to say, Body; and hath the dimensions of Magnitude, namely, Length, Bredth, and Depth; also every part of Body, is likewise Body, and hath the like dimensions; and consequently every part of the Universe is Body; and that which is not Body is not part of the Universe: And because the Universe is All, that which is no part of it is *Nothing*; and consequently *no where*" (Hobbes, *Leviathan* 46, 463).
[60] Hobbes, *Questions* XXIII, 323.
[61] Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore* in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes* Vol. I, ed. Sir William Molesworth, 1839), 115. Herafter cited as *De Corpore*, followed by chapter and article. See also *De Corpore* IX.7.
[62] Samantha Frost, *Lessons from a Materialist Thinker: Hobbesian Reflections on Ethics and Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 2.
[63] Bramhall, *Defense* 1, 1.
[64] Hobbes, *Treatise* 11, 20.

As with Descartes, for Hobbes liberty is voluntariness. That is to say, human freedom is defined in terms of freedom of the will: "He is free to do a thing, that may do it if he have a will to do it, and may forbear it if he has a will to forbear it."[65] But Hobbes's is not a will made in the image of God; rather, it is a will determined by God, "the first link" in the chain of antecedent causes, and nothing more than the appetite antecedent to action. In answer to Bramhall's so-called true liberty, Hobbes declares "free from necessitation, I say, no man can be."[66] As he explains in *Leviathan*, "[B]ecause every act of mans will, and every desire, and inclination proceedeth from some cause, and that from another cause, in a continuall chaine (whose first link is in the hand of God the first of all causes,) they proceed from *necessity*."[67] Thought, too, is caught in the web of material and necessary causes. What Bramhall refers to as the intellectual appetite specific to human beings, then, Hobbes considers the appetite of a "thinking-body."[68] There are different bodies – inanimate and animate, living, or thinking – and there are different motions of thinking bodies – vital and voluntary – but for Hobbes there is no ontological distinction between bodies. All thought has its origin in the relation of the body to external bodies. *Leviathan* begins by affirming this relation: "Concerning the Thoughts of man, I will consider them first *singly*, and afterwards in *Trayne*, or dependence upon one another…The Originall of them all, is that which we call SENSE…The cause of Sense, is the Externall Body, or Object, which presseth the organ proper to each Sense."[69] According to Hobbes, the motion of external bodies in relation to the counter-motion of the organs constitutive of thinking beings engenders sense; sense engenders imagination or phantasms;

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[65] Hobbes, *Treatise* 3, 16. See also *Leviathan* 21, 146.
[66] Hobbes, *Treatise* 18, 30.
[67] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 21, 146-147.
[68] Hobbes, *De Corpore* III.4.
[69] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 1, 13. As early as the *Elements*, Hobbes explains, "external objects cause conceptions" (Thomas Hobbes, *Elements of Law Natural and Political*, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 73. Hereafter cited as *Elements*, chapter and article).

imagination, when directed toward an object, engenders the appetites and aversions which, in their "small beginnings," Hobbes calls endeavor.[70] Even when the actually existing external world is imagined to be annihilated in *De Corpore*, it is still imagined *as external* to thought.[71] As Lee argues, "the phantasm is possible only if there is or has been a world. There is, therefore, always a world outside of thought whenever there is thought."[72] The "continual chain" of outside causes, of diverse motion after motion, produces diverse imaginations and a continuous contest of appetites and aversions in living bodies.[73] The will is simply the victor, or the last appetite or aversion, in the contest: "In all deliberations, that is to say, in all alternate succession of contrary appetites, the last is that which we call the will, and is immediately before the doing of the action, or next before the doing of it becomes impossible."[74] In *Questions* Hobbes dismisses "the vanity of such words as these, *intellectual appetite, conformity of the appetite to the object, rational will*"[75] on the grounds that all appetites and aversions – even rational ones – are simply the motion toward or away from an object that an animate being imagines to be good or evil; deliberation is the alternation of appetites and aversions; and the will is the last appetite in the contest of appetites and aversions of any animate being. For Hobbes, then, all thinking beings, not only human beings, deliberate and will: "it is manifest by

[70] See *Leviathan* 6 and *De Corpore* XXV.
[71] Hobbes, *De Corpore* VII.1.
[72] Richard Lee, *The Thought of Matter: Materialism, Conceptuality and the Transcendence of Immanence* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 86-87.
[73] Frost is nearly alone in emphasizing this aspect of Hobbes's account of thought: "thoughts and desires are constituted and reconstituted intersubjectively and in relation to the material environment" (Frost, *Lessons*, 7). In describing the relational constitution of thought as a "contest" I am disagreeing with Susan James's interpretation of Hobbes's passions. James argues that Hobbes differs from the philosophical tradition because there is no contest in the formation of the will, but simply a succession of appetites and aversions, a sequence in which the thoughts have no relation to each other (Susan James, *Passions and Actions: The Emotions in 17th Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), Ch. 12). I think James is correct that Hobbes does not frame the formation of the will in terms of the contest between reason and the passions, but insofar as one appetite overcomes another, there is a conflict.
[74] Hobbes, *Treatise* 15, 27. See also *Elements* XII.2 and *Leviathan* 6, 44.
[75] Hobbes, *Questions*, III, 47.

continual experience, that beasts do deliberate."[76] That is to say, the liberty to do as one will is the same for both human and spider. In the *Treatise*, Hobbes playfully insists, "For bees and spiders, if my Lord had so little to do as to be a spectator of their actions, he would have confessed not only election but also art, prudence, and policy in them very near equal to that of mankind."[77]

What does this first moment of relation, the web of causes in which both Hobbesian human and spider are entangled, tell us about the Hobbesian configuration of freedom? First and foremost, it emphasizes that for Hobbes all liberty is material. As Hobbes proclaims in *Leviathan*, "when the words *Free*, and *Liberty*, are applied to anything but Bodies, they are abused; for that which is not subject to *Motion*, is not subject to Impediment."[78] Among those who charge Hobbes with a confused concept of liberty, most suggest that Hobbes equivocates or contradicts himself regarding corporeal and non-corporeal conceptions. In *Liberty, Right, and Nature*, Brett, for example, argues that the liberty presupposed by Hobbes's right of nature is derived from the Jurists' natural liberty, a *facultas animi* that "force cannot totally eliminate."[79] She asserts that Hobbesian natural liberty is distinct from, though Hobbes often conflates it with, liberty *per se*, a *facultas corpori*. She further contends that the result of this distinction "is to draw a line between the natural and the physical, on the one hand, and the artificial and the

[76] Hobbes, *Questions* XXVIII, 365. Later in the same text he will say, "deliberation is common to men with beasts" (Hobbes, *Questions* XXXVIII, 451). See also Hobbes, *Leviathan* 6, 44.
[77] Hobbes, *Treatise* 8, 19. Far from being a merely polemical rejoinder, this position is consistent with Hobbes' *Elements of Philosophy*. In *De Corpore* Hobbes again levels the human and non-human distinction upon which Bramhall erects his concept of liberty: "Nor is that which is done within a man whilst he willeth anything different from that which is done in other living creatures, whilst, deliberation having preceded, they have appetite. Neither is the freedom of willing or not willing greater in man, than in other living creatures" (Hobbes, *De Corpore*, XXV.13). For a lengthier discussion of Hobbes' denial of the specific difference between human and animal reasoning see Thomas Pink, "Suarez, Hobbes and the scholastic tradition in action theory" in *The Will and Human Action: From Antiquity To The Present Day*, eds. Thomas Pink and M.W.F. Stone (New York: Routledge, 2004), 127-153.
[78] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 21, 146.
[79] Brett, *Liberty, Right, and Nature*, 210.

will, on the other."[80] But even if Hobbes does draw such a line, the debate with Bramhall indicates that it cannot have any *ontologically* meaningful sense.[81] Although Hobbes himself makes methodological use of this distinction, the artificial is a specific kind of effect produced by natural or material causes, namely animate, living, thinking bodies.[82] For Hobbes there is no incorporeal *animus* and so no incorporeal accident of *animus*.[83] The will is simply the last appetite and all appetite is motion.[84] As he tells Bramhall, "The will is produced, generated, formed, and created in such sort as accidents are effected in a corporeal subject."[85] That is to say, the will is determined in the relation between the body of which it is an accident and external bodies. As an extrinsically determined motion, it is necessarily subject to force. When Bramhall invokes the distinction between the natural and the physical, on the one hand, and what he terms moral, on the other,[86] Hobbes claims this is "nonsense, unworthy of a man, nay,

[80] Ibid, 211. The distinction between the corporeal and non-corporeal is connected to the longstanding debate as to whether Hobbes' concept of obligation is prudential or moral. Because I am focused on the concept of liberty I do not have space to address this question directly, but I tend to agree with McPherson that Hobbes "rejected" such a distinction between the moral and prudential (McPherson, *Theory of Possessive Individualism*, 72). In the debate with Bramhall, Hobbes himself protests, "But what it is to determine a thing morally no man living understands" (Hobbes, *Questions* XIV, 188). The equivalence of morality and prudence is even more obvious in Hobbes' discussion of the equality of the grounds for punishment of both humans and animals; neither a punished because they are morally culpable, but in order to protect others from them or to use them as an example for others in the future.
[81] I emphasize the ontological, that is, Hobbes' fundamental materialism, here because Hobbes asserts natural and artificial bodies, namely, natural bodies and the commonwealth, are methodologically "very different from one another" (Hobbes, *De Corpore* I.9).
[82] To say that this distinction is primarily methodological is to say it pertains to distinct modes of knowledge of the causes of these kinds of bodies: "For the causes of the motion of the mind are known, not only by ratiocination, but also by the experience of every man that takes pains to observe those motions within himself" (Hobbes, *De Corpore* VI.7)
[83] See *Leviathan*, where Hobbes explains that incorporeal substance are self-contradictory words (Hobbes, *Leviathan* 12, 77 and 34, 270), the soul is nothing but the principle of the living body, and spirit is corporeal (Ibid. 46, 463).
[84] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 6, 40.
[85] Hobbes, *Questions* XXII, 313.
[86] Bramhall first refers to moral efficacy in *Discourse* 1, 3, but he continues to use it throughout their exchange. For his definition, see *Defense* XI, 108.

and if a beast could speak, unworthy of a beast."[87] In his introduction to *Questions*, Hobbes reduces "the state of the question" between Bramhall and himself "to this, 'Whether there be a moral efficacy which is not natural?'" In Bramhall's usage, "moral" denotes the immaterial, self-determining cause presupposed by the intellectual appetite of Bramhall's "true liberty."[88] To this question, Hobbes states plainly, "I say there is not."[89] Brett does not use the language of moral efficacy, but she does argue on the same presupposition as moral efficacy, namely, that Hobbes's natural liberty is non-corporeal insofar as it is a "juridical" concept. But Hobbes even responds to this more restricted sense of the non-corporeal in his exchange with Bramhall:

> Moral motion is a mere word, without any imagination of the mind correspondent to it. I have heard men talk of a motion in the court of justice; perhaps this is what he means by moral motion. But certainly when the tongue of the judge and the hands of the clerk are thereby moved, the motion is natural and proceeds from natural causes; which also causes were natural motions of the tongue of the advocate.[90]

There is a further difficulty with Brett's account of Hobbes's alleged confusion, a difficulty that leads us to the second moment of relation in the Hobbesian configuration of freedom. When she defines natural liberty as "the natural faculty of doing what one will"[91] she exposes the fact that Hobbes's concept of freedom involves *doing* what one will. But Brett's account of "natural liberty" involves no such performance. For Hobbes, as we have seen, there is no liberty in willing because the will is itself determined by the web of external causes: "The man's will is something, but the liberty of his will is nothing."[92] And so Hobbesian freedom, as we will see more clearly in the discussion of the second moment of relation below, does not lie

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[87] Hobbes *Questions* XI, 113.
[88] Again, for Hobbes "moral" refers to the science of good and evil for human beings. See *Leviathan* 15, 110 and *De Corpore* I.9.
[89] Hobbes, *Questions*, "The state of the question," 4.
[90] Hobbes, *Questions* XX, 293.
[91] Brett, *Liberty, Right, and Nature*, 210.
[92] Hobbes, *Questions* XXXIV, 417.

principally in the will, but in the non-relation of the will to external impediments to action. That is to say, there can be no "faculty of doing what one will," as Brett calls it, without also considering whether there are external causes that impede the performance of the will. The second moment of relationality in the Hobbesian configuration of human freedom, then, is the contest between the will, itself determined by the web of extrinsic causes, and the extrinsic conditions for its enactment.

The Non-Relational Relation

> Liberty is never in any other danger than to be lost.
>
> –Hobbes, *Treatise* 22, 34

In the *Defense of True Liberty from Antecedent and Extrinsicall Necessity*, Bramhall makes the charge of blasphemy explicit. In his address to Newcastle he indicates his purpose to be "against the blasphemous, desperate, and destructive opinion of fatal destiny."[93] Hobbes himself reads the charge of arachnidanism as one of atheism. In response to Bramhall's accusation that Hobbes's "chiefest confidence is in his bees and spiders," Hobbes protests that this passage has been "added against me, whom he would have men think to be one of the boldest-faced atheists of this age."[94] But, as we have already begun to see, there is more to the charge of arachnidan freedom than that of atheism. In refusing to exempt the human being from the natural world of material causes, in claiming that freedom is the same for human and spider, Hobbes affirms the first moment of relation in his concept of freedom. The definition of liberty

[93] In the *Castigations* Bramhall assails absolute necessity as "a degree worse than atheism" (Bramhall, *Castigations*, 250).
[94] Bramhall, *Defense* VIII, 88. Bramhall continues, "…Yes, I have seen those silliest of creatures and seeing their rare works I have seen enough to confute all the boldfaced atheists of this age and their hellish blasphemies"; Hobbes, *Questions* XV, 209.

he gives in the *Treatise*, "the absence of all impediments to action, that are not contained in the nature and intrinsical quality of the agent,"[95] also implies the second, namely, the non-relation of the will to external impediments to action. In the *Defense*, Bramhall condemns Hobbes's liberty as catachrestical because it is negative: "How a real faculty or the elective power should be defined by a negation, or an absence, is past my understanding, and contrary to all the rules of right reason that I have learned."[96] As we have already seen, Hobbes concedes that liberty signifies a negation or absence; but we have yet to see what it means to say that Hobbes has a negative definition of liberty. Many have rightly argued that Hobbes's definition does not neatly map onto the so-called distinction between positive and negative liberty.[97] Indeed, such a distinction is more anachronistic than arachnidan. Beginning from the perspective of relationality, I suggest that we should understand Hobbes' negative liberty as a non-relational relation, that is, an absence of relation between the agent and that which would impede the enactment of its will. On this reading, in order for the agent to be free, we must say that the concourse of external causes both determines the will and, once there is a determinate will, does *not* impede or hinder the enactment of the will. It is the relation between these two extrinsic modes of determination, of what Hobbes identifies as the (extrinsically determined) intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of agency, which elucidates the Hobbesian configuration of freedom.

Throughout their exchange, Hobbes repeatedly, even if scornfully, claims that Bramhall "mistakes the question" between them. Hobbes declares that both he and Bramhall actually agree that human freedom consists in doing what one has a will to do. That is, as we have already seen, Hobbes concedes that the will is essential to human freedom; indeed, he maintains

[95] Hobbes, *Treatise* X, 38.
[96] Bramhall, *Defense* XXIX, 368.
[97] See, for example, Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, Introduction; Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

that freedom and voluntariness are one and the same thing.[98] But as we have also seen, given the web of causes in which the human being is entangled, Hobbes denies the freedom to will: "I acknowledge this liberty, that I can do if I will; but to say I can will if I will, I take to be an absurd speech."[99] What Bramhall continues to mistake until the *Castigations* is that for Hobbes freedom consists in *doing* what one will, that is, that one perform what one will (or not perform what one will to forbear). Throughout the *Castigations* Bramhall repeatedly returns to Hobbes's distinction between the liberty to do if one will and the liberty to will, rejecting it as "a vain distinction."[100] He argues that without freedom to will, freedom *to do* what one will is "silly," going so far as to claim that freedom does not require doing at all.[101] It is worth considering Bramhall's position here because it tells us a lot about Hobbes's own. Bramhall contends that "man is more free to will than to do" because volition is an "inward immediate act of the will" while all other acts of the agent are "external and mediate acts of the will."[102] Because it is "inward" and "immediate" Bramhall, much like Descartes, suggests the liberty of will alone is essential to liberty, while performing the will is merely accidental. In what he considers to be a demonstration of the liberty to will without performance, Bramhall asserts,

> Though a man were thrust into the deepest dungeon of Europe, yet in spite of all the second causes he may will his own liberty. Let the causes heap a conglomeration of diseases upon a man, more than Herod had; yet he may will his own health. Though a man be withheld from his friend by seas and mountains, yet he may will his presence. He that hath not so much as a cracked groat towards the payment of his debts, may yet will the satisfaction of his creditors. And though some of these may seem but pendulous wishes of impossibilities, and not so compatible with a serious deliberation, yet they plainly shew the freedom of the will.[103]

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[98] Hobbes, *Questions* XVI, 226.
[99] Hobbes, *Treatise* 3, 16.
[100] Bramhall, *Castigations*, 284.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Bramhall, *Castigations*, 234.
[103] Bramhall, *Castigations*, 223.

What does Bramhall's claim tell us about the Hobbesian configuration of freedom? First, in opposition to Bramhall, Hobbes's liberty presupposes that one *does* what one will (or not *do* what one will to forbear), not merely that one will. According to Hobbes, to will liberty (or health, the company of a friend, or a debt-free existence) even though external impediments render it impossible is not to employ a vain distinction but to have a vain appetite. As Hobbes states in the explanation of the will cited above, the will "is immediately before *the doing of the action*, or next before *the doing of it* becomes impossible."[104] Hobbes continues by explaining that appetites or aversions that are not performed are better called "intentions or inclinations" because they might subsequently be overcome in the contest of appetites and aversions constitutive of deliberation.[105] Even if Hobbes grants that one can unknowingly deliberate about impossibilities, he denies liberty without effect.[106] For Hobbes, to be free is *to do* what one will. To will what is not done is either to have an ignorant, vain appetite *or* to be deprived of one's liberty, that is, to have performance impeded by external causes. As early as the *Treatise*, Hobbes states, "He that can do what he will hath all liberty possible; and he that cannot, has none at all."[107] This explains Hobbes' argument against Bramhall that liberty is never a matter of degree; one is either free to act or impeded from acting and so "liberty is never in any other danger than to be lost."[108]

Second, again in opposition to Bramhall, we can see that for Hobbes, external causes only constitute impediments when they are hindrances to a determinate will. Hobbes dismisses the Scholastic distinction between the liberty of exercise, the liberty to do or not to do, and the

[104] Hobbes, *Treatise* 27, 37, my italics. See also *Elements* XII.2 and *Leviathan* 6, 44.
[105] See also *Questions* XV, 209 and *Elements* XV and XX on the temporality of deliberation.
[106] I say "unwittingly" because for Hobbes an agent cannot deliberate about known impossibilities, only about impossibilities they do not know are impossibilities. See *Elements* XII.2 and *Leviathan* 6, 44.
[107] Hobbes, *Treatise* 19, 31.
[108] Hobbes, *Treatise* 22, 34.

liberty of specification, the liberty to do this or that in particular, as "terms invented by I know not whom to cover ignorance and blind the understanding of the reader." [109] In keeping with his nominalism, for Hobbes all liberty is particular, or involves the determinate appetite to do a determinate act: "Is it possible to conceive that he that willith can will anything but this or that thing…For universal actions there be none."[110] It follows that all impediments to volition must also be particular, or a determinate hindrance to a determinate appetite. In reply to Bramhall's objection that because they extrinsically determine the agent, the web of causes undermines Hobbes's own definition of freedom, Hobbes clarifies,

> 'Impediment' or 'hinderence' signifies an opposition to endeavor. And therefore if a man be necessitated by extrinsical causes not to endeavor an action, those causes do not oppose his endeavor to it, *because he has no such endeavor to be opposed*. And consequently extriniscal causes that take away endeavor are not to be called endeavor; *nor can any man be said to be hindered from doing that, which he had no purpose at all to do.*[111]

As one example in their exchange has it, a man that has not willed to play tennis cannot be said to want liberty to play tennis if the doors to the court are locked. Hobbes explains, "it is no impediment to him that the door is shut, till he have a will to play."[112]

Third, and again in opposition to Bramhall's position, the Hobbesian configuration of freedom presupposes the power of the agent to enact the will, but does not consist in such

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[109] Hobbes, *Treatise* 19, 31.
[110] Hobbes, *Questions* XXX, 378. See also *Questions* XII, 142.
[111] Hobbes, *Questions* XXV, 352, my italics.
[112] Ibid. What in *De Cive* – and only in *De Cive* – Hobbes calls "arbitrary impediments," those that "hinder motion by accident, to wit, by our own choice," might fall into this category (*De Cive* IX.9). To be sure *arbitrary* impediment is a self-contradictory concept if freedom is to do what *one will*, and Hobbes himself explicitly contradicts it when he claims that fear is consistent with liberty in the same text (*De Cive* XV.13). But if we examine the sole example that Hobbes gives of an arbitrary impediment, "he that is in a ship is not so hindered, but he may cast himself in the sea, if he will" we can see that Hobbes is actually giving us an example of a non-determinate will. That there is an absence of impediments to throwing himself into the sea is simply not relevant unless he actually will to throw himself into the sea. The relevant impediment would be to the actual or determinate will not to throw himself into the sea, through fear or coercion, no doubt. Skinner takes the notion of an arbitrary impediment to be "completely new terrain" from what Hobbes wrote in *Elements* and something Hobbes ultimately had to change in *Leviathan*. Given this analysis, I simply cannot agree.

power: "It is one thing to say that a man hath liberty to do what he will, and another thing to say he hath power to do what he will. A man that is bound would say readily that he hath not the liberty to walk; but he will not say he wants the power. But the sick man will say he wants the power to walk, but not the liberty."[113] For Hobbes, to say that something is in the power of the agent is to say that the agent has been extrinsically determined to have the accidents that can produce the effect(s) in question. Indeed, for Hobbes, power and act are one and the same except for temporal perspective: "For to act, to work, to produce, are the same thing with to be doing…for act and power differ in nothing but this, that the former signifieth the time present and the latter the time to come."[114] These accidents, as we have seen above, are themselves determined by external causes, but they constitute what Hobbes calls "the intrinsical quality of the agent" insofar as the last accident or appetite itself constitutes the determinate will of the agent. If the agent does not have the power to perform the will, if the agent has not been extrinsically determined to have "the [natural] and instrinsicall quality" to will, the question of freedom does not arise. Hobbesian freedom therefore consists essentially in the relation of the agent with extrinsic conditions, specifically, the non-relational relation of the will to external impediments to performance. One is only able to enact the will, and so one is only free, when one is *not* hindered or impeded by external causes. In sum, the debate with Bramhall over "the

[113] Hobbes, *Questions* XIX, 265. This is consistent with Hobbes's definition of liberty in *Leviathan* 14. Hobbes subsequently clarifies this, explaining "when the impediment of motion is in the constitution of the thing itself, we use not to say it wants the liberty, but the power to move" (Hobbes, *Leviathan* 21, 136).

[114] Hobbes, *Questions* XXXII, 389. See also *De Corpore*, X.1. Benn argues that this actualist position, the identification of power and act, is incompatible with Hobbes's accounts of power in the debate with Bramhall and the *Leviathan*. He claims "shifts are required because the analysis of the concept offered in *De Corpore* would make it unfit for the work it has to do in contexts concerned with voluntary action and interpersonal relations" (S.I. Benn, "Hobbes on Power," *Hobbes and Rousseau*, eds. Maurice Cranston and R. Peters (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1972), 207). But Benn's analysis does not adequately heed the temporal or epistemological qualifications involved in Hobbes's accounts in these different texts.

power to do what one will" shows that the Hobbesian configuration of freedom presupposes a determinate will, itself determined by its relation to the web of causes, which is performed because of the non-relational relation of the determinate will to the web of causes. Hobbes's negative concept of human liberty lies in this double external determination of the human being.

What does this second moment of (non-)relation indicate about the Hobbesian configuration of freedom? It indicates that for Hobbes freedom lies principally in the enactment of the will, that is, in the non-relation of the determinate will to external impediments, not in the deliberation that precedes the determinate will. Much has been made of Hobbes's etymological error in the *Elements* that deliberation comes from *de-liberare* and "signifieth the taking away of our own liberty."[115] In his debate with Bramhall, Hobbes himself proclaims, "of a voluntary agent it is all one to say he is free and to say he has not made an end of deliberating."[116] Such phrasing suggests to many commentators that Hobbes conceives of liberty as the power of the agent prior to performance of the will and so independent of the (non-)relation to external impediments to such performance. Following Brett's work, Pettit, for example, argues that Hobbes has "two quite different categories of freedom": freedom of non-commitment, "one's freedom to choose between certain alternatives, uncommitted by certain decision or obligation," and freedom of non-obstruction, "the freedom to enact the choice one has made in any instance."[117] He argues these are mutually exclusive, even "deeply contrasted"[118] concepts of

[115] Hobbes, *Elements* XII.1. Skinner sees this as grounds for his claim that Hobbes radically changed his concept of liberty over time, while both Brett and Pettit argue it demonstrates that Hobbes has two, even if confused, concepts of liberty.
[116] Hobbes, *Treatise* 28, 38.
[117] Pettit, "Liberty and Leviathan," 133. In his earlier *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government*, Pettit recognizes the significance of what I call the non-relational relation constitutive of the Hobbesian configuration of freedom. There Pettit makes the historical argument that Hobbes is the first to develop the concept of liberty as non-interference, according to which governmental authority infringes on liberty if and only if it is exercised, that is, as I have been arguing, it actually impedes a determinate will.

freedom that Hobbes consistently holds throughout his work. But the exchange with Bramhall tells us otherwise. Pettit's freedom of non-commitment sounds suspiciously like Bramhall's freedom to will without performance.[119]

I have tried to show that Hobbes does not distinguish between the freedom to do what one will and the freedom to will only because he denies the freedom to will, but also because for Hobbes performance is constitutive of freedom. In the *Defense* Bramhall refers to Hobbes's own words, claiming "On T.H.'s confession here he is more free whilst he deliberates than after,"[120] interpreting this to mean freedom consists in deliberation itself. But Hobbes denounces such an interpretation of his words as "jargon," "nonsense," and "unintelligible."[121] When Hobbes claims that one is more free in deliberation than after deliberation, we cannot take this to mean there is freedom in deliberation itself, but that at the end of deliberation, in the performance of the will, one is no longer free with regard to the determinate will performed. Hobbes's phrasing is no doubt "misleading" at times, but his position is clearer in the

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[118] Ibid, 140.

[119] Pettit himself admits that freedom as non-commitment "would not be a particularly interesting category" if it were only the freedom to choose that which will not be done (Pettit, "Liberty and Leviathan," 134). But the category does a lot of work in his explanation of Hobbes's contested concept of obligation. Pettit argues that freedom of non-obligation is simply a species of freedom as non-commitment. For Hobbes, "obligation begins where freedom ends" because one has transferred one's will to the one to whom they are obligated. According to Pettit transferring one's will is just a special case of losing one's freedom of non-commitment because one wills commitment (or in Hobbes's terms, subjection) to the will of another. But there is another way of understanding the loss of freedom involved in obligation, one consistent with freedom of non-obstruction and the relational account of Hobbesian freedom I've developed so far. Hobbes makes clear that the "transfer" of the will is a form of renunciation, divestiture, or defect (Hobbes, *Leviathan* 14, 92). If to be free is to do what one has a will to do, to obligate oneself is simply to renounce one's *will* to do. Even though he has a problematically moral understanding of the will, even Pennock understands obligation in a similar way: "Since, according to Hobbes, all obligations are self-imposed, this element of the definition [of liberty] is not so much an addition to the notion of 'external impediments' as an elaboration on what is implied by the term will in the definition" (Pennock, "Hobbes' Confusing Clarity," 107). In other words, to be obligated to another is to will that one's will is *not* relevant to particular actions or, as Brett has put it, "self-deliberation to end self-deliberation." (Brett, *Liberty, Right and Nature*, 228).

[120] Bramhall, *Defense* XXVIII, 364.

[121] Hobbes, *Questions* XXVIII, 365-367.

formulation in *Leviathan*, where he claims "of things past, there is no *Deliberation*; because manifestly impossible to be changed; [122] nor of things known to be impossible, or thought so; because men know or think such Deliberation vain."[123] Just as one is not free to do what is impossible, for this is merely a vain appetite, so one is no longer free to do or omit an action that is already done.[124] In his explanation to Bramhall, Hobbes again points to the non-relational relation of the determinate will to impediments: "There are no impediments but to the action, whilst we are endeavoring to do it, which is not till we have *done* deliberating."[125] On this analysis we see that Hobbes does not have two different concepts of freedom; rather, what Pettit takes to be two concepts are actually just two aspects of the double relation involved in Hobbes's negative concept of freedom.

The title of the Second Chapter of *Catching of Leviathan*, that to which Hobbes did not reply, is "the Hobbian principles do destroy all relations between man and man, and the whole frame of a Commonwealth." In the following Section we will see that this title is not merely Bramhall's infamous, even if entertaining, vitriol. Hobbesian sociality, the relation of human being to human being, is grounded in a mortal fragility, a fundamental susceptibility to death that renders human beings equal, but equally fierce and fearsome to each other. The contest of appetites and aversions internal to a body becomes, as is well known, the external contest between bodies in what Hobbes calls "the war of all against all," a contest that renders direct human community impossible. This fragile yet fearsome relation, manifest in the "meer brutall

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[122] See Vere Chappell,"Determinism and Human Freedom" in *Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* Vol II, ed. Daniel Garber and Michal Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1223.
[123] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 6, 44.
[124] Even Gauthier, who considers Hobbes to have a confused concept of liberty in other regards, sees this as a consistent reading: "Deliberation terminates in action. But when we act, we are no longer at liberty or not to act" (Gauthier, *Logic of Leviathan*, 64).
[125] Hobbes, *Questions* XXVIII, 367, my italics.

Rapacity" of humans in their relation to each other, is what I call the lupine sociality of Hobbes' philosophy.[126]

Section 2. Hobbes's Lupine Sociality

> The Power of Earthly Princes he doth foolishly pretend
> By his fictitious Loyalty t' extend
> To larger measures; gives to Kings what's due to God alone:
> Thus what he seems to make more great, he really makes none:
> For sure on Earth there is No Monarchy,
> If it consist in ABSOLUTE Sovereignty.
> The King of Kings commands us to obey our King,
> By chearful Doing, or by quiet Suffering:
> He that the Power of Kings would have much higher to arise,
> His King Dishonours, and his GOD he doth Despise:
> Such Folk dwell in those Colonies,
> Which Hobbes has planted in his Lands of New Philosophies.
>
> –Abraham, "To Mr. Hobbes"

> Men (who naturally love Liberty, and Dominion over others)…
>
> –Hobbes, from the opening lines of Part II of *Leviathan*, entitled "Of Common-wealth."[127]

For Abraham Cowley – as for many of Hobbes's contemporary and subsequent critics – Hobbes's defense of absolute sovereignty is an offense to the "King of Kings," yet another monstrous impiety in his heretical philosophical doctrine. Bramhall too includes absolute sovereignty among "Mr. Hobbes his errors in theology and policy,"[128] but from the beginning of their debate Bramhall also condemns the social implications of Hobbes's doctrine on free will, arguing, "this very persuasion that there is no true liberty is able to overthrow all the societies and commonwealths in the world."[129] Bramhall maintains that if actions are done necessarily, then no society can justly command obedience to or punish those who transgress the law. He

[126] Hobbes, *De Cive*, Preface to the Reader.
[127] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 17, 117.
[128] Bramhall, *Catching*, 513.
[129] Bramhall, *Defense* 14, 4.

further protests, against the doctrine of the state of nature, that human beings have never existed without society, arguing that Hobbes's concept of liberty and the right of nature is destructive of "all relations between man and man."[130] In this Section I will examine the connection between the Hobbesian configuration of freedom and the "relations between man and man" in Hobbes's own image of the arrant wolf.

In the Epistle Dedicatory of *De Cive*, published in anticipation of the outbreak of civil war in England, Hobbes proclaims, "To speak impartially, both sayings are very true; That *Man to Man is a kind of God*; and that *Man to Man is an arrant Wolfe*. The first is true, if we compare Citizens amongst themselves; and the second, if we compare Cities."[131] Here Hobbes invokes the words of the Roman Censor, Marcus Porcius Cato. In *De Cive* Hobbes himself plays something of the English Censor. Just as it is the Censor's responsibility, in the words of Cicero, "to guide the behavior of the people,"[132] so Hobbes claims it is the purpose of *De Cive* to demonstrate "the duties of men, First as Men, then as Subjects, Lastly, as Christians."[133] In the images of god and wolf Hobbes presents a disjunctive account of sociality. These exhaustive and mutually exclusive social possibilities are indexed directly to the body politic. In the commonwealth, when men are citizens, sociality is indivisible, irrevocable, and absolute, that is, divine. Outside of the commonwealth, when each man is a city unto himself, sociality is fierce and fearsome, lupine. But at the foundation of this distinction lies what Hobbes simply calls men "as Men," or the human nature which menaces all relations of "Man to Man."

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[130] Ibid.
[131] Hobbes, *De Cive*, Dedicatory Letter.
[132] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Legibus* III.iii.7, ed. and trans. Georges de Plinval, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2007.01.0030%3Abook%3D3%3Asection%3D7, (accessed September 1, 2017).
[133] Ibid.

Instead of reading Hobbesian sociality as a process through which the lupine state of nature is overcome or obviated by a civil society instituted through "that Mortall God," the sovereign, in this Section I propose to read the Hobbesian sociality, or the relation between human beings, that persists through all Hobbes' philosophy. In what follows we will see that the Hobbesian configuration of freedom bears directly on Hobbes's image of sociality. For Hobbes liberty is socially onerous. The condition of "mere nature" is that in which human beings have "a most entire but unfruitfull liberty; because that he who by reason of his own liberty acts all at his own will, must also by reason of the same liberty in others, suffer al at anothers wil."[134] That is to ay, in the state of nature sociality is a non-relational relation. Human beings are free only insofar as other human beings do not impede them or destroy them through the ultimate impediment, death. The mortal fragility that grounds human equality is, according to Hobbes, also the impetus for a divine human society, in which "Man is a God to Man." But in the commonwealth sociality also manifests itself as a non-relational relation. Human beings are only capable of commonwealth insofar as there is no mutual commonality. Their fear of each other becomes awe of the sovereign, who is not part of the social covenant; their freedom is only exercised in acts not prohibited by the will of the sovereign, those "Spider's webs," the laws.[135] Rather than the disjunctive sociality he pretends, then, Hobbes presents a lupine sociality through and through. It is always "distrust and dread," "deceit and violence" that dictates sociality; human freedom is necessarily "solitary." The wolf prowls the borders of the city, ready to dismember and devour the political body from without. And within the borders,

[134] Hobbes, *De Cive* X.1
[135] Hobbes, *Discourse Upon the Beginnings of Tacitus* in *Three Discourses*: *A Critical Modern Edition of Newly Identified Work of the Young Hobbes*, eds. Noel Reynolds and Arleen Saxonhouse (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 49. See also *Leviathan* 27, 204.

roaming "the close, darke, and dangerous by-paths of faction and sedition"[136] is the menace of that werewolf, civil war. It is the non-relational relation of sociality, this lupine sociality, which produces both the "poor, nasty, brutish and short life" of the individual in the state of nature and the anti-social sociability of life under the State. [137]

The State of Nature: Eminence, Diffidence, Death

> The greatest part of those men who have written ought concerning commonwealths either suppose or require us, or beg us to believe, that Man is a Creature born fit for society.
>
> – Hobbes, *De Cive* I. 2

Hobbes begins his first published political treatise by claiming, "The true and perspicuous explication of the Elements of Laws, Natural and Politic, which is my present scope, dependeth upon the knowledge of what is human nature."[138] This is a position that Hobbes maintains consistently throughout his work. Whether known synthetically or analytically, by demonstration or by experience, in *De Corpore* Hobbes still asserts, "for the knowledge of the properties of a commonwealth it is necessary first to know the dispositions, affections, and manners of men."[139] I suggest that the real foundation of Hobbesian society is the sociality implicit in Hobbes's concept of human nature. As we saw in Section 1, the human being, like all corporeal beings, is always in relation to others beings, including other human

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[136] Hobbes, *De Cive* Preface.

[137] I say anti-social sociability to distinguish it from what Kant calls unsociable sociability, "the tendency to come together in society, coupled, however with a continual resistance which consistently threatens to break this society up" (Immanuel Kant, *Idea for a Universal History*, *Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 44. Kant understands this unsociable sociability to be a productive antagonism that engenders progress. As we will see in this and the following chapter, Hobbes's anti-social sociality is productive only of alienation.

[138] Hobbes, *Elements* I.1.

[139] Hobbes *De Corpore* I.9. For Hobbes's discussion of the synthetic and analytic methods, or knowledge of human nature by deductive ratiocination and experience, see *De Corpore* VI.7.

beings. No human being is exempted from the chains of necessity that constitute the material world – and these chains are also intersubjective.[140] In his exchange with Bramhall, Hobbes concedes, "It may well be true there never was a time in which mankind was totally without society."[141] But perhaps more importantly, Hobbes's materialist metaphysics does not admit of a state in which human beings are without sociality, that is, are not constituted in and through their relation to other human beings. We have already seen, for Hobbes, all thought has its origin in relation to an outside, and he further argues that both the guided and unguided "trayne of thoughts" are informed by encounters with other humans. As Birmigham argues, "The moving body in the state of nature persists in alterity. In other words, the individual moving body…is from the outset a body in relation to and exposed to the movements and views of others."[142] Indeed, speech, which is the mark of the human being, and by which human beings do not merely mark, but also signify their thoughts, is for Hobbes fundamentally intersubjective. This power that distinguishes the human from other thinking bodies, also signifies that humans are essentially related to other humans: "The first use of language is the expression of our conceptions, that is, the begetting in another the same conceptions we have in ourselves."[143] As Frost has noted, for Hobbes, "thoughts and desires are constituted and reconstituted intersubjectively and in relation to the material environment…In his analysis, the patterns of our

[140] I use the term "intersubjective" as a synonym for social; it specifies the relation between human beings. We have seen that contrary to the Cartesian configuration of freedom, the Hobbesian individual is not the subject of its subjection, but is subjected to the causes that determine its will, among which are other human beings. In this section we will see that insofar as other human beings are also possible impediments to the will, they constitute a threat to freedom, rendering freedom and sociality mutually exclusive for Hobbes.
[141] Hobbes, *Questions* XIV, 183.
[142] Peg Birmingham, "Arendt and Hobbes: Glory, Sacrificial Violence, and The Political Imagination," *Research in Phenomenology* 41 (2011), 5. Birmingham argues that taking fear as the foundation of the modern state, an interpretation inaugurated by Strauss and Schmidt's readings of Hobbes's and continuous through Foucault's analysis of sovereign power, fails to countenance the fundamental role of honor in the formation of the modern political subject. As will become evident in my analysis below, I agree that the desire for honor plays an essential role in Hobbes's political philosophy.
[143] Hobbes, *Elements* XV.3

reasoning and desire and our very capacity to act are such that we must speak of action and interaction in terms of our interdependence."[144] How, then, can the human being be "solitary" in any condition, as Hobbes claims of the so-called state of nature? I suggest that the lupine sociality implied by Hobbes's concept of human nature institutes the fierce, fearsome, and solitary condition of the state of nature, as seen in the determinate mode of non-relational relation that Hobbes claims to exist between humans in "mere nature."

Given his methodological claims about human nature, it must be said that the foundation of Hobbesian society is not arachnidan, but anthropological. Even if for Hobbes there is no difference in ontological kind between humans and spiders, Hobbes does claim there is a difference in power. As he tells Bramhall, "The truth is, that man is a creature of greater power than other living creatures are."[145] As already indicated, the difference lies in the human use of language to achieve desired ends: "setting aside the discourse of the tongue in words of general signification, the ideas of our minds are the same with those of other living creatures."[146] Speech, specifically the use of universal and communicable terms, enables humans not only to think from effects to causes, as animals also do, but also to reason from causes to possible effects, "that is to say, we imagine what we can do with it, when we have it."[147] Indeed, because speech signifies the will, Hobbes claims that without speech, "there had been amongst men neither Commonwealth, nor society, nor contract, nor peace, no more than amongst lions, bears,

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[144] Frost, *Lessons*, 7.
[145] Hobbes, *Questions* XIV, 186. It is important to note that for Hobbes speech is not a distinct natural faculty, but upon being acquired through industry, allows for the increase in the efficacy of the faculties. This is a difference in degree, not in kind.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 3, 21. This prudential use of speech, which Hobbes calls sagacity or "the faculty of invention," is connected to but distinct from the use of universal names to reason synthetically from causes to necessary effects, or the compositive method of science (Cf. Ch. 6 of *De Corpore*).

and wolves."[148] But that which is supposed to raise human beings above wolves also makes social agreement among human beings more difficult than that of political animals. Though potentially a wolf or god, and even, in its freedom, a spider, the Hobbesian human being is not a bee, ant, or other "political animal" in the Aristotelian sense. In *Elements of Law*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan* Hobbes enumerates no less than six reasons for the distinction between human and hymenopteran sociality.[149] In addition to the absurdities engendered by speech, "to which no living creature is subject, but man onely," Hobbes argues that speech is used to invert and amplify good and evil, and so to foment sedition and instigate rebellion.[150]

In the discussion of the distinction between human and political animal, Hobbes's relational conception of human nature comes to the fore. The first reason that Hobbes enumerates for this distinction is that among bees and ants there is "no question of precedence,"[151] while "men are continually in competition for Honour and Dignity."[152] Here we see the relationality, the sociality, that is the foundation of Hobbes's account of human nature. According to Hobbes the natural powers of the human being are corporeal strength, experience, reason, and passion.[153] But these natural powers are not powerful in themselves; they constitute powers only insofar as they are more powerful than those of other human beings. As Macpherson rightly says, for Hobbes "a man's power is not an absolute but a comparative quantity."[154] In the *Elements of Law* Hobbes asserts, "power simply is no more, but the excess of the power of one above that of another," while in *Leviathan* he defines natural power as "the

[148] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 4, 24.
[149] See Hobbes, *Elements* XIX.5, *De Cive* V.5, and *Leviathan* 17.
[150] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 5, 34.
[151] Hobbes, Elements XIX.5
[152] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 17, 119.
[153] See Hobbes, *Elements* XIV.1 and *De Cive* I.1.
[154] Macpherson, *Possessive Individualism*, 35.

eminence of the Faculties of Body, or Mind."[155] The Hobbesian human being can only perceive and take pleasure in its own power in relation to the power of other human beings. As Hobbes says, "Man, whose Joy consisteth in comparing himselfe with other men, can relish nothing but what is eminent."[156] Given the affective dimension of this self-perception, one's experience of one's own power readily becomes Vain-glory, a joy that arises from the flattery or weakness of others, "by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves."[157] This relational conception of natural power leads Hobbes to conclude that, "Vertue generally, in all sorts of subjects, is something what is valued for eminence; and consisteth in comparison."[158] The *Summum Bonum* of human nature, then, is not, as the Schoolmen have it, tranquility, but "being foremost."[159]

It is worth noting that Part I of *De Cive*, in which Hobbes gives his account of human beings "as Men," or in the condition of "mere nature," is entitled *Liberty*. In *De Cive* and *Leviathan* Hobbes refers to the state of nature as the condition of "absolute liberty"[160] but he also always explains that it is an "unfruitful liberty." As we saw in Section 1 of this Chapter, for Hobbes liberty that is unfruitful, in the sense of not being enacted, is no liberty at all. Thus liberty in the state of nature cannot be said to be unconditionally unconditioned, but is, I suggest, conditioned by lupine sociality. As Hobbes says, human beings "naturally love Liberty, and Dominion over others."[161] Indeed, for Hobbes it is because human beings love liberty that they love dominion over others. Given Hobbes's account of power as eminence, humans experience other humans as a potential impediment to their will to eminence. The Hobbesian

[155] Hobbes, *Elements* VIII.4; *Leviathan* 10, 62.
[156] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 17, 119.
[157] Ibid., 6, 43.
[158] Ibid., 8, 50.
[159] Hobbes, *Elements* IX.21 See also *Leviathan* 6 and 11.
[160] Hobbes, *De Cive* XV.1. See also *Leviathan* 21.
[161] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 17, 117.

human being must constantly pursue and assert power in order to maintain power: "The cause whereof is, That the object of mans desire, is not to enjoy once onely, and for one instant of time; but to assure for ever, the way of his future desire…he cannot assure the power and the means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more."[162] Desire is rapacious, yet the Hobbesian human being can never secure desire. Humans do not "*spontaneously* desire infinitely,"[163] as Strauss suggests; rather, they desire to secure that which is essentially insecure because of their relation to other human beings. This means there is a fundamentally lupine mode of sociality, one of deceit and violence, diffidence, and dread.

This fundamental insecurity is structural to power as eminence, insofar as eminence is relational and unstable, but it is intensified by temporal and intersubjective ignorance. The same "power" that makes humans the eminent species, that of conceiving possible effects from given causes, also leaves human beings in a condition of uncertainty. Because one must "assure for ever, the way of his future desire," one must "care for"[164] the time to come in order to secure that which is. And yet one cannot know what is to come. The future, Hobbes explains, is a mere presumption; it has "no being at all."[165] As Bray has rightly noted, "reason reveals the future to be indeterminate and yet demands that it be determined and ordered."[166] Ignorance of future time therefore "make Anxiety," such that "man…hath his heart all the day long, gnawed on by feare of death, poverty, or other calamity."[167] This temporal uncertainty is compounded by the ignorance of others' wills, what Bray calls "social indeterminacy."[168] One must want to know but cannot know what others want. The appetite for social eminence engenders social aversion

[162] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 11, 70.
[163] Strauss, *Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 9.
[164] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 12, 76.
[165] Hobbes *Leviathan* 3, 22.
[166] Michael Bray, "The Hedges that are Set: Hobbes and the Future of Politics," *Epoche* 11 (2006), 175.
[167] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 12, 76.
[168] Bray, "The Hedges," 185.

because, Hobbes explains, "Aversion wee have for things, not onely which we know have hurt us; but that we do not know whether they will hurt us or not."[169] In *De Cive*, Hobbes argues that the mutually diffident sociality he posits as a first principle is "by experience known to all men, and denied by none."[170] This principle, he clarifies, does not imply that human beings are "evill by nature." Rather, he suggests, the intersubjective ignorance endemic to human nature, evidenced as much in the border wall as the locked door, necessitates lupine sociality: "though the wicked were fewer than the righteous, yet because we cannot distinguish them, there is a necessity of suspecting, heeding, anticipating, selfe-defending, ever incident to the most honest and fairest condition'd."[171] That is to say, for Hobbes it is human nature to distrust human nature. Hobbes's claim that "Vertue generally" lies in eminence is entirely consistent with – or rather entails – his claim that "The sum of virtue is to be sociable to them that will be sociable, and formidable to them that will not."[172]

Because power is eminence there can be no social equilibrium. To be equal is to be an enemy: "each man is an enemy to that other whom he neither obeys nor commands."[173] Not only do others threaten to impede one's will, leading to universal diffidence, but others also threaten the greatest of all impediments, death. There is no social equilibrium for Hobbes, but – or because – there is a social equality grounded in each human being's susceptibility to "chiefly the chiefest of naturall evills, which is Death."[174] Immediately after his exposition of human power, Hobbes exposes human impotence before other humans: "In this chapter it will be expedient to consider in what estate of security this our nature has placed us…against the

[169] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 6, 39.
[170] Hobbes, *De Cive* Preface
[171] Ibid.
[172] Hobbes, *Elements* XVII.15.
[173] Hobbes, *De Cive* IX.3.
[174] Hobbes, *De Cive* I. 2.

violence of one another."[175] Hobbes concludes an equality of human powers grounded in the equal powerlessness of humans before death: "they are equals who can do equall things against each other; but they who can do the greatest things, (namely kill) can doe equall things."[176] No matter one's natural eminence or the alliances one makes to collectively, even if only fleetingly, establish eminence, each human being is equally vulnerable to death. The state of nature, which is the state of equality and "absolute" freedom among human beings, is for Hobbes the state of mortal fragility. With mutual aid comes mutual fear, with equality, the war of all against all.[177] In the state of nature, the relationality constitutive of human nature is also the non-relational relation of a sociality in which humans experience each other only as impediments. Upon exposing the lupine sociality by which "every man will distrust and dread each other"[178] as an impediment to freedom or as the ultimate impediment, death, we must conclude that the state of nature is "absolute liberty" only in the determinate sense that the individual is not limited by the determinate will to institute a common good dictated and enforced by law.

[175] Hobbes, *Elements* XIV.2
[176] Hobbes, *De Cive*, I.3. See also *Leviathan* 13, 86-87.
[177] "This estate of man, therefore, wherein all men are equal, and every man allowed to be his own judge, the fears they have of one another are equal….this safety and commodity [that comes with laws of nature] consisteth in the mutual aid and help of one another, whereby all followeth the mutual fear of one another" (Hobbes, *Elements* XIX.1); "the state of equality is the state of warre, and that therefore inequality was introduced by a general consent" (Hobbes, *De Cive* X.4).
[178] Hobbes, *De Cive* Preface.

The State: The Commonwealth that is not in Common

> Again, men have no pleasure, (but on the contrary a great deale of grief) in keeping company, where there is no power able to over-awe them all.
>
> – Hobbes, *Leviathan* 13

Hobbes contends, "*In the first place*, I put a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of Power after Power, that ceaseth onely in Death."[179] But he further contends that death is the power that causes the desire to overcome the restlessness and rapacity of desire. As Malcolm has put it, "only one desire can have any sort of priority over all other desires, namely the desire to avoid death."[180] The fear of death is the passionate catalyst for reason's discovery of the laws of nature and, because the laws of nature are contrary to some of the passions and "but words," the fear of death leads to the institution of a power that channels all fear into awe. According to Hobbes, the only "possibility to come out of" the state of mutual diffidence and fear is through the common fear of the sovereign.[181] Hobbes makes it clear that society is inaugurated through lupine sociality: "We must therefore resolve that the Originall of all great, and lasting Societies, consisted not in the mutual good will men have towards each other, but in the mutual fear they had of each other."[182] But as we will see this lupine sociality menaces Hobbesian society as well. Even in the State, "the relations between man and man" are non-relational relations determined by fear of violence.

When distinguishing human beings from political animals, Hobbes explains that hymenopteran accord cannot be threatened by discord because the common good of bees and ants is not distinct from their private goods. Unlike bees and ants, discord always threatens

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[179] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 11, 70, my italics.
[180] Malcolm, "Hobbes and Spinoza," 32.
[181] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 13, 90.
[182] Hobbes, *De Cive* I.2.

humans because they have no "common rule of Good and Evill."[183] Each human being calls the object of appetite good and the object of aversion evil, and, as we have already seen, the necessary conflict of appetites renders humans mutually odious. Even if, as Hobbes suggests, "all men agree on this, that Peace is good,"[184] Hobbes also contends that, given the mutual diffidence and fear endemic to human nature, it is "impossible" that mutual agreement should endure.[185] That is to say, unlike bees and ants, human beings require "somewhat else" than agreement amongst themselves in order to exist in common.

The "somewhat else," Hobbes explains, is "some mutual and common fear to rule them."[186] In distinguishing political animals from humans, Hobbes indicates that the common in the commonwealth does not consist in the object of the will, some common good toward which the multitude of wills direct their actions, but in the unity of the will itself: "the government [of ants and bees] is onely a consent, or many wills concurring in one object, not (as is necessary in civill government) one will."[187] Though perhaps not made in the image of God, it is through the will that "Man" is supposed to become "a god to Man." But Hobbes's society is not polytheistic. The commonwealth does not consist in the mutual agreement of the multitude because, as Hobbes explains, "unity cannot…be understood in multitude."[188] The multitude of wills only finds unity in the one will of the "Mortall God," the sovereign. Hobbesian sociality makes Hobbes a monotheist of society: "The only way to erect…a common power… is to

[183] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 6, 39. See also *Elements* XIV.5
[184] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 15, 110.
[185] Hobbes, *Elements* XIX.4. See also *Elements* XIX.6
[186] Ibid.
[187] *De Cive* V.5.
[188] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 16, 114.

confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will."[189]

In keeping with the Hobbesian configuration of freedom, subjects of the commonwealth are only related to each other through a non-relation, that is, through their relation to an awesome, transcendent power. Hobbes explains that mutual covenants are of "none effect" without power "coercive over" those party to them.[190] Thus mutual fear and diffidence become common awe at the coercive power of the sovereign: "he to whom they have submitted have so much power, *as by terrour of it* hee can conforme the wills of particular men unto unity, and concord."[191] The covenant is the unification of wills through the centralization of fear. Beyond the unity of his will, the sovereign alone holds the sword. Where there is no sword, or "force sufficient to compelle performance," covenants are "voyd."[192] But the sovereign is awesome only insofar as the sovereign is "over" the covenant. Hobbes argues the power of the sovereign is absolute because it is outside of the covenant: "Because the Right of bearing the Person of them all, is given to him they make Sovereign, by Covenant onely of one to another, and not of him to any of them; there can happen no breach of Covenant on the part of the Sovereign."[193] All covenant to transfer their right to the sovereign and this covenant is effective because the sovereign is not party to the covenant.[194] Thus the sword, the monopoly on violence manifest in the sovereign's right of punishment, is "left to him, and to him only."[195] The mutual covenant is therefore conditioned on the non-mutual covenant with the sovereign.

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[189] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 17, 120.
[190] Hobbes, *Elements* XV.10.
[191] Hobbes, *De Cive* V.8, my italics.
[192] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 14, 96.
[193] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 17, 122.
[194] Hobbes, *De Cive* VI.20.
[195] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 28, 214.

Hobbes claims that in the commonwealth "the liberty of nature is abridged."[196] Above I argued that even the "absolute" liberty of the state of nature is conditioned by lupine sociality; others are perceived as impediments, and the ultimate impediment, to liberty. But a further abridgement of liberty does occur in the institution of the commonwealth. In the covenant all "transfer" their will to the sovereign, but Hobbes recognizes that this so-called transfer is in fact a mode of renunciation, a will to not will. As with all volition, this renunciation is determinate: one wills not to be an impediment to the will of the sovereign, expressed in the civil laws, which "set forth and make known the common measure."[197] One authorizes but is not the agent of this common measure. Indeed, the authorization is the relinquishment of agency under the law. Hobbes explains, "Because it is impossible for any man to transfer his own strength to another, or for that other to receive it, to transfer a man's power and strength, is no more but to lay by or relinquish his own right of resisting him to whom he so transferreth it."[198] Hobbes consistently frames the social contract as a covenant of non-resistance, as the will to non-impediment to the State. Despite Hobbes's rhetorical description of laws as "Artificall Chains" and "Bonds,"[199] the laws are not an obstruction to the will of the subject; rather, in relinquishment, the subject wills not to be an obstruction to the will of the sovereign. In this sense, Hobbes's covenant is what Hampton rightly deems an "alienation" contract theory. To be a subject of the sovereign is "only to standeth out of his way."[200]

If the will of the sovereign is supposed to be what is common in the commonwealth, then for Hobbes freedom and sociality are as mutually exclusive in the commonwealth as they are in the state of nature. Liberty in the commonwealth, like the liberty that institutes the

[196] Hobbes, *Elements* XXIX.10.
[197] Hobbes, *Elements* XX.10
[198] Hobbes, *Elements* XIX.10.
[199] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 21, 147.
[200] Ibid. 14, 92.

commonwealth, is negative or, as Hobbes himself puts it, an "exemption."[201] One *is* free where one is *not* bound by the commonwealth. This freedom as freedom-from the State has two forms. It is "manifest," according to Hobbes, that subjects have liberty to do that which, as the grounds of the transfer, cannot be transferred and to do that about which the law is silent.[202] Hobbes is clear that laws are "in their own nature but weak" and so are effective not by the difficulty, but by "the danger," of breaking them. [203] In referring to laws as "Cob-web[s],"[204] Hobbes emphasizes how weak they are without the coercive power of the sovereign, the centralization of the fear of violence. But, as indicated in his exchange with Bramhall, Hobbes is also emphasizing that laws themselves are part of the web of necessary causes. The fragility of law in society is the result of the fragility of sociality, namely, the temporal and intersubjective ignorance of the human condition. As Hobbes tells Bramhall, "a man cannot determine to-day, that which he shall have to the doing of any action to-morrow, as that it may not be changed by some external accident or other, as there appear more or less advantage to make him persevere in the will to the same action, or to will it no more."[205] The coercive power of the sovereign therefore functions to strengthen the will to persevere in the will to non-resistance to the sovereign. That is to say, the threat of violence strengthens the will insofar as it becomes a cause of the will to be a non-impediment to the law. Hobbes continues,

> When a man intendeth to pay a debt at a certain time, if he see that the detaining of the money for a little longer may advantage himself, and seeth no other disadvantage equivalent likely to follow upon the detention, he hath his will changed by the advantage, and therefore had not determined his will himself; but when he forseeth discredit or perhaps imprisonment, then his will remaineth the

[201] Hobbes, *De Cive* IX.9.
[202] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 21, 151.
[203] Ibid., 21, 147.
[204] Ibid., 27, 204.
[205] Hobbes, *Questions* XV, 209.

> same, and is determined by his thought he has of his creditor, who is therefore an external cause of the determination of the debtor's will.[206]

As mentioned in the opening of this Section, from the beginning of their debate, Bramhall objects to Hobbes' definition of liberty on the grounds that it is unjust to punish those who transgress the law if transgressions of the law are materially necessitated. In response, Hobbes reaffirms and defends his own definition of justice. He argues that because there is no common good for human beings by nature, the common measure of justice can only be dictated by the unified will of the sovereign, i.e. civil law, alone. He further explains that those who are punished for transgressions of the law are not punished because they are the free cause of their transgression, but in order 1) to protect others from them because they are "noxious and contrary to men's preservation"[207] and 2) to correct them and make of them an example to "guide the behavior" of others: "The intention of the law is not to grieve the delinquent for that which is passed and not to be undone; but to make him and others just, that else would not be so; and respects not the evil past, but the good to come."[208] That is to say, for Hobbes the violence of State punishment "hath for end the framing and necessitating of the will to virtue."[209] Fear, or more accurately awe, is a cause: "Of all Passions, that which inclineth men least to break the Lawes, is Fear. Nay, (excepting some generous natures,) it is the onely thing, (when there is appearance of profit, or pleasure by breaking the Lawes,) that makes men keep them."[210] The laws, therefore, are not some deontological ground of obligation; rather they are causes in the web of causes enforced through common awe of the sovereign's coercive

[206] Ibid.
[207] Hobbes, *Treatise* 14, 24.
[208] Ibid., 25.
[209] Hobbes, *Questions* XIV, 177.
[210] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 27, 206.

power.[211] As Hobbes concludes his reply to Bramhall, "To make a law is therefore to make a cause of justice and to necessitate justice."[212]

As we have seen, Hobbes argues that society is made possible by the desire to avoid the impediment to freedom that others in the state of nature represent. But in society there is no relation with others except through the sovereign. In society sociality is still structured as a non-relational relation. Society exists in the transcendent person of the sovereign, who alone is god, to the (were)wolf subjects. For these subjects, freedom only exists where society is not. Just as in the state of nature, then, freedom is still solitary. That is to say, the common of the commonwealth is not in common. For Hobbes, the purpose of civil society is peace. To live "well" for Hobbes is to live "quietly."[213] But, as I have argued, Hobbes's irenic politics is constituted by anti-social, lupine sociality that exists in and through fear.

[211] In this way I agree with Hampton that obligation is prudential for Hobbes, rather than objective (Hampton, *Hobbes and The Social Contract*, especially Ch. 1-2).
[212] Hobbes, *Treatise* XIV, 125.
[213] Hobbes. *Elements* X.1.

Part II
Chapter 4

"This is what surpasses all the monstrosities": A Spinozan Critique of Hobbesian Freedom

> When Spinoza's *Tractatus-Theologico-Politicus* first came out, Mr. Edmund Waller sent it to my lord of Devonshire and desired him to send him word what Mr. Hobbes said of it. Mr. H told his lordship: *Ne judicate ne judicemini*. He told me he had cut through him a barre's length, for he durst not write so boldly.
> – John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*[1]

Less than a year after Cowley Abraham refers to Hobbes as "that Monster, the Father of the Leviathan," the English clergyman Turner deems Spinoza "the First-born of the Leviathan."[2] In Turner's version of the Hobbes-Spinoza conjunction, Spinoza is the offspring of Hobbes, a descendant as monstrous as Empedocles' man-faced ox-progeny, "for by their Hypothesis, whose Scholars both were, even his who resolv'd the Creation of the Universe into the fortuitous concurs of Atoms."[3] Turner condemns Hobbes and Spinoza because he believes their commitment to absolute necessity renders the universe "fortuitous" and devoid of moral meaning, just like the primordial chaos of the Ancient poet. We have seen that despite the fact that both Hobbes and Spinoza maintain that God is the primary cause of all that exists, both are charged with atheism. Spinoza claims part of his motivation in writing the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* was to refute this charge.[4] Yet many of their contemporaries found their published works grounds to further condemn Hobbes and Spinoza as clandestine atheists, whose use of the name God serves as a ploy for the unwitting believer. This is why Hobbes and Spinoza are two of the three "imposters" exposed in Christian Kortholt's *De Tribus*

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[1] John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), 357.
[2] Cited in Parkin, *Taming*, 407.
[3] Ibid. Parkin explains that upon the appearance of the *Tractatus-Theologicus Politicus*, it was common to interpret Spinoza as belonging to the Hobbesian– Epicurean tradition of Atomism.
[4] See Letter 30 to Oldenburg.

Impostoribus, published the same year as Abraham's *The True Effigies of the Monster of Malmesbury*. As Pierre Bayle suggests in his *Historical and Critical Dictionary* some fifteen years later, "Those who would like to know better the replies and equivocations that Spinoza made use of to avoid showing his atheism plainly, have only to consult the work of Christian Kortholt."[5]

Bayle himself condemns Spinoza's system as "the most monstrous hypothesis that could be imagined, the most absurd, and the most diametrically opposed to the most evident notions of the mind."[6] But unlike his predecessors, Bayle does not identify Spinoza's monstrosity with his strict determinism. He even denies Spinoza belongs to the Atomist tradition.[7] Rather, Bayle contends that the foundational principle of Spinoza's "system of impiety"[8] is the doctrine of immanent causation, that is, "There is only one being and one nature and this nature produces in itself by an immanent action all that we call creatures. It is at the same time both agent and patient, efficient cause and subject."[9] Bayle argues that, "when considered from the point of view of morality" this "execrable abomination" is "what surpasses all the monstrosities and

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[5] Pierre Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary Selections,* trans. Richard Popkin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 299.

[6] Ibid., 296. We see a similar commonsense refusal of Spinoza's metaphysics, ethics, and politics among current commentators. See, for example, Bennett's interpretation of Spinoza in *A Study of Spinoza's* Ethics. Like Bayle, Bennett does not only object to Spinoza's arguments on the grounds that they are against commonsense, but he also seeks to demonstrate what he takes to be the internal inconsistencies in Spinoza's philosophy. Yet, much like Bayle, even these arguments against the alleged "absurdities" of Spinoza's *Ethics* are ultimately to get Spinoza more in line with commonsense. Another commonsense reading of Spinoza comes from Curley, who explicitly claims it is a methodological precept that "views which are tremendously implausible should not be attributed to great, dead philosophers without pretty strong evidence" (Edwin Curley and Gregory Walski, "Spinoza's Necessitarianism Reconsidered" in *New Essays on the Rationalists*, eds. Rocco Gennaro and Charles Heunemann (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 242.) A similar anxiety over the "tremendously implausible" can be found in the moral and political implications of Spinoza's view that right is coextensive with power, which, in a very Baylean tone, Curley deems "a disturbing thesis" and "a defect in his philosophy" (Curley, "Kissinger, Spinoza, Genghis Khan," 320 and 335, respectively).

[7] Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, 305.

[8] Ibid., 301.

[9] Ibid.

chimerical disorders of the craziest people who were ever put away in lunatic asylums."[10] In pointing to immanence rather than necessity as the source of Spinoza's monstrosity, Bayle indicates what I consider to be the decisive disjunction between Hobbes and Spinoza, namely, the determinate way in which all things are necessarily determined. If, as Aristotle suggests in his arguments against Empedocles, a monster belongs to "the class of things unlike the parent,"[11] then in his commitment to an immanent ontology Spinoza would indeed be a monstrous offspring of Hobbes.

Spinoza's only extant comment on Hobbes is written in a letter to his friend Jarig Jelles in 1674, just one year before Spinoza begins his *Political Treatise*:

> As far as Politics is concerned, the difference you ask about, between Hobbes and me, is this: I always preserve natural right unimpaired, and I maintain that in each State the Supreme Magistrate has no more right over its subjects than it has greater power over them. This is always the case in the state of Nature (Ep 50).

In the letter Spinoza critiques the renunciation of power that inaugurates Hobbes's commonwealth. Many commentators suggest that in this passage Spinoza also critiques Hobbes's failure to be rigorous in his naturalism. Because Hobbes distinguishes between nature and right, so this interpretation goes, Hobbes puts forward a moral philosophy that Spinoza cannot. Strauss, for example, proclaims, "Political philosophy deprived of its moral foundation is, indeed, Spinoza's political philosophy, but it is not Hobbes's political philosophy. Spinoza, indeed, and not Hobbes, made might equivalent to right."[12] Strauss argues that unlike Hobbes, Spinoza "misses the specifically human problem of right."[13] But, as I argued in Chapter 3 above, for Hobbes the right of nature, which is grounded in his materialist and determinist doctrine of the will, is not a specifically human problem at all. All thinking bodies have a right

[10] Ibid., 311.
[11] Aristotle, *Generation of Animals* IV.4.
[12] Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 28.
[13] Ibid., 29.

coextensive with their will. As Hobbes retorts in his exchange with Bramhall, who asserts the natural right of humans over animals: "I pray, when a lion eats a man, and a man eats an ox, why is the ox more made for man, than the man for the lion? 'Yes,' he saith, 'God gave man liberty (Gen. ix. 3) to eat the flesh of the creatures for substance.' True, but the lion had the liberty to eat the flesh of man long before."[14]

I propose that Spinoza is not more rigorous in his naturalism than Hobbes, but that Hobbes and Spinoza have profoundly different concepts of nature – and so of the relations that necessarily determine human beings in nature. Both are strict necessitarians, but, as we will see below, Spinoza's immanent concept of nature institutes a different mode of relation, which is not exhausted by extrinsic determination, and a different concept of power, which is not exhausted by violence or the relinquishment of agency. In Section 1 of Chapter 3 I argued that for Hobbes human freedom only consists in extrinsic relations. The Hobbesian configuration of freedom consists in a double extrinsic relationality: the relation of the will to the web of causes that determine it and the non-relational relation of the will to impediments. In Section 2, we further saw that this negative conception of liberty institutes a lupine sociality, both in the state of nature and the State, such that for Hobbes freedom and sociality are mutually exclusive. In this chapter, I will examine the Hobbesian configuration of freedom from a Spinozan perspective. We will come to see that Hobbes's arrant wolf is produced by the mechanisms of the arrant imagination. In Section 1 we will look more closely at the nature of Hobbesian human nature, seeing the way in which it functions as the ground of Hobbes's political philosophy. For Spinoza, human nature, like all in the immanent, relational self-production of God *sive* Nature, is profoundly ambivalent, and so human nature can never serve as a ground, but only as a result of the actual and determinate agreement between individuals. In Sections 2 and 3, we will look

[14] Hobbes, *Questions* XIV, 185-186.

at the comparative and mortal mechnisms of the imagination that cause Hobbes's lupine image of sociality. The imagined difference and similarity involved in the comparative mechanism, by which one measures one's own power through eminence over another, is a denial of the singularity and in-common, and so leads to the appearance of the inevitability of the war of all against all. The intensity of the fear of death involved in the mortal mechanism both explains the predominance of the future in Hobbes's politics of fear and renders life in this politics a being toward death, a damaged and diminished life. If the mutual exclusion between freedom and sociality ensures what Hobbes candidly refers to as "harmlesse liberty,"[15] then the Spinozan analysis demonstrates just how harmful such a harmless liberty actually is. In conclusion of the chapter and the work, we will take on the perspective of Spinoza's "tiny worm living in the blood" (Ep 32). This vermicular view will allow us both to perceive the work of the exclusionary imagination, which fixes external causes as external, in the production of Hobbes's negative freedom and to better appreciate that for Spinoza, freedom lies not in freedom from external causes, but in affinity with external causes. The vermicular view, understood as that of immanent causation, troubles the internal-external binary that shores up both the intrinsic determination of the Cartesian configuration of freedom and the extrinsic determination of the Hobbesian configuration of freedom. It also shows the grounds for the collective and cooperative empowerment that constitutes real freedom.

[15] Hobbes, *De Cive* XIII.6

Section 1. The Nature of Human Nature

> Do not let us go back to a fictitious primordial condition…Such a primordial condition explains nothing. It merely pushes the question away into a grey nebulous distance. It assumes in the form of fact, of an event, what it is supposed to deduce – namely, the necessary relationship between two things.
>
> –Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*

In *Spinoza and Other Heretics*, Yovel suggests, "Spinoza rejects Hobbes's grim and pessimistic portrayal of man's natural dispositions to other humans. To Hobbes's *homo homini lupus est*, Spinoza retorts provocatively with *homo homini deus est*."[16] Like many commentators, Yovel reduces the difference between Hobbesian humans and Spinozan humans to that between wolves and gods.[17] I agree that this is an important aspect of the disjunction between Hobbes and Spinoza – just not for the reasons Yovel supposes. In this Section I will interpret the Hobbes-Spinoza disjunction in terms of the function of human nature in their philosophy. For Hobbes, we have already seen, human nature is the ground of politics. Yovel is therefore correct to suggest that Hobbes posits human nature as lupine. As we will see, from a Spinozan perspective, this positing is the work of imagination, specifically the hypostatic and present-ing mechanisms we saw at work in the Cartesian configuration of freedom. Spinoza, on

[16] Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics, Volume II: The Adventures of Immanence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 131.

[17] See also, among more recent examples, Cesarino, who claims Spinoza's "*Homini…nihil homine utilius*" is a "direct answer and corrective to Hobbes' dictum" (Cesare Casarino, "Grammars of Contatus: Or, on the Primacy of Resistance in Spinoza, Foucault, and Deleuze" in *Spinoza's Authority Volume I: Resistance and Power in Ethics*, eds. A. Kiarina Kordela and Dimitris Vardoulakis (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2018), 69) and Vardoulakis, who claims the same passage is Spinoza's "riposte to Hobbes' supposition of an absolute ante-political equality, which legitimizes a sovereign power" (Dimitris Vardoulakis, "Equality and Power: Spinoza's Reformulation of the Aristotelian Tradition of Egalitarianism" in *Spinoza's Authority Volume I: Resistance and Power in Ethics*, eds. A. Kiarina Kordela and Dimitris Vardoulakis (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2018), 24). An exception to this common interpretation is Etienne Balibar, who sees that Spinoza "breaks with the traditional alternative" of god or wolf (Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, 112). My interpretation in this Chapter owes much to Balibar's claim, "In place of these essentialist alternatives [between god and wolf, nature and art], Spinoza establishes an analytic of desire and its multiple forms, arranged around the polarity of activity and passivity" (Ibid., 122).

the other hand, does not posit a divine, optimistic human nature in "retort." Rather, Spinoza presents human nature, like all relations in nature, as fundamentally ambivalent, capable of being both divine and lupine. Because of the ambivalence of sociality, for Spinoza human nature is not a ground, but the result of actual agreement between individuals.[18]

Wolf or God: Human Nature as Ground

We can begin our Spinozan analysis of the Hobbesian configuration of freedom, then, where Hobbes begins, with human nature. Given Hobbes's naturalism it might seem that Hobbesian freedom should be understood to begin in nature, not human nature. Indeed, I argued above that because the Hobbesian human is not exempt from the web of causes that constitute nature, anthropic freedom is no different from arachnidan. The will of both human and spider is an appetite, a motion of the thinking body subject, like any body, to external determination by necessary, material causes. But as Hobbes explains in his *Elements of Philosophy*, philosophy always begins in human nature. In the first part of the *Elements of Philosophy*, *De Corpore*, Hobbes explains, "every man brought Philosophy, that is, Natural Reason, into the world with him." His purpose in *De Corpore* is to direct this natural reason through methodical

[18] The significance of the concept of human nature in Spinoza's philosophy is usually addressed in terms of the nominalist-realist debate. The nominalists contend that only individual essences are real for Spinoza, and so consider Spinoza's *Ethics* to be a deductive proof for a kind of ethical egoism that yields a common utilitarianism. (See, for example, Douglas Den-Uyl, "Spinoza and Hume on Individuals," *Reason Papers* 15 (1990), 91-117; C. Lee Rice, "*Tanquam Naturae Humanae Exemplar*," *Modern Schoolman* 68 (1991): 291-303; Errol Harris, *The Substance of Spinoza* **(**Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1993), Ch. 3. The realists argue that human nature is similar to a Platonic ideal or transcendent exemplar, which determines the ethical actions of all individual humans as their common essence. (See, for example, Francis Haserot, "Spinoza and the Status of Universals," *Philosophical Review* 59:4 (1950): 469-492; William Sacksteder, "Spinoza on Part and Whole: The Worm's Eye View," *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 8 (1977): 139-159; Diane Steinberg "Spinoza's Ethical Doctrine and the Unity of Universals," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 22 (1984): 303-324). I do not think this debate takes seriously the ontological actuality and efficacy of imaginative universals in Spinoza's immanent ontology, so will address the concept of human nature in other terms.

ratiocination of cause and effect to "pure and true Philosophy."[19] Even if, according to the synthetic method of the *Elements of Philosophy*, Hobbes claims human nature should be deduced from physics, he also makes it clear that reason can take an analytical short-cut through human nature: "For the causes of the motions of the mind are known, not only by ratiocination, but also by the experience of every man that takes the pains to observe those motions within himself."[20] Hobbes himself takes such a short-cut when he publishes *De Cive*, the third part of the *Elements of Philosophy*, some sixteen years before the first part: "what was last in order, is yet come forth first in time, and the rather, because I saw that grounded on its owne principles sufficiently knowne by experience *it would not stand in need of the former Sections*."[21] The same method is used in *Elements of Law*, where Hobbes asserts that human nature is "the true and only foundation of such science," and *Leviathan*, in which Hobbes acquires knowledge of the "Artificiall Man" from "the Naturall."[22] That is to say, whether appealing to reason or experience, Hobbes begins his philosophy in human nature.

But Hobbes himself concedes that "experience concludeth nothing universally" and, moreover, there is "nothing in the world Universall but Names; for the things named, are every one of them Individuall and Singular."[23] What, then, is the status of the name "human nature" in the philosophy of Hobbes? Although I maintain that the Hobbesian configuration of freedom is consistent with Hobbes' strict naturalism, the order in which Hobbes argues for political order is just as strict: human nature is the ground of politics. Yovel's incomplete citation of *De Cive* conceals this grounding function. In the Dedicatory Letter of *De Cive*, Hobbes posits a human nature capable of *both* lupine *and* divine relations, but he also argues that these conditions are

[19] Hobbes, *De Corpore* I.1.
[20] Hobbes, *De Corpore* VI.7.
[21] Hobbes, *De Cive*, Preface to the Reader, my italics.
[22] Hobbes, *Elements*, Epistle Dedicatory; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Introduction.
[23] Hobbes, *Elements* IV.10; *Leviathan* 4, 26. See also *Elements* V.6.

conditioned on the state of nature and the State. Indeed, using the language of *Leviathan*, we can say it is because "Naturall" man is lupine that the "Artificiall Man" of the State is the "Mortall God."

Given our insights from the analysis of the Cartesian configuration of freedom in Chapter 2, it is clear that, from a Spinozan perspective, this grounding function is the result of the hypostatic and present-ing mechanisms of the imagination. Hobbes hypostatizes human nature insofar as human nature is supposed to be universal. In *Leviathan* he advises, "He that is to govern a whole Nation, must read in himself, not this, or that particular man; but Man-kind."[24] As with Cartesian free will, hypostatization is buttressed by imaginative presence, insofar as the universal "Man-kind" is taken as an obviousness in experience. Hobbes explains that one is able to read "Man-kind" in himself "for the similitude of the thoughts, and Passions of one man, to the thoughts and Passions of another, whosoever looketh into himself, and considereth what he doth, when he does *think, opine, reason, hope, fear*, &c, and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know, what are the thoughts, and Passions of all other men, upon the like occasions."[25] It should be noted that Hobbes only appeals to experience when positing the lupine sociality of human nature as the ground of his political philosophy. In *Elements of Law* he suggests that his fierce and fearsome image of human nature is one his readers "know already, or may know by their own experience."[26] In *De Cive*, he asserts that "mutuall feare and diffidence" is "a principle by experience knowne to all men."[27] To deny that human nature is lupine, he scoffs, is to use words that contradict one's own actions:

> Wee see even in well-governed States, where there are laws and punishments appointed for offenders, yet particular men travel not without their Sword by

[24] Hobbes, *Leviathan* Introduction, 11. See also *Elements* V.14.
[25] Ibid., 9
[26] Hobbes, *Elements* I.2.
[27] Hobbes, *De Cive*, Preface to the Reader.

> their sides, neither sleep they without shutting not only their doors against their fellow Subjects, but also their Trunks and Coffers for fear of their domestiques. Can men give a clearer testimony of the distrust they have each of the other, and all, of all?[28]

The immediacy of human nature to (self-)observation is again affirmed in *Leviathan*. Against his own *Elements of Philosophy*, Hobbes concludes the Introduction, "For this kind of Doctrine, admitteth no other Demonstration."[29]

Insofar as human nature functions as a ground, Spinoza would object that Hobbes, much like Descartes, does not observe "the proper order of philosophizing" (E2p10). Just as Descartes posits the sovereign self, so Hobbes posits a human nature determined to be subject to the sovereign. The fact that Hobbes deems the sovereign "Artificiall" obscures the way in which he naturalizes it. In *De Cive* Hobbes resolves the body politic in order to recompose it from the foundational "matter," not of his materialism, but of human nature. Hobbes likens this method to "a watch, or some such small engine, the matter, figure, and the motion of the wheeles, cannot be well known except it be taken in sunder." In *Leviathan*, Hobbes presents the State as an imitation of the nature in which it is grounded; and he presents nature as (divine) art. Hobbes's mechanistic conception of "Naturall" man thereby reinforces the naturalization of "Artificiall Man." As Althusser suggests, "It is reassuring to be able to refer directly to nature, to be sure. Hobbes said it long ago: men tear out their hair or lives over politics, but they are as thick as thieves over the hypotenuse or falling bodies."[30] Although Hobbes tore his own hair out over the squaring of the circle, Althusser's point should not be lost. Hobbes's appeal to the name of human nature, a human nature that he posits as both universal and "sufficiently

[28] Ibid.
[29] Hobbes, *Leviathan* Introduction, 11.
[30] Louis Althusser, "Contradiction and Overdetermination" in *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 2005), 122.

knowne by experience," grounds his politics only because of the hypostatic and present-ing mechanisms of the imagination.

Wolf *sive* God: Human Nature as Result

Unlike Hobbes, Spinoza is as strict in denaturalizing his naturalism as he is in his naturalism. That is, Spinoza does not posit human nature as universal and immediate, but, according to the proper order of philosophizing, Spinoza makes clear that the human "must necessarily follow from the essence of God, or the infinite and eternal being" (E2Pref.). Indeed, when Spinoza first uses the words "human nature" in the *Ethics* he does so to point out that they are often misused to signify that human nature stands outside of nature:

> Most of those who have written about the affects and men's way of living, seem to treat, not of natural things, which follow the common laws of nature, but as things which are outside of nature. Indeed, they seem to conceive of man in nature as a dominion within a dominion. For they believe that man disturbs, rather than follows, the order of nature…and they attribute the cause of human impotence and inconstancy, not to the common power of nature, but to I know not what vice of *human nature* (E3pref, my italics).

When Spinoza first uses the words "human nature" in a positive sense in the geometric apparatus of the *Ethics*, he does so to demonstrate that, like all relations that follow from nature, the relations between humans that constitute human nature are ambivalent.[31] Specifically, he identifies the imitation of the affects, the relations with things the mind imagines to be similar to itself,[32] as engendering both divine and lupine sociality: "from the same property of human

[31] The words "human nature" do appear in the Appendix to the First Part *Ethics*, but are specified as yet to be treated.

[32] Spinoza claims the imitation of the affects occurs when "from the fact that we imagine a thing like us to be with an affect, we are affected with a like affect" (E3p27). Much like the mirror game of God and human in the Cartesian configuration of freedom, in the imitation of the affects Spinoza identifies a mirror game between humans. Both specular relations operate according to similitude, but the order of

nature from which it follows that men are compassionate, it follows that the same men are envious and ambitious" (E3p32s). That is to say, for Spinoza "the human being is a god to the human being" (E4p18s) *and* "men are naturally inclined to hate and envy" (E3p55s).

As indicated in Letter 50, the difference between lupine and divine sociality does not lie for Spinoza in the difference between the state of nature and the State. Rather, the difference consists in the determinate modes of disagreement and agreement that actually exist between individual human beings. Spinoza argues that "*insofar* as human beings are subject to passions, they cannot be said to agree in nature" (E4p32, my italics) and "*only insofar as* men live according to reason, must they always agree in nature; *to that extent only* do they always necessarily agree in nature" (E4p35, my italics). The *quatenus-eatenus* in these passages makes clear that only the actual agreement of humans can be said to constitute human nature. Indeed, this correlative pair elucidates the way in which the ambivalence is determined. When Spinoza introduces his own model of human nature (*exemplar naturae humanae*), he does so after explaining that all models are fabricated by the imagination (E4Pref.).[33] In identifying his

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the similitude is, we might say, inverse. In the anthropo-theological circle, the appropriative tendency of the imagination fashions an external being in its imaginative self-image, which effects a guarantee of that self-image. In the imitation of the affects the imagination fashions a similarity between the self and an external being which effects a similitude of affect in the self. For the most extensive discussion of the imitation of the affects, see Alexandre Matheron, *Individu et Commaunite Chez Spinoza* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1969). See also Michael Della Rocca, "Egoism and the Imitation of the Affects" in *Spinoza on Reason and 'The Free Man'*, ed. Yirmiyahu Yovel and Gideon Segal (New York: Little Room Press, 2004), 123-148. While recognizing that the imitation of the affects are inadequate, Della Rocca contends that they make a more sound Spinozan argument for humans benefiting other humans because the imitation of the affects do not presuppose a shared essence, something which he believes Spinoza to hold contradictory views on.

[33] There is extensive debate over the ontological and epistemological status of the model of human nature. There are those who maintain that it is an inadequate idea: Don Garrett, "Spinoza's Ethical Theory" in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Don Garrett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Charles Jarrett, "Spinoza on the Relativity of Good and Evil" in *Spinoza: Metaphysical Themes*, eds. Olli Koistinen and John Biro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 159-181; Daniel Garber, "Dr. Fischelson's Dilemma: Spinoza on Freedom and Necessity" in *Spinoza on Reason and the "Free Man,"* eds. Yirmiyahu Yovel and Gideon Segal (New York: Little Room Press, 2004), 183-208. There are also those who maintain the model of human nature is an adequate idea: Steven Nadler,

concept of human nature *as* a model, Spinoza is able to propose an empowering image of human nature, consistent with his claim that, "If the mind, while it imagined nonexistent things as present to it, at the same time knew that those things did not exist, it would, of course, attribute this power of imagining to a virtue of its nature, not to a vice" (E2p17s). Against Hobbes, who posits a lupine human nature as universal and obvious, Spinoza maintains that human nature is not given in advance, but is produced through the real agreement (*conveniunt*), that is, the coming together, assemblage, or collective action of a multitude of individuals. In Spinoza's use of it, human nature is a call to collective action. Thus Balibar is right to claim that for Spinoza, "sociability is the union of a real agreement and an imaginary ambivalence, both of which have real effects."[34] I will discuss the agreement that constitutes human nature more extensively in the concluding section below, but for now I simply want to emphasize that human nature cannot function as an ungrounded ground in Spinoza's philosophy. This holds not only because human nature itself is grounded in nature, but also because, given the fundamental ambivalence of the affects, human nature can only be the result of the actual and determinate relations between human beings. Before examining the relations that constitute human freedom and empowerment, though, I will turn to the determinate causes of human disempowerment as imagined in Hobbes's lupine sociality.

Spinoza's Ethics: *An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 219; Andrew Youpa, "Spinoza's Model of Human Nature," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (2010) 61-76. As indicated in my comments, I take the model of human nature to be an inadequate idea, but I agree with Rousset, who argues, "the good, with its rules (or laws), once rationally determined, ceases to be an *ens imaginationis* (as it used to be together with the exemplar humanae naturae in E4pPref), and becomes rather an *ens rationis* once it is defined and deductively explicated in Part 4; although one must not, nor even could, mistake it for an *ens reale*, as one has always wanted to do" (Bernard Rousset, "*Recta Ratio*" in *Spinoza on Reason and the "Free Man*," eds. Yirmiyahu Yovel and Gideon Segal (New York: Little Room Press, 2004), 10. A complete defense of this position is outside of the scope of my argument.

[34] Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, 88.

Section 2. Lupine Sociality: Imaginative Comparison

It would take too long to enumerate all the evils of pride.

–Spinoza, E4p57s

In *De Cive*, Hobbes protests that the claim that man is a political animal "though received by most, is yet certainly false, and an error proceeding from our too slight contemplation of Humane Nature."[35] We will take a closer look, then, at the particular image of human nature that Hobbes claims is available immediately and universally to contemplation. In the previous Section we saw that Hobbes posits human nature as lupine – and so does not account for the causes of lupine sociality. Taking the Spinoza perspective, in this and the following Section we will see that this lupine image of human nature is caused in by the comparative and mortal mechanisms of the imagination in co-ordination with the hypostatic and present-ing just described. In this section I will focus on the comparative mechanism, which measures the power of the individual as relative to that of other individuals. Following the index of effectivity of this comparative mechanism, we will see that, contrary to the "individualism" for which Hobbes is infamous, Hobbesian human nature denies the singularity of the individual and the in-common between individuals.

The Comparative Mechanism

As we saw in Chapter 3, Hobbes's account of human nature is relational and rapacious. The powers that constitute human nature are not powers in themselves, but are relative to the power of others. Eminence drives both the individual's self-perception and their perception of others: "All the minds pleasure is either Glory, (or to have a good opinion of ones selfe) or

[35] Hobbes *De Cive* I.2.

refers to Glory in the end."[36] Eminence and the rapacity of desire make a vicious circle, a viciousness intensified by temporal and intersubjective ignorance. That is, the image of human nature Hobbes presents is lupine, one constituted by social diffidence and dread, "deceit and violence." Hobbes maintains that even if humans are not political by nature, politics emerges from the natural, rapacious desire for eminence: "We do not therefore seek Society for its own sake, but that we may receive some Honour or Profit from it; these we desire Primarily, that Secondarily."[37]

Spinoza too has a relational account of the human. The Spinozan individual is determined through its relations with other individuals (E1p29) and because the individual's thoughts are born of affection, Spinoza maintains that the individual thinks itself only through such relations (E2p19 and E2p23). But we have seen that for Spinoza these relations are fundamentally ambivalent. Given this ambivalence, the capacity for both divine and lupine sociality, there must be, according to Spinoza, a determinate cause of the lupine sociality that Hobbes simply posits as universal and obvious: "The affects, therefore, of hate, anger, envy, and the like, considered in themselves, follow with the same necessity and force of nature as the other singular things. And therefore they acknowledge certain causes, through which they are understood, and have certain properties, as worthy of our knowledge as the properties of any other thing" (E3Pref.). If indeed "man is a god to man," why, according to Spinoza, are human beings "by nature enemies" (TP 2.14)?[38] Like Hobbes, Spinoza begins his account of lupine

[36] Ibid. Glory is at work in both self-perception and the perception of others, as indicated in Hobbes definitions of glory and honor: "GLORY, or internal gloriation or triumph of the mind, is that passion which proceedeth from the imagination or conception of our own power, *above the power of him that contendeth with us*" (Hobbes, *Elements* IX.1, my italics); "the acknowledgement of power is called HONOUR; and to honour a man (inwardly in the mind) is to conceive or acknowledge, that the man hath *the odds or excess of power above him that contendeth or compareth himself*" (Ibid. VIII.5, my italics)
[37] Ibid.
[38] See also TP 8.12.

sociality with pride, or what Hobbes calls (vain)glory, that is, the individual's joy, or increase in power, in their own imagined power (E3p26s). Like Hobbes, Spinoza indicates that pride is born of the *conatus*, or the striving to persevere in being, for, he explains, "the mind as far as it can strives to imagine those things that increase or aid the body's power of acting" (E3p12).[39] Spinoza also agrees with Hobbes that pride involves imagining oneself as *more* powerful than other individuals: "pride should be defined as a joy born of a man's false opinion that he is above others" (E4p57s).[40]

But unlike Hobbes, for Spinoza this glorying in one's own eminence is not universal or obvious; rather it is caused by the comparative mechanism of the imagination. In imagining oneself to be eminent, one imagines oneself as exceptional: "everyone will have the greatest gladness in considering himself, when he considers something in himself which he denies concerning others" (E3p55s). In this sense pride is wonder at oneself, and wonder, Spinoza explains, is a cessation of thought caused by the failure to perceive what is in common with others. The proud are those "who wish to be first and are not" (E4appxxi). This imaginative exceptionality of pride always involves imagining one's own actions "compared to others' actions" (E3p55s). But insofar as this comparison is imaginative, Spinoza deems pride "very great ignorance of oneself" (E4p55) and "weakness of the mind" (E4p56). The social implications of pride are therefore exactly what Hobbes postulates. "From this it follows," Spinoza tells us,

> that men are by nature envious, or are glad of their equals' weakness and saddened by their equals' virtue. For whenever anyone imagines his own actions, he is affected with joy (byp53), and with a greater joy, the more his actions express perfection, and the more distinctly he imagines them, that is (byE2p40s1), the more he can distinguish them from the others, and consider them as singular things (E3p55s).

[39] See also E3p25 and E3p54.
[40] See also E3p52s.

Spinoza contends that pride, much like Cartesian free will, is a form of somnambulism: "because the man dreams, with open eyes, that he can do all those things which he achieves only in his imagination, and which he therefore regards as real and triumphs in" (E3p26). According to Spinoza, this "triumph of the mind," as Hobbes also refers to it,[41] is imaginative not because one is not actually more powerful than another but because the individual imagines their power to be *exceptional* or absolutely singular and distinct by comparison with others. In the same scholium in which Spinoza identifies this somnambulant eminence, Spinoza deems pride "a species of madness" because it engenders lupine sociality. Given the imitation of the affects, pride leads to ambition, or the desire for others to praise their idea of the good (E3p29s).[42] But because, given the appropriative tendency of the imagination, each individual imagines a different idea of good, hate and conflict ensue: "We see that each of us, by his nature, wants the others to live according to his temperament (*constitutio*); when all alike want this, they are alike an obstacle to one another, and when they all wish to be praised, or loved, by all, they hate one another" (E3p31s). [43] We should recall that Spinoza defines hate as "sadness with the accompanying idea of an external cause" (E3p13s); in hate one imagines the other – who, *qua* other, is posited as external – as the cause of one's own lack of power. Through the same principle of the *conatus* by which one strives to imagine only that which posits one's power, hate engenders the desire to "remove or destroy" (E3p39) the other. Others are an obstacle not only in the contest over the idea of the good, but also in the contest for the

[41] Hobbes, *Elements* IX.1.
[42] Praise intensifies pride because in being praised, one imagines oneself to be the cause of joy in another and so increases one's own joy at one's power to cause joy. Pride is further intensified, of course, if on believes oneself ot be free, as discussed in Ch. 2 above.
[43] See E1Appendix and E3p9s. For Spinoza "we neither desire, nor will, neither want, nor desire anything because we judge it to be good; on the contrary, we judge something to be good because we strive for it, will it, want it, and desire it" (E3p9s).

attainment of the good: "If we imagine that someone enjoys something that only one can possess, we shall strive to bring it about that he does not possess it" (E3p32). Because in the comparative imaginary the good cannot be possessed in-common, there is a mutual desire to dispossess or destroy the other: "And since the struggle is over a good thought to be the highest, this gives rise to a monstrous lust of each to crush the other in any way possible" (E4p58s). Spinoza concludes, "it would take too long to enumerate all the evils of pride," but, he continues, "These things follow from this affect as necessarily as it follows from the nature of a triangle that its three angles are equal to two right angles" (E4p57s).

Spinoza's account of pride, ambition, and the conflict that arise from these affects certainly recalls Hobbes's claim in the Epistle Dedicatory to *De Cive*, that "from a Community of Goods, there must needs arise Contention whose enjoyment should be greatest, and from that Contention all kind of Calamaties must unavoidably ensue."[44] But the problem is that Hobbes takes such "Calamaties," and the lupine sociality which causes them, to be endemic to human nature. Spinoza, on the other hand, makes clear that others are an "obstacle," or as Hobbes might have it, an obstruction or hindrance, *only* insofar as one imagines that the good is not in common. Spinoza explains that human beings

> are not troublesome to each other insofar as they agree in nature, i.e. insofar as each loves the same thing, but insofar as they disagree in nature. For insofar as each loves the same thing, each one's love is thereby encouraged (by3p31) i.e. (by def.aff.vi), each one's joy is thereby encouraged. So it is far from true that they are troublesome to one another insofar as they love the same thing and agree in nature.
> Instead, as I have said, the cause of [their enmity] is nothing but the fact that (as we suppose) they disagree in nature. For we suppose that [one] has the idea of the thing he loves that is already possessed, whereas [the other] has the idea of a thing he loves which is lost.

[44] Hobbes, *De Cive*, Epistle Dedicatory.

In another letter to his friend Jarig Jelles, Spinoza mentions reading *Homo Politicus*, an uncannily Hobbesian work, according to which human nature necessarily manifests itself in competition for honor and wealth. Spinoza declares it "the most pernicious book that can be devised by man" and muses about writing a critical *oposculum* in which he would "show the anxious and pitiable condition" of those who live in competition for the good (Ep 44). Spinoza continues, "How much better and more excellent the thoughts of Thales of Miletus were compared than those of this Author will be evident from the following reasoning. All things, he said, are in common among friends" (Ibid). While Hobbes argues, "glory is like honor; if all men have it, no man has it,"[45] for Spinoza, "man's greatest good is common to all" (E4p36s). That is to say, for Spinoza, it is only in denying the in-common, in positing a non-relational relation as natural, obvious, and universal, that others are imagined as obstacles, not known as friends.

The Incomparable: Singularity and the In-Common

We can now definitively say that the Hobbes-Spinoza disjunction regarding human nature does not lie in Spinoza's positing of divine sociality in "retort" to Hobbes's posited lupine sociality *or* in Spinoza's denial of lupine sociality. Rather, because of the ambivalence of all affective relations, Spinoza maintains that any multitude can be dually determined: "The appetite by which a man is said to act, and that by which he is said to be acted on, are one and the same" (E5p4s). By the same nature, humans can be both active and passive, both cooperative and antagonistic, both god and wolf. Grounded in this ambivalence of all affects, but more specifically in the imitation of the affects, Spinoza argues, "The things which are of

[45] Ibid. I.2

assistance to the common society of men, or which bring it about that men live harmoniously, are useful; those, on the other hand, are evil which bring discord…" (E4p40). But what exactly is "evil" in Hobbes's image of human nature? We have seen that the comparative mechanism of the imagination operates according to both difference and similarity. It involves imaginative difference insofar as the individual experiences themselves as superior to those with whom they compare themselves; it involves imaginative similitude because, as Spinoza suggests, if they did not assume "equality," human beings would not envy other human beings "any more than we envy trees their height and lions their strength" (E3p55c2s). From a Spinozan perspective, this comparative tendency of the imagination is disempowering because its imagined difference and similarity are a denial of singularity and commonality.

In his demonstration of the conflict that results from pride, Spinoza references E2p40s1, which explicates the causes of "[t]hose notions they call *Universal*, like Man…

> namely, because so many images (e.g. of men) are formed at one time in the human body that they surpass the power of imagining – not entirely, of course, but to the point where the mind can neither imagine slight differences of the singular [men] (such as the color or size of each one, etc.), nor of their determinate number, and imagines distinctly only what they all agree in, insofar as they affect the body.

In this passage we see that, as discussed in Chapter 2, universals "like Man," formed through the hypostatic mechanism of the imagination, cover over certain and determinate differences, and so denegate singularity. But there is a further denial of the singular in the comparative tendency of the imagination. As discussed above, the prideful individual imagines they are powerful, and so perfect, *only* insofar as they perceive themselves as more perfect than others.[46] But according to Spinoza, "the perfection of things is to be judged solely from *their* nature and power" (E1app, my italics). A distinction between absolute and relative perfection drawn in the

[46] "For whenever anyone imagines his own actions, he is affected with joy (byp53), and with a greater joy, *the more his actions express perfection"* (E3p55s, my italics).

Appendix to the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* helps us better understand what Spinoza means by perfection. In *Metaphysical Thoughts*, Spinoza explains that perfection "may be ascribed absolutely…when we take perfection for the very essence of the thing" (CM I.6). This notion of absolute perfection in Spinoza's early work corresponds to the definition in the *Ethics*, where Spinoza asserts, "by reality and perfection I understand the same thing" (E2def6). In identifying reality with absolute perfection, Spinoza affirms that insofar as each singular thing follows from nature, or, more accurately, just is nature existing in a certain and determinate way (E1p29s), each singular thing is perfect in itself. As he explains in the Preface to the Third Part of the *Ethics*, "[N]othing happens in Nature which can be attributed to any defect in it, for Nature is always the same, and its virtue and power of acting are everywhere one and the same" (E3pref). Spinoza reaffirms the absolute perfection of singular things in his correspondence with Blyenbergh: "We know that whatever is, when considered in itself without regard to anything else, possesses a perfection coextensive in every case with the thing's essence; for its essence is nothing other [than perfection]" (Ep. 19). If each singular thing is perfect "in itself without comparing it with other things," then the comparative mechanism by which one imagines eminence is a denial of this absolute perfection. That is, the comparative mechanism of the imagination compares the incomparable.

The comparative work of the imagination involves only a relative conception of perfection. When comparing one singular thing with another, perfection is ascribed, as Spinoza puts it in *Metaphysical Thoughts*, only "in a certain respect," namely, with respect to a particular image in a particular mind (CM I.6). In the letter to Blyenburgh, Spinoza explains that the privation by which something is deemed imperfect

> is not something positive, and is so termed in respect of our intellect, not God's intellect. This is due to the fact that we express by one and the same genus – for

> instance, all that have the outward appearance of men – and we therefore deem them equally capable of the highest degree of perfection that can be inferred from that particular definition. (Ibid.)

The lack of perfection in the other by which one measures one's eminence, Spinoza explains, "is only a construct of the mind or a mode of thinking which we form from comparing things with one another" (Ep 21). This is the same relative sense of perfection explicated in the Preface to the Fourth Part of the *Ethics*, where Spinoza writes, "Perfection and imperfection, therefore, are only modes of thinking, that is, notions we are accustomed to feign, because we compare individuals of the same species or genus to one another." This relative sense of perfection and imperfection produced by the comparative mechanism is always and only inadequate insofar as it does not involve the thought that it is relative. In this way it is decidedly distinct from the sense of the perfection of each thing, the incomparability of each thing, in itself.

Beyond this more general operation of the comparative mechanism, we can say that pride is specifically an erasure of the singularity of the individual through a denial of the in-common. As mentioned above, according to Spinoza, pride is a form of wonder. Spinoza defines wonder as "an imagination of a thing in which the mind remains fixed because this singular imagination has *no connection with others*" (E3def.aff.iv, my italics). Insofar as wonder is "the imagination of a singular thing, insofar as it is alone in the mind," we must say that the object of wonder is not so much singular as isolated.[47] In the fixation of imagination the object of wonder is imagined as completely external, individualized only through its exclusion, its dis-connection or non-relational relation with others. Pride is a form of wonder because one

[47] Spinoza explains the ignorant fixity of wonder in the following way: "But when we suppose that we imagine in an object something singular, which we have never seen before, we are only saying that when the mind considers that object, it has nothing in itself which it is led to consider from considering that. And so it is determined to consider only that" (E3p52). Thus wonder is disconnected from the nexus of ideas requisite for the second kind of knowledge and, because *scientia intuitiva* is grounded in *ratio*, its imaginative singularity is incommensurable with the third kind of knowledge.

imagines oneself as singular, or exceptional, only insofar as one is not "with others" or does not have "what is common to many things" (E3p52). As Spinoza explains, in pride the individual imagines "the virtues to be peculiarly in him, and not as common" to others (E3p55c2). Pride presupposes the relationality of the non-relational relation of eminence. On Spinoza's account, then, pride is a denial of connection, an imagined similarity that is a failure to perceive the real relation, which consists in both the singularity and the commonality, between things. This failure "does not arise from any positive cause which distracts the Mind from other things, but only from the fact that there is no cause determining the Mind to pass from regarding one thing to regarding others" (E3Def.Aff.IV).[48] Pride is a cessation of thought born of privation, or of the disavowal of the common.

As we will see more clearly in the concluding Section, for Spinoza the common is not comparative similitude or even sameness, but exists in the agreement (*conveniunt*) of singular things. Human nature is a unity *only* insofar as it is the cooperative activity of certain and determinate individuals; its power is defined through the collective force of desires: "It is impossible for man not to be a part of Nature and not to follow the common order of Nature. But if he lives among such individuals as agree with his nature, his power of acting will thereby be aided and encouraged" (E4app.vii). Thus Spinoza argues,

> The human being, I say, can wish for nothing more helpful to the preservation of its being than that all should so agree in all things that the minds and bodies of all would compose, as it were, one mind and one body; that all should strive together, as far as they can, to preserve their being; and that all, together, should seek for themselves the common advantage of all (*omnium commune utile*) (E4p18s).

Human nature is not a universal, in which all individuals are consumed or by which they are consumed with mutual hate in a "war of all against all," but is a commons constructed

[48] In not including wonder among the primary affects, Spinoza makes himself an exception to the history of philosophy from Plato to Descartes, for whom wonder is itself the affective origin of philosophy.

encounter by encounter. The principles of human nature are the same as those of individuals. They are as existentially tenuous: they come into being and are destroyed. They are as existentially tenacious: once in existence, they seek to persevere in being. Human beings are capable of both divine and lupine sociality. Before turning to Spinoza's account of the construction of divine sociality, though, I will further develop the Spinozan critique of Hobbes's lupine sociality. Spinoza's claim that judgments of perfection and imperfection involve comparisons of "individuals of the same species or genus to one another" (E4pref), forces us to countenance what Hobbes takes to be the equality of the human species, namely, their mortal fragility. Spinoza explains that wonder at what one fears is dread (E3p52s), and it is no doubt this fearsome wonder, this awe born of the co-ordination of the comparative and mortal mechanisms of the imagination, which lies behind the Hobbesian image of sociality. But Spinoza further opposes awe: "if from the thing's presence, *or from considering it more accurately*, we are forced to deny it whatever can be the cause of wonder, love, fear, and the like, then the mind remains determined by the thing's presence to think more of the things which are not in the object than of the things which are" (Ibid., my italics). In the following Section I will attempt to consider Hobbesian fear "more accurately" in order to better understand Spinoza's disdain of the mortal logic of the imagination.

Section 3. Lupine Sociality: The Mortal Imagination

> Continually to be out-gone is misery.
> Continually to out-go the next before is felicity.
> And to forsake the course is to Die.
>
> –Hobbes, *Elements* IX.21

In the last Section we saw that from a Spinozan perspective "all the evils of pride" are produced by the comparative mechanism of the imagination. This "joy born of a man's false

opinion that he is above others" (E4p57s) causes the double sadness of hate and envy: in hate one imagines the other as the cause of one's disempowerment, and consequently envies the other, or experiences joy at their disempowerment and sadness at their empowerment. Even though pride is born of the desire to imagine only that which posits one's power, in fixing the other as external, Spinoza demonstrates that pride causes socially disempowering desires: mutual hate and envy lead to the mutual desire to dispossess and destroy others, or, as Hobbes might have it, the war of all against all. It is important to note that Hobbes's war of all against all does not lie in the past reality of some original state of nature, but in the future possibility of such a reality in the present State. As most readers of Hobbes agree, Hobbes's "mere nature" is not a historical fact, but expresses a fact of human nature in the present. In this sense Agamben is correct to say, "the foundation [of the State] is thus not achieved once and for all, but is continually operative in the civil state."[49] This is true not only, as Agamben argues, because of sovereign violence grounded on "the exclusive inclusion of bare life in the State,"[50] but also, as I have tried to show, because of the lupine sociality, the non-relational relation, constitutive of human relations even in society. This is why, upon conceding to Bramhall "there never was a time in which mankind was totally without society," Hobbes further argues, "But in those places where there is a civil war at any time, at the same time there is neither laws, nor commonwealth, nor society."[51] The state of nature is included in the State insofar as fear and distrust are constitutive of sociality. In the previous Section we examined the comparative mechanism that partially causes this lupine sociality. In this Section we will more closely examine its dreadful aspect, namely, the mortal mechanism with which it co-ordinates. Hobbes asserts, "Life it selfe

[49] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 109.
[50] Ibid., 107.
[51] Hobbes, *Questions* XIV, 183-184.

is but Motion, and can never be without Desire, nor without Feare, no more than without Sense."[52] We will see that from a Spinozan perspective the redoubtable relations in both the state of nature and the State are caused by the mortal mechanism of the imagination. In its fixation on death, this tendency to avoid existence being taken away becomes the cause of a decrease in the power of acting constitutive of existence. This desire to avoid death becomes a life like death, a damaged and disempowered life.

The Time of Fear

In a discussion of Spinoza's hermeneutics, Strauss suggests, "Hobbes's political theory is determined by the same motive as the one he has already recognized as the sole reason for the foundation of enduring states: fear and distrust towards other men."[53] Though I will not speculate on Hobbes's motives, Strauss is no doubt correct to claim that fear and distrust, diffidence and dread, are the theoretical foundation of Hobbes's political theory. As we saw in Chapter 3, for Hobbes fear and distrust are constitutive of social relations in "mere nature" because of the rapacious desire to secure future desires: "to assure for ever, the way of his future desire…he cannot assure the power and the means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more."[54] Hobbes makes it clear that fear and distrust are born of intersubjective and temporal ignorance. Because of ignorance of the other, there is, Hobbes argues, "a necessity of suspecting, heeding, anticipating, subjugating, selfe-defending."[55] This

[52] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 6, 46.
[53] Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, trans. E.M. Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 93.
[54] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 11, 70. Desire is rapacious because, as Hobbes explains, like fame or a falling body, power increases "as it proceeds" (Ibid. 10, 62).
[55] Hobbes, *De Cive* Preface

necessity is the foundation of the necessity of the centralization of fear of the sovereign. Fear is the principal force of social relations in the commonwealth as well. As Hobbes explains, "mutual aid is necessary for defense as mutual fear is necessary for peace."[56] Just as fear of others rules life in the state of nature, so the same fear of others demands that the sovereign rule by "terrour,"[57] "mutual and common fear,"[58] and "awe"[59] in the State. Insofar as all covenants are born of fear, we can say that for Hobbes all covenants are compelled, coerced, or "extorted."[60] Like covenants, fear pertains to the future: "For appetite and fear are expectations of the future."[61] But for Hobbes one is just as ignorant of the future as one is of the will of the other: "No man can have in his mind a conception of the future because the future is not yet."[62] Intersubjective and temporal ignorance, fear, and distrust, are mutually reinforcing; because one must know but cannot know the other's will or the future, one cannot trust, and so must fear the other, which in turn grounds the "mutual and common fear" of the sovereign. As Bray has so aptly put it, "One's concern for the future can only be resolved by an act in which one gives up control over the future altogether."[63]

But there seems to be a difficulty in Hobbes's grounding of sociality and society in the futurity of fear. There is a preponderance of the present and the past in his mechanistic materialism that is absent from his conception of human nature and politics. For Hobbes all thought is born of sensation, which "really" consists in the present motions of external bodies

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[56] Hobbes, *Elements* XIX.3
[57] Hobbes, *De Cive* V.8
[58] Hobbes, *Elements* XIX.4
[59] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 17, 120; *Elements* XX.8
[60] Hobbes, *Treatise* 19, 30; *Elements* XV, XX and *De Cive*, Preface to the Reader; *Elements* XIII. This explains why Hobbes goes out of his way to argue that compulsion is consistent with obligation. See *Leviathan* 14.
[61] Hobbes, *Elements* XII.2
[62] Ibid. IV.7
[63] Bray, "The Hedges," 190. In this sense there is not only a predominance of the future in Hobbes's account of fear, but Bray is right to interpret Hobbes' politics itself as futural.

on the counter-motions of the organs, and imagination or fancy is nothing but the "decaying sense" that is at present past. Indeed, Hobbes admits "experience concludeth nothing universally" only because "we make remembrance to be prevision or conjecture of things to come."[64] That is, the future is constitutively uncertain because it is mere presumption about sequences of the past from the present. Hobbes claims, "The *Present* onely has being in Nature; things *Past* have being in the Memory onely, but things *to come* have no being at all; the Future being but a fiction of the mind, applying the sequels of action."[65] How, then, can the future come to dominate Hobbes's account of human nature and politics? How can fear be "the passion to be reckoned upon"[66]? A Spinozan analysis can go some way to a critical elucidation of the temporality of Hobbesian fear.

Spinoza defines fear as "an inconstant sadness, which has arisen from the image of a doubtful thing"(E3p18s2). Fear is hatred, or sadness imagined to be caused by an external thing, of the future. Fear therefore involves a double image: an image of the hated thing and an image of future time. Let us first examine the image of the future from a Spinozan perspective. Like Hobbes, Spinoza's concept of fear involves uncertainty of the future. For Spinoza, too, fear is "doubtful," or, as Hobbes might phrase it, "never full and evident."[67] The fundamental uncertainty and inconstancy constitutive of fear is, according to Spinoza, derived from the vacillation of the imagination that occurs in imagining time. Humans determine "times of existing only by imagination" (E4p62s). In an analysis similar to Hobbes's, Spinoza explains that the order in which ideas occur in the imagination becomes the order in which the individual

[64] Hobbes, *Elements* IV.
[65] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 3, 22.
[66] Ibid 14, 99.
[67] Hobbes, *Elements* IV.10.

imagines time.[68] Time is nothing but the associations involved in the arrant encounters of the body (E2p44c1), derived from the assumption of the similitude of the before and after, the "antecedent" and the "consequent." Insofar as the order and images differ, the mind waivers:

> Let us suppose, then, a child, who saw Peter for the first time yesterday, in the morning, but saw Paul at noon, and Simon in the evening, and today again saw Peter in the morning. It is clear from p18 that as soon as he saw the morning light, he will immediately imagine the sun taking the same course through the sky as he saw on the preceding day, or he will imagine the whole day, and Peter together with the morning, Paul with noon, and Simon with the evening. That is, he will imagine the existence of Paul and of Simon with relation to a future time…and he will do this more uniformly, the more often he has seen them in the same order.
>
> But if it should happen some time that on some other evening he sees James instead of Simon, then on the following morning he will imagine now Simon, now James, together with the evening time, but not both at once. For it is supposed that he has seen one or the other of them in the evening, but not both at once. His imagination, therefore, will vacillate and he will imagine now this one, now that one, with the future evening time, that is, he will regard neither of them as certainly future, but both of them as contingently future (Ibid.).

Thus it is clear how, according to Spinoza, fear is always of "a doubtful thing."[69] Because it is doubtful, because the imagination waivers in imagining the presence and exclusion of the fearsome thing, doubt effects redoubt in countless ways: "Anything whatsoever can be an accidental cause of hope or fear" (E3p50). Though inconstant, fear constantly proliferates itself through the arrancy of imaginative association.

It is important to note that for Spinoza the affect itself involved in fear, the sadness or decrease in power, is in itself temporally indifferent: "a man is affected with the same affect of

[68] See *Elements* IV and *Leviathan* 3.

[69] The Latin *dubius* means to waver to and fro. In Chapter 2 we saw Spinoza's critique of doubt in the philosophy of Descartes: doubt is nothing more than the vacillation of the imagination (E2p44s); doubt cannot be the ground of certainty, "for by certainty we understand something positive, not the privation of doubt" (E2p49s), and so only truth can be the ground of certainty (E2p43); Descartes' own certainty is a lack of doubt or the privation of ideas that exclude the idea of free will (E2p49s). Thus, when he writes, "When we say that a man rests in false ideas and does not doubt them, we do not, on that account, say that he is certain, but only that he does not doubt, or he rests in a false idea because there are no causes to bring about that his imagination wavers" (E2p49s), he could be writing of Descartes.

Joy or Sadness from the image of a past or future thing as from the image of a present thing" (E3p18). In the present-ing of imagination, all time is imagined *as if* present. Thus, insofar as fear involves an image of the hated thing, the future makes a claim on the present. This goes some way toward explaining the power of the future over imaginative existence. But Spinoza also claims "the desires by which we are most bound (by p9c) have regard only to the present and not to the future" (E4p60s).[70] The affective power of the present lies in the tenacity of its image. The future, on the other hand, not only involves the affirmation of the hated thing as present, but also "that which excludes the existence" of the hated thing (E4p9).[71] In order to answer this question we must turn from temporality to intensity, from the future to the end of futurity, death. If, as Spinoza suggests, "A desire which arises from true knowledge of good and evil, insofar as this knowledge concerns the future, can be quite easily restrained or extinguished by Desire for the pleasures of the moment" (E4p16), how can he provide critical insight into the dominance of the future in Hobbes's philosophy?

[70] Spinoza explains this difference in temporal intensity as analogous to the spatial limits of imaginative thought: "we imagine to be equally far from the present all those objects whose time of existing we imagine to be separated from the present by an interval longer than we are used to imagining distinctly; so we relate them, as it were, to one moment of time" (E4d6).

[71] This greater intensity also varies according to the proximity and remoteness of the imagined future (E4p10). Indeed, Spinoza's account of human impotence generally seems to focus on this affective intensity of the temporal present. He frames the purpose of the Fourth Part of the *Ethics*, "Of Human Bondage," as an attempt to explain the causes of *video meliora, proboque, deteriora sequor*. Spinoza cites Ovid here, as well as the Bible, but this problem of knowing the better but doing the worse has a long history in philosophy, at least beginning with Aristotle who, against Plato, was the first to admit of the problem of *akrasia*. These causes, he argues in E4p1-18, lie principally in the impotence of knowledge and the affective priority of the temporal present.

The Power(lessness) of Death

If we look more closely at Spinoza's explanation of the affective strength of the present over the future, we find the answer to the problem just outlined. The corollary to E4p9 reads: "*Other things equal,* the image of a future or a past thing (i.e. of a thing we consider in relation to future or past time, the present being excluded) is weaker than the image of a present thing; and consequently, an affect toward a future or past thing is milder, *other things equal*, than an affect toward a present thing" (E4p9c, my italics). The greater intensity of the present follows *only if* other things are equal. But as we have seen, on Hobbes's account of lupine sociality, fear is not of equal things, but of that which equalizes all things, namely, "the chiefest of natural evils," death. It is because Hobbes reduces all fear to fear of death, that the future can predominate in his politics. From a Spinozan perspective, it is the mortal mechanism of the imagination that produces the dread constitutive of a lupine sociality. As we will see, this mortal mechanism, born of the desire to deny that which denies existence, produces a disempowered existence.

In the exposition of Hobbes's lupine sociality, we saw that in Hobbes' state of nature, fear of the other quickly becomes fear of death. According to Hobbes, because freedom is the power to do what one will, sociality and freedom are mutually exclusive. The individual perceives others as possible impediments to their rapacious desire for eminence, but beyond this, others threaten the greatest impediment of all, death:

> Among so many dangers, therefore, as the natural lusts of men do daily threaten each other withal, to have a care of ones selfe is not a matter so scornfully to be lookt upon, as if so be there had not been a power and will left in one to have done otherwise, for every man is desirour of what is good for him, and shuns what is evill, but chiefly the chiefest of natural evils, which is Death; and this he

> doth, by a certain impulsion of nature, no lesse than that whereby a Stone moves downward.[72]

Hobbes describes the state of nature as a state of equality and equal fear: "This estate of man, therefore, wherein all men are equal, and every man allowed to be his own judge, the fears they have of one another are equal."[73] The fear that equalizes is not the fear of the loss of liberty, the fear of the other as impediment to determinate desire, but the fear of the other as the end of desire as such, death:

> If we consider how little odds there is of strength or knowledge between men of mature age, and how with great facility he that is the weaker in strength or wit, or in both, may utterly destroy the power of the stronger, since there needeth but little force to the taking away of a man's life; we may conclude that men considered in mere nature, ought to admit amongst themselves equality.[74]

Even though Hobbes defines the power of the human being in terms of an inequality of power, Hobbes argues that all human beings are equal in their impotence before the eminent impediment, death. Through the covenant this fear of death at the hand of others becomes fear of the sword in the hand of the sovereign: "the wills of most men are governed only by fear, and where there is no power of coercion, there is no fear."[75] As explained above, the sword is the sovereign monopoly on violence. It is to the sword that all sovereign powers are annexed.[76] As Hobbes explains, "not every fear justifies the Action it produceth, but the fear onely of corporeall hurt, which we call *Bodily Fear*."[77] Because one cannot relinquish the right of self-defense against corporeal punishment, the State monopoly on violence is "not given [the

[72] Hobbes, *De Cive* I.7.
[73] Hobbes, *Elements* XIX.1.
[74] Ibid XIV.2.
[75] Ibid. XX.6.
[76] Hobbes, *Elements* XX.6-11, *Leviathan* 18.
[77] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 27, 206.

sovereign], but left to him and him only."[78] That is, the sovereign maintains dominion over life through the power over death.

For Spinoza life affirms itself through itself. In Deleuze's words, "Spinoza's is a philosophy of pure affirmation."[79] Because the individual is nothing but substance existing in a certain and determinate way, each thing is, as we have seen, perfect in itself, and so affirms its own existence through itself: "For the definition of any thing affirms, and does not deny, the thing's essence, or it posits the thing's essence, and does not take it away. So while we attend only to the thing itself, and not to external causes, we shall not be able to find anything in it which can destroy it" (E3p4). It follows that each thing strives to imagine only those things that affirm its existence and increase its power of acting (E3p12). In the previous Section we saw how this desire to affirm existence and power became disempowering through the affects of pride, ambition, hate and envy. Given this self-affirmative character of life, what, according to Spinoza, is the power of death? In addition to striving to affirm its existence and power, Spinoza explains the mind "avoids imagining those things that diminish or restrain its or the body's power" (E3p13c). In seeking to deny its own death, this mortal mechanism of the imagination tends toward and reproduces the image of death. Death is the absolute diminishment or restraint of power because it is the "taking away (*tollere*)" of the existence of the individual as such: "I understand the body to die when its parts are so disposed that they acquire a different proportion of motion and rest to one another" (E4p39s). The image of death posits (*ponit*) the taking away (*tollit*) of existence.

Because the denial of death involves the image of death, the mortal tendency has real effects on the way of life. Rather than principally affirming existence, the mortal mechanism

[78] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 28, 214
[79] Deleuze, *Spinoza's Practical Philosophy*, 12-13.

denies death. It is this work of the imagination that, together with the comparative mechanism, causes Hobbes's politics of fear. In referring to the fear of the sovereign as awe, Hobbes indicates that it involves a kind of wonder. Just as pride is wonder at oneself, so awe is wonder at what one fears, which Spinoza calls dread. In both cases the object of wonder is imagined to be singular, exceptional, and in the case of the sovereign, it is imagined to be the absolute power of death over life. We can recall that Hobbes describes hope as "expectation of good to come, as fear is the expectation of evil."[80] It turns out, the "expectation of evil" to come becomes one of the evils of Hobbes's political philosophy. According to Spinoza, "The free man thinks of nothing less than death, and his wisdom is a meditation on life, not on death" (E4p67). This is because the free individual seeks to empower itself, not merely to avoid disempowerment, as in "the example of the sick and the healthy. The sick man, from timidity regarding death, eats what he is repelled by, whereas the healthy man enjoys his food, and in this way enjoys life better than if he feared death, and directly desired to avoid it" (E4p63c). In its desire to deny the end of desire, the Hobbesian image of human nature obviates the direct empowerment involved in life. As Spinoza says, "He who is guided by fear, and does good to avoid evil," is not guided by virtue or the power of thinking and acting (E4p63). Where Hobbes's philosophy proceeds through the binary peace or death, Spinoza shows that insofar as it is dominated by its specter, Hobbes's peace is more like death:

> The superstitious know how to reproach people for their vices better than they know how to teach them virtues, and they strive, not to guide men by reason, but to restrain them by fear, so that they flee evil rather than love virtues. Such people aim only to make others as wretched as they themselves are, so it is no wonder that they are generally burdensome and hateful to men (E4p63s).

[80] Hobbes, *Elements* IX.8.

For the same reason I would not speculate on Hobbes's motives, I do not want to speculate on Hobbes' affective condition in life (and his love poems, written in his nineties, suggest he was not at all wretched).[81] It should be clear, though, that for Spinoza the motive or the force of the good life is direct empowerment, not avoidance of death.

Section 4. The Vermicular View: Spinoza's Collective Conception of Freedom

In Fifteen hundred eighty eight, Old Style,
When that Armada did invade Our Isle,
Call'd the Invincible; whose freight was then,
Nothing but Murd'ring Steel, and Murd'ring Men;
Most of Which Navy was disperst, or lost,
And had the Fate to Perish on our Coast:
April the fifth (though now with Age outworn)
I'th' early Spring, I, a poor worm, was born.

–Hobbes, "The Verse Life"[82]

I wish he may not Die *too soon* after so long a Life,
That he no longer would maintain his cursed *Strife*
'Gainst That, which would make him repent of all's Im'pieties:
Least his Long Life bring him i'th' End to th' WORM that *Never Dies*

–Abraham, "To Mr. Hobbes"

Hobbes's autobiographical poem begins much the way the poem in Abraham Cowley's *The Monster of Malmesbury* ends, from the worm's perspective. Spinoza was similarly warned against "the Divine Justice, which consumes all things in its wrath" by a former friend and Catholic convert, Albert Burgh, who addresses Spinoza as a "a wretched little man, a base little worm of the earth, indeed, ashes, food for worms" (Ep. 67A). Hobbes was born "a poor worm," into a war that began with an English military expedition into the Netherlands and lived for

[81] See Aubrey, *Brief Lives.*
[82] Hobbes, "The Verse Life," 254.

nearly a century in an era of numerous wars for and between England and the Netherlands. Remarking on the Second Anglo-Dutch War, Spinoza proclaims,

> these turmoils move me, neither to laughter nor even to tears, but to philosophizing and to observing human nature better. For I do not think it right for me to mock nature, much less to lament it, when I reflect that men, like all other things, are only part of nature, and that I do not know how each part of nature agrees with the whole to which it belongs, and how it coheres with the other parts (Ep 30).[83]

Following these remarks, Henry Oldenburg, Spinoza's friend and the Secretary of the Royal Society from which Hobbes was excluded,[84] asks Spinoza to "shed any light on that difficult question concerning our knowledge of how each part of Nature agrees [*conveniat*] with its whole and in what way it agrees [*cohaereat*] with other things" (Ep 31). Spinoza responds with the image of a little worm in the blood, which "would live in this blood the way we do in this part of the universe" (Ep 32). In this Section I will use the vermicular view to conclude the Spinozan critique of the Hobbesian configuration of freedom and to get some perspective on Spinoza's own concept of freedom.

We have seen that both Hobbes and Spinoza affirm that "men, like all other things, are only part of nature," and so necessarily determined by the totality of causes in nature. But if the Hobbes-Spinoza conjunction can be said to lie in their strict determinism, the disjunction between their concepts of freedom lies in the determinate nature of their determinism. As we will see, Spinoza's feigned vermicular view delimits his own view of being part of and determined by Nature. The perspective of the worm is that of immanent causation, of being both

[83] These epistolary lines echo the Preface of the Third Part of the *Ethics*, in which Spinoza affirms the necessity and perfection of all that exists in nature, including the causes of "human impotence," against "those who prefer to curse and laugh at the affects and actions of men" (E3pref). See also TP I.4.
[84] Malcolm argues that Hobbes's exclusion resulted from the proximity of his mechanical philosophy to theirs – and their desire to distance themselves from his theological and political notoriety. (Noel Malcolm, "Hobbes and the Royal Society" in *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 317-335).

internally and externally determined, in a universe that produces itself through the infinite multiplicity that is itself. From this view we can assess the imaginative causes and real disempowering effects of the Hobbesian configuration of freedom.

Hobbes takes freedom to consist in the non-relational relation of freedom from impediment, a concept of freedom that engenders a solitary, anti-social conception of sociality. In Sections 2 and 3 of this Chapter we examined the imaginative causes of this lupine sociality that Hobbes posits as endemic to human nature. In this Section I will show that the negative concept of freedom presupposed by this lupine sociality is produced by the exclusionary logic of the imagination, which fixes external causes *as* external. Because Spinoza himself defines freedom and action as that which can be understood through the nature of the agent "alone," commentators often mistake Spinoza's concept of freedom as negative.[85] In one of the more recent and extensive analyses of Spinoza's concept of freedom, for example, Kisner defines Spinoza's freedom as "liberation from the power of external forces."[86] But as the vermicular view reveals, the key to human freedom for Spinoza does not lie in freedom from external forces, but in the affinity, the *convenire* and *cohaereo*, or the coming together and cleaving together, with external forces. Spinoza is clear that "things that agree only in negation, or in what they do not have, really agree in nothing" (E4p32s). In exposing the disempowering effects of the exclusionary mechanism, I will argue that for Spinoza freedom consists in acting

[85] See E1d7 and E3d2.

[86] Matthew Kisner, *Spinoza on Freedom: Reason, Autonomy and the Good Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1. Of course this recent definition belongs to a long line of interpretations of Spinoza's concept of freedom, a reading that is the foundation of the liberal and libertarian interpretations of Spinoza's political philosophy. See, for example, Steven Barbone, "What Counts as an Individual for Spinoza?" in *Spinoza: Metaphysical Themes*, eds. Olli Koistinen and J. I. Biro, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 89-112; C. Lee Rice, "*Tanquam Naturae Humanae Exemplar*"; Steven Smith, *Spinoza, Liberalism, and the Question of Jewish Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

with external causes, such that they are no longer external, and so presents a collective conception of freedom against both Descartes' and Hobbes's images of solitary freedom.

The Exclusionary Mechanism

Hobbes's mechanistic materialism externalizes all causes – and his concept of freedom reflects this. The Hobbesian configuration of freedom is, as Hobbes himself professes, negative. Freedom is defined in terms of privation, as a relation that is a lack of relation, or of non-impediment to action. Freedom *is* only when impediment is *not*. As we saw in Chapter 3, this negative conception of freedom is supposed by and implicated in Hobbesian sociality in both the state of nature and the State. One is free in the state of nature to the extent that one is able to realize one's will *without* opposition, that is to say, to the extent that others *do not* impede one's desires. In order to avoid impediments to one's will and especially the ultimate impediment, death, the State is instituted through the unity of wills: "The Greatest of humane Powers, is that which is compounded of the Powers of most men, united by consent, in one person, Naturall, or Civill, that has the use of all their Powers depending on his will; such as is the Power of a Common-wealth."[87] This union of forces, this compound of powers, is not a unity through itself but only through non-relational relation. Subjects covenant with each other through the person of the sovereign, who is not part of the covenant. The consent involved in the covenant is the relinquishment of agency, a will to non-impediment to the will of the State, such that political agency takes the form of authorization without action. For Hobbes there can be no mutual commonality, no union *with* others, because freedom and society are mutually exclusive. And

[87] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 10, 62.

so even in the State freedom exists only where sociality is not. That is to say, on the Hobbesian configuration of freedom, freedom is not in-common.

From a Spinozan perspective, the Hobbesian configuration of freedom is caused by the exclusionary mechanism of the imagination. Again, Spinoza defines the image as "the affections of the human body whose ideas present external bodies as present to us" (E2p17s). Insofar as the imaginative idea always involves the idea of the imagining body and the idea of the external body, it must be said that the image is, in Althusser's words, "hallucinatory," not only because it presents the external body *as present*, but it also fixes the external body *as external*. [88] Hobbes himself warns against mistaking mere imagination for an external object, but his own image of freedom succumbs to the imaginative tendency to externalize. According to Spinoza the imaginative idea persists, or tenaciously presents the *ideatum* as if present through itself, insofar as it excludes the idea of that which excludes its existence (E2p17s). This *secludere* is a shutting off or isolation of the imagined. This seclusion is at work in two senses: 1) As we saw in Chapter 2, it is operative in the present-ing of the imagination; the image persists in presenting the imagined as present only because it is isolated or broken off from the chain of causes that produce it; 2) It is also operative in the exclusionary mechanism of the imagination, that which posits the external body as external, or isolates the other as other. Whether because of a substantial distinction or because of a non-relational relation, in both cases external causes are conceived as absolutely external. But for Spinoza, "of things which are really distinct from one another, once can be and remain in its condition without the other" (E1p15). But Spinoza's immanent, relational ontology does not permit of such a condition. In claiming freedom is where impediment is not, the Hobbesian configuration of freedom – much

[88] Louis Althusser, "On Feuerbach," *The Humanist Controversy and Other Writings (1966-1967)*, ed. Francois Matheron, trans. G.M. Gosharian (London: Verso, 2003), 136.

like the Cartesian – isolates the individual insofar as the agency of the individual involves being cut off and independent from external causes. This exclusionary mechanism, which produces the non-relational relation of Hobbes's negative concept of freedom, is also operative in Hobbes's lupine sociality – it is only insofar as the other is perceived as other, as an external cause, that they are perceived as the *object* of hate, envy, and fear. In this sense, the atomism of which Hobbes is so often accused is in fact the effect, not the cause of his concept of freedom. Life is "solitary" both in and outside of society because of this mutual exclusion of freedom and sociality.

It is in this sense that the lupine sociality born of the Hobbesian configuration of freedom also excludes the unity of human nature. When Spinoza argues, "Insofar as human beings are subject to passions they cannot be said to agree in nature," he does so on the grounds that "things that agree only in negation, or in what they do not have, really agree in nothing" (E4p32s). For Spinoza, then, there can be no collectivity of the passions, though, as we saw in Sections 2 and 3, human beings can and often do live the mutilated and inimical existence described in Hobbes's image of lupine sociality. In the same Scholium in which he denies unity grounded in negation, Spinoza further argues, "things that are said to agree in nature are said to agree in power (by 3p7), but not in lack of power, or negation" (E4p32s). As we will see, it is only when human beings act in co-operation, when they act through themselves in common with others, that they are free and constitute the actuality of human nature. Hobbes argues against the "dissolute multitude" because he claims the multitude is incapable of action and cannot secure the security those in the multitude seek. [89] While Hobbes suggests, "men cannot

[89] Hobbes, *De Cive* X.10.; *Elements* XX.2, *De Cive* VI.1 and VII.5; *De Cive* V.4 and *Leviathan* 17, 118. See Ch. 3 of Montag's *Bodies, Masses, Power* for an extensive analysis of Spinoza's critique of Hobbes' treatment of the multitude. Montag argues, "To read Hobbes from a Spinozist point of view allows us to see not simply the absent concept that is arguably central to Hobbes's politics, but to understand that its

distinguish, without study and great understanding, between one action of many men, and many actions of one multitude,"[90] Spinoza asserts that the unity of any multitude is defined through its collective action (E2d7). Sharp is therefore correct to claim that for Spinoza "human freedom must be re-imagined as freedom-within relation."[91] For Spinoza individuals are more powerful collectively than in non-relational relation. It is to this notion of freedom as collectivity to which we will now turn.

"The Greatest Freedom":
Sociality Against the State, Collectivity Against Negative Community

In Chapter 2 we saw some of the ways in which Spinoza argues that his doctrine of freedom without free will is "of use for life (*ad usum vitae*)" (E2p49sIV). Hobbes too has a doctrine of freedom without free will, but as we have seen, it is implicated in a lupine sociality that Spinoza deems a wretched life. In concluding this Section and the work I want to examine how Spinoza's critique of the Hobbesian configuration of freedom is of use for life, specifically "*ad vitam socialem*" (E4p49s). In Letter 29, Spinoza declares that the turmoils of war lead him "to philosophizing and to observing human nature better." We will better understand what Spinoza means by human nature in examining the worm in the blood described in Letter 32, a

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exclusion is precisely one of Hobbes's foremost theoretical objectives" (Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power*, 95).

[90] Hobbes, *Leviathan* 11, 73.

[91] Sharp, *Politics of Renaturalization*, 34. Sharp reaches similar conclusions to my own through a compelling analysis of Spinoza's concept of reason. Sharp argues that although reason has its foundation in common notions that are universal, the operation of reason is local (Sharp, *Politics of Renaturalization*, 93-100). In part because I consider her analysis decisive and in part because I have found that it is difficult to avoid the common sense connotations of reason (as faculty peculiar to human beings, as self-evidently distinct from sense perception and imagination) against which Spinoza developed his own concept, I do not make use of the concept of reason very often in my own analysis. Instead I tend toward using the concepts of virtue, power, or causality with which Spinoza identifies the life of one led by reason.

mobilization of imagination that explicates the life of the human being in the universe. [92] If for Spinoza human nature does not consist in the negative community born of the lupine passions, then it is only insofar as individuals agree, *conveniunt* and *cohaerent*, in nature that human nature is produced and "man is a god to man" (E4p35s). The vermicular view shows that in Spinoza's usage human nature is another name for human freedom. Spinoza claims "the greatest freedom" is "virtue itself" (E2p49s) and he defines virtue as power, "the very essence or nature of man, insofar as he has the power of bringing about certain things, which can be understood through the laws of his nature alone" (E4d8). From the vermicular view it is clear that to "be understood through the laws of his nature alone" does not mean to act alone, but to act in common *with* others. As Balibar puts it, for Spinoza "to be an active or adequate cause is also to establish a relationship with others."[93]

In Ep. 32 Spinoza offers a definition of the relationship between things which *cohaerant*, stick or cleave together, and *convenient*, come together, a relationship I will refer to as affinity because these relations involve moving toward and overcoming limits, borders, and boundaries. Spinoza then elucidates these definitions by feigning a worm in the blood, which both observes and reasons about the parts of the blood "as we do in this part of the universe." Let us examine, then, the vermicular view of part and whole in the definitions Spinoza proposes:

> By coherence of parts, then, I understand nothing but that the laws or the nature of one part adapts itself to the laws or the nature of the other part so that they are opposed to each other as little as possible. Concerning the whole and parts, I

[92] In putting forth the image of the worm in the blood, Spinoza uses *fingere*, or the use of imagination with the idea that cognizes this use, a term Spinoza uses frequently in his early works but less in the *Ethics*. This constructive use of imagination is also no doubt at work in Spinoza's "model of human nature," which Sharp rightly calls a "useful fiction" (Sharp, *Politics of Renaturalization*, 106).
[93] Balibar, "From Individuation to Transindividuation," 24. As Balibar rightly points out, "Spinoza never actually says that anyone whose actions can be explained by his own or his sole nature (*per solam suam naturam intelligi*) is acting solely or separately from the others" (Ibid.).

> consider things as parts of some whole to the extent that the nature of one adapts itself to that of the other so that that they all agree with one another as far as possible (Ep 32).

Spinoza gives the example of the parts of the blood, explaining that only insofar the determinate motion, size, and shape of each adapts itself to the determinate motion, size, and shape of the others can they be considered as parts of the blood and do they constitute one fluid. Spinoza then asks Oldenburgh to feign a worm in the blood capable of "distinguishing" the parts as parts and "observing by reason" the "encounters" of the parts in their relation to each other in the whole of the blood (Ibid). Spinoza further explains that because there are causes outside of the blood, the blood itself can be conceived as a part of a larger whole, which itself can be conceived as belonging to a larger whole *ad infinitum*.

These definitions and the "observations" of the worm in the blood indicate that both the relationship of parts to each other and to the whole of which they are a part involve accommodation [*se accommodare*]. In the *Ethics* Spinoza uses *se accommodare* to emphasize that singular things are always overpowered and so subject to passions by forces external to themselves: "It is impossible that a man should not be part of Nature …From this it follows that man is necessarily always subject to passions, that he follows and obeys the common order of Nature, and *accommodates himself to it as much as the nature of things requires*" (E4p4c, my italics). This proposition follows from the sole Axiom of the Fourth Part of the *Ethics*, "On Human Servitude": "There is no singular thing in nature than which there is not another more powerful and stronger. Wherever one is given, there is another more powerful by which the first can be destroyed" (E4a1). Some commentators have rightly focused on this Axiom to emphasize the finitude of the human being, to mark the epistemological and existential limits of

the human – or of any mode – in Spinoza's ontological scheme.[94] But what is often underappreciated is that this Axiom emphasizes the impotence of the singular thing *as a singular thing*. This is why, although Spinoza reaffirms this impotence of the solitary being nearly verbatim in the Appendix to the Fourth Part, he adds, "*But* if he lives among such individuals as agree with his nature, his power of acting will thereby be aided and encouraged" (E4appvii, my italics). What *se accomodare* indicates, then, is that singular things are always powerless to what is given *as singular* and are empowered when they give to and are given their force by others. As the *com* in *accomodare* indicates, to accommodate external causes is not to succumb to or be subject to them, but to work *with* them.

Many commentators take the agreement of nature required for such empowerment to be similarity. Indeed, Matheron claims Spinoza's philosophy is an "ethics of similitude."[95] But we should again look at Letter 32, where Spinoza explains that affinity involves "as little contrariety as possible (*minime sibi contrarentur*)" and "agreement to the greatest extent possible" (*quod fierier potest inter se consentient*)." There must be something other than similitude at stake in affinity insofar as similitude operates according to likeness, simulacrum, or imitation, not a real contrariety or coming-together. This is not to deny that similitude can produce such real effects. Indeed, in Sections 2 and 3 of this Chapter we saw just how real the social contrariety produced by similitude can be. Furthermore, Spinoza clearly states that

[94] See, for example, Yitzhak Melamed, "Acosmism or Weak Individuals? Hegel, Spinoza, and the Reality of the Finite," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 48 (2010), 77-92. In a recent intertextual account, Buyse argues that the source for Spinoza's concept of accommodation was Huygen's discovery of synchronization. See Filip Buyse, "A New Reading of Spinoza's Letter 32: Spinoza and the Agreement Between Bodies in the Universe" in *The Concept of Affectivity in Early Modern Philosophy*, eds. Gábor Boros, Judit Szalai & Olivér István Tóth (Budapest, 2017), 104-123.

[95] Alexandre Matheron, *Individu et communaute chez Spinoza*, 164. See also Sharp, *Politics of Renaturalization*, 100-107; Rice, "Tanquam Naturae Humanae Exemplar"; Michael Della Rocca, "Egoism and the Imitation of the Affects"; Karolina Huebner, "Spinoza on Being Human and Human Perfection" in *Essays on Spinoza's Ethical Theory*, eds. Matthew Kisner and Andrew Youpa, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 124-143.

insofar as things are conceived in terms of power, "we can recognize no difference between the causes generated in us by reason and those generated by other causes" (TPII.5). Commentators have correctly argued that Spinoza mobilizes the passionate imagination in his ethics and politics in order to do so. As Balibar has noted, "passions are not the antithesis of sociability but another genesis of society."[96] Insofar as passionate desires can be both good and evil (E4appiii), Spinoza certainly does show the way to marshal the imitation of the affects. But we have seen that the imitation of the affects is fundamentally *ambivalent*, insofar as it can produce both love and hate, compassion and envy, the desire for mutuality and the desire for mutual destruction. Therefore similitude cannot be an adequate explanation of affinity.[97]

Rather than thinking affinity in terms of similitude, then, I will turn to that doctrine Bayle deemed "the most monstrous hypothesis," immanent causation.[98] After describing the worm in the blood, Spinoza claims "all bodies can and must be conceived as we have here conceived the blood….as part of the whole universe…regulated in infinite ways by the infinite

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[96] Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, 85. I consider Balibar's analysis of E4p37 in *Spinoza and Politics* and Mathereau's *Individu et Communaute* to be the most cogent accounts of the imaginative production of community.

[97] It can further be argued that in coordination with the hypostatic tendency of the imagination, similitude multiplies the objects of sad passions, scaling them immeasurably, such that "If someone has been affected with joy or sadness by someone of a class, or nation, different from his own…he will love or hate, not only that person, but everyone of the same class or nation" (E3p46). Furthermore, many appeal to similitude to explain the relation between humans (see, for example, Della Rocca, "Egoism and the Imitation of the Affects" and Huebner, "Spinoza on Being Human"), but for Spinoza the imitation of the affects are not peculiar to human relations. Indeed, Spinoza explains the biblical story of the fall of man in terms of Adam's imaginative identification with the serpent, i.e. "the imitation of the affects, or because he believed the lower animals to be life himself, he immediately began to imitate their affect" (E4p68s), and so the imitation fail in this explanatory work.

[98] The very words "immanent causation" might provoke a certain interpretive unease – and with good reason. Immanent causation is often taken as metaphysical and ethical pandemic or panacea by readers of Spinoza: it is the hideous hypothesis (Hume) or the crown on the prince of philosophy (Deleuze); it is "more horrible" than "the most infamous things that Pagan poets dare to sing against Venus and Jupiter" (Bayle) or it is the adventure in which Spinoza does not quite venture far enough, but which makes him a decisively modern champion of this-worldliness (Yovel). But because such totalizing readings of immanent causation, or as it is more often referred to, "immanence," dominate the history of Spinoza interpretation we have even more reason to say that the concept of immanence demands close, determinate readings.

power [of the universe]" (Ep. 32). He further clarifies that "in relation to substance I conceive each part to have a closer union with its whole" because each individual in the universe is "this same power, not insofar as it is infinite…but insofar as it is finite" (Ibid.) Although Oldenbugh would find Spinoza's account "very pleasing," there was a ten year silence between the two. Upon resuming their correspondence, Spinoza returns to this "closer union" between substance and its modes. Oldenburgh warns Spinoza "not to mix into [the *Ethics*] anything which might seem to any extent to weaken the practice of Religious virtue" (Ep. 62) and remarks that some (and maybe even he) were convinced that several doctrine in Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise* undermine such virtue. When Spinoza asks Oldenburgh to specify which doctrines and passages appear to do so, Oldenburgh points to "those passages in the work which seem to speak ambiguously about God and Nature. A great many people think you confuse the two things" (Ep. 71).[99] Spinoza quickly explains that his philosophy is not a confusion, but an identification of God and Nature: "I favor an opinion far different from the one Modern Christians usually defend. For I maintain that God is, as they say, the immanent, and not the transitive cause of all things. That all things are in God and move in God" (Ep. 73). Other than this letter, there are very few passages in which Spinoza explicitly invokes immanent causation. They are: *KV* Dialogues, I.2-3 and II.26 and E1p18. In the *Ethics*, Spinoza demonstrates, "God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things" by arguing, "Everything that is, is in God (by E1p15), and so (by E1p16) God is the cause of all things which are in him. That is the first [thing to be proven.] And then outside of God there can be no substance (by E1p14), i.e. (byd3),

[99] In keeping with the Hobbes-Spinoza conjunction, the majority of this late correspondence is about Oldenburgh's claim that "fatal necessity" destroys both laws and miracles, including the literal interpretation of the resurrection of Jesus, which Spinoza flatly denies.

thing which is in itself outside God. That was the second."[100] Spinoza's epistolary claim regarding the vermicular view, then, is at one with his claim of immanent causation.

There are two advantages in taking the vermicular view to be that of immanent causation. First, it emphasizes power, or the virtue with which Spinoza identifies human freedom. What is lost in explaining affinity in terms of similitude is just this power "of bringing about certain things, which can be understood through the laws of his nature alone" (E4d8). It is because the individual is part of nature, or is the finite existence of the infinite power of nature, that Spinoza writes of "human nature, or rather God, no insofar as he is infinite, but only insofar as he is the cause of man's existence" (E4p68d). The perspective of immanent causation makes clear that because "God must be called the cause of all things in the same sense in which he is called the cause of himself" (E1p25s), it follows that "the power of natural things, by which they exist and have effects, is the very power of God itself" (TP II.3). Letter 32 emphasizes the essentially *immanent* and *efficacious* character of the relation between Nature and its effects – Nature does not produce its effects outside of itself, but produces itself as its effects. The vermicular view affirms that the immanent causality of God *just is* the infinite efficient causality, the relationality, among singular things. Second, because immanent causation is the cause of effects that are internal to the cause, it compels us to rethink the implications of the mutual exclusion or reduction of causal relationality to either internal or external determination. In the *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being*, Spinoza even treats the human mind as immanent cause of its ideas, a helpful way to frame the way in which the individual is an

[100] This proposition is consistent with the account in the *Short Treatise*, where Spinoza delimits the relationship of cause and effect in immanent causation as: 1. The effect is not external to the cause, but remains in it (KV, First Dialogue); 2. The effect depends on its cause to be and be understood; 3. Cause and effect constitute a union, one which does not increase the essence of the cause (KV, Second Dialogue).

internal cause of both its adequate and inadequate ideas, of both its actions and passions.[101] As Balibar puts it, for Spinoza "the essence of causality is the unity of activity and passivity…in the same 'subject'."[102] Spinoza's immanent, or what Balibar calls relational, ontology presupposes that external causes always also involve the internal power of the agent. Because all ideas are actions of the mind (E2s3), even inadequate ideas involve the essence of the mind, just as passions involve the power of acting of the individual. This is why Spinoza refers to inadequate ideas as mutilated and inadequate causes as partial, not simply external, causes. After geometrically detailing the many ways in which the human mind is inadequate (E2p24-29), Spinoza concludes,

> I say expressly that the mind has, not an adequate, but only a confused knowledge of itself, of its own body, and of external bodies, so long as it perceives things from the common order of nature, i.e., so long as it is determined externally, from fortuitous encounters with things, to regard this or that, and not so long as it is determined internally, from the fact that it regards a number of things at once, to understand their agreements, differences, and oppositions. For so often as it is disposed internally, in this or another way, then it regards things clearly and distinctly (E2p29s).

From the perspective of immanent causation, the mind is "disposed internally" when the mind affirms rather than denies its relation to others in Nature. Spinoza states the same thing in the *Short Treatise* in the register of power: "When we say that some things are in our power, and others outside it, we understand by those which *are in our power* those which we bring about *through the order of or together with nature, of which we are a part*" (KV II.5, my italics). The vermicular view therefore troubles the fixed external determination constitutive of the Hobbesian configuration of freedom as well as the absolutely internal determination constitutive of the Cartesian configuration of freedom. The vermicular view, understood as immanent

[101] See KV II.2, First and Second Dialogues.
[102] Balibar, "Individuation to Transindividuation," 15.

causation, is the view that even external causes have common ground for internal relations and internal causes must always be understood in terms of their relation with external causes.

The first significant ethical implication of the vermicular view, the perspective of immanent causation, is that Spinoza defines the human collective as neither equivalent to the State, nor simply outside of it.[103] In opposition to the Hobbesian configuration of freedom, according to which the State alone makes freedom "fruitful," Spinozan sociality cannot be confused with the State. Spinoza claims he has refuted those who "compare God's power with the power of kings" (E2p3s). This refutation is correctly read against the anthropomorphic God, transcendent ruler and "Divine Justice" that punishes those who might transgress his commandments. But I think it can just as correctly be read against the Hobbesian "Mortall God," or deification of the State. As we have seen, Spinoza unmistakably asserts that there can be no agreement in what is not, that there can be no negative community. For Spinoza peace "consists not in the absence of war but in the union or harmony of minds" (TP 6.4). The in-common of human nature is explicitly an agreement in power, a community of cooperative forces. Human nature, insofar as it is a name for human freedom, is therefore constitutively different from the State, which operates through the sad affects. The State, developed to "suppress" the destructive affects, also operates through the destructive affects: "No affect can be restrained except by an affect stronger than and contrary to the affect to be restrained, and everyone refrains from doing harm out of timidity regarding a greater harm" (E4pP37s2). In this sense Spinoza agrees with Hobbes that the State's power lies in the "awe" it instills in subjects. Its power therefore arises from its constituents but only insofar as it asserts its greater

[103] My position is therefore distinguished from that of Balibar, who often identifies sociality and freedom with life in the State (Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, Chapter 4), and Negri, who identifies the multitude as contrary to even if constitutive of the State (Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics*, trans. Michael Hard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

force as a cause external and contrary to them. As Spinoza explains, the State institutes a "common rule of life…not by reason, which cannot restrain the affects (by p17s) but by threats" (Ibid.). The State creates harmony by attaching the image of sad affects to the image of a multiple actions forbidden by the law. In keeping with the Hobbesian conception of freedom through the State, the State prevents rather than enables, it produces the relinquishment of rather than the conditions for agency. Its harmony is a false harmony. As Spinoza formulates it, "Harmony is commonly born of fear, but then it is without trust…Add to this that fear arises from weakness of mind, and therefore does not pertain to the exercise of [virtue]" (E4app.XVI). That is to say, according to Spinoza, the State administers its rule through the sad affects and so should not be conflated with human freedom, which operates through the joyful, mutual empowering affects of love, generosity, friendship, and nobility. As Spinoza puts it in the *Political Treatise*, "It would be incorrect to call the life of reason," that is, the free life, "obedience" (TP II.20).[104]

But the sad contrivances of the State do not imply that one can live more joyfully outside of or separated from the State. Spinoza cautions, "A man who is guided by reason is more free in a State, where he lives according to common decision, than in solitude, where he obeys only himself" (E4p73). This claim has led even as perspicuous a reader of Spinoza as Balibar to in large part identify Spinozan sociality with the functions of the State. I interpret Spinoza's claim about being "more free in a state" in a much more restricted sense. Insofar as the State exists, even if only passionately, as the site of interpolation in which the mutilated powers of many are invested, it must be countenanced, not simply denied. Insofar as there is

[104] See Domingo Sanches Estop's compelling analysis of the non-existence of the State born of the imaginative interpolation of an obedient subject (Juan Domingo Sanches Estop, "Beyond Legitimacy: The State as an Imaginary Entity in Spinoza's Political Ontology" in *Spinoza's Authority Volume I: Resistance and Power in Ethics*, eds. A. Kiarina Kordela and Dimitris Vardoulakis, (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2018), 87-111.

necessarily interaction among individuals in the State, there is a proliferation of encounters and so of the conditions for the joining of forces. It is this commonality from which the State ontologically abstracts its power, even if the State effectively manipulates the affects of those under its imaginary rule, but it is also this commonality that can manifest itself otherwise, even if only in terms of resistance to interpolation by State. The function of the State, then, as long as it exists, should be the enabling of ability, the furthering of agency. On these grounds Spinoza argues, "a commonwealth whose peace depends on the sluggish spirit of its subjects who are led like sheep to learn simply to be slaves can more properly be called a desert than a commonwealth" (TP V.4).

The second, but more significant ethical implication of the vermicular view is that, against Descartes' sovereign individual and Hobbes's negative community, Spinoza presents us with a human freedom in-common. We saw that for Hobbes all causal relations are externally determined and so one is free only in non-relational relation to external causes, that is, in fear and relinquishment of agency. According to Spinoza, one is not free in the com-passion of fear, or in the non-relational relation constitutive of Hobbesian society. As he concludes in the passage from the *Political Treatise* cited above,

> Freedom is a virtue, or perfection. Whatever convicts man of weakness can't be related to his freedom. A man can't be called free on the grounds that he can *not* exist, or that he can *not* use reason; only insofar as he has the power to exist and produce effects, according to the laws of human nature, can he be called free acts in accordance with the necessity of his nature (TP II.7).

In order to explain cooperation, we should be clear that for Spinoza encounters with external causes either disagree or agree, restrain or aid, destroy or enable, the power of acting of the individual.[105] The affective nature of these encounters corresponds directly to the relation of the

[105] In E3p1, Spinoza actually identifies three possible encounters: *neutral*, empowering and disempowering, where neutral encounters correspond to those with that which is completely different or

natures involved: contrary or common. It should be noted that similitude is not part of Spinoza's account here. We have already discussed the desire for mutual destruction born of contrary natures. Spinoza defines the power of the passion as the power of the external cause "compared with" that of the individual, that is, the power of passions lies in their being contrary to the power of the individual (E4p5). Insofar as the comparative and mortal mechanisms imagine the other as other, and so as the object of hate, envy, diffidence and fear, there is mutual (desire for) destruction. As we saw in the analysis of the Cartesian configuration of freedom this desire is intensified by the imagined freedom of the other. According to Spinoza, there must be "something in common" for both passion and actions, that is, for relations to disagree or agree, restrain or aid, destroy or enable, the power of acting of the individual (E4p29). The question, then, is how to turn what is contrary into what is common.

In the Fifth Part of the *Ethics,* Spinoza emphasizes the *externality* of passionate love, hate, and other disempowering affects. He explains the power over these disempowering affects lies in joining them to other thoughts, that is, in excluding their exclusion or finding their in-common: "If we separate our emotions, or affects, from the thought of an external cause, and join them to other thoughts, then the love, or hate, toward the external cause is destroyed, as are the vacillations of the mind arising from these affects" (E5p2). So let us look more closely at the common through which agreement is possible. For both Descartes and Hobbes the common consists only in the unity of wills, but for Spinoza the common consists in the good. At the level of "the whole universe," it must be said that everything is in-common. Spinoza contends "the greatest good of those who seek virtue is common to all, and can be enjoyed by all equally" (E4p36) because it is all. And so the good of those whose actions can be explained "through

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"alien." But because everything that is exists in and produces effects through *Deus sive Natura*, there is for Spinoza no real ontological difference, so it must be said that there can be nothing that an individual can encounter with which there is no commonality.

their nature alone" is the good they want for others too (E4p37). This desire for others is a desire with others. It is not the denial of desire or the suspension of action proposed by Descartes. It is not Hobbes's lupine ambition that wants others to want what one wants while also denying it to them. It is to want for, not from others. It is the desire for the common good that is mutually useful. For Spinoza "the principle of common life" is that of "common usefulness" (E4p73d).

Against Descartes' solitary meditator and Hobbes's solitary wolf, Spinoza plainly identifies the empowerment of the individual with "the common advantage of all (*omnium commune utile*)": "If we consider our mind, our intellect would of course be more imperfect if the mind were alone and did not understand anything except itself. There are, therefore, many things outside us which are useful to us, and on that account to be sought" (E4p18s). When Spinoza writes of use, he means "Whatever so disposes the human body that it can be affected in a great many ways, or renders it capable of affecting external bodies in a great many ways" (E4p38). To be useful is to multiply capacity, to proliferate powers. It should be clear that Spinoza's use of use cannot be reduced to instrumentalization.[106] The instrumental conception of use presupposes a *telos*, but as we saw in Chapter 2, the Spinozan ontology of nature has no place for final causes, or what Deleuze calls the teleological illusion. Spinoza dismantles both natural and human teleology. Throughout his work, Spinoza exposes the mutual implication between final causes and the instrumentalization of nature, including human nature.[107] In eliminating final causes from ontology, then, Spinoza also eradicates instrumentality. If no

[106] Much as happiness is an unhappy translation of the Greek *eudaimonia*, so useful is not always a useful way to translate the Latin *utile*. In the English language both have been nearly reduced to their utilitarian senses.

[107] In the Appendix to Part One of the *Ethics*, Spinoza provides a genetic – perhaps even genealogical – account of this mutual implication. He argues that it is only because some things are deemed ends that others are reduced to means.

ends, not even human ends, are legitimate, then there is no legitimate reduction of any being to means. To "consider all natural things as means to their own advantage" (E1app) is to succumb to the appropriative mechanism of the imagination. To be useful to others, Spinoza explains, is mutual empowerment, not "a business transaction" (E4p71s). Neither does the definition of usefulness, the grounds for the in-common, presuppose sameness or similitude. Because it involves the proliferation of capacities, the increase in *different* ways of affecting and being affected, it should be understood to be opposed to similitude. Common usefulness presupposes difference in and openness to the common. As Balibar notes, "the other is conceived as useful not in spite of its (his) singularity or difference, but because this singularity is implied by the general laws of human nature."[108] Against Descartes, for whom the self-same individual is an absolute power, and Hobbes, for whom the multitude is impotent, Spinoza argues that it is only because there is a multitude of singularities, a proliferation of differences, that singularities can produce a common in agreement (c*onveniunt)* with each other. To institute the common in the contrary, to make the useless "*omnium commune utile*," is to act *with* external causes such that they become internal causes.

But if from the view of "the whole universe" everything is in-common, then what does this mean for the little worm which is only "part" of the universe? It is important to point out that in Letter 32 Spinoza admits not knowing "the actual manner" of the totality of the relations of parts to each other and the whole because this would require knowledge of "the whole of Nature." Spinoza emphasizes that affinity, both in *convenire* and *cohaere*, only exists "insofar as" and "to that extent," that accommodation occurs "in a certain and determinate way" and "a definite way." That is, Spinoza emphasizes the determinate nature of determination. Affinity is

[108] Balibar, "Individuation to Transindividuation," 30. See also Sharp, *Politics of Renaturalization*, Ch. 3.

not given in advance, but occurs with external causes encounter by encounter. It is because the vermicular view is not that of the whole universe, because "the actual manner" of the relations constitutive of the whole universe is known only in its imagined present and not *sub species aeternitatis*, that "the true knowledge we have of good and evil is only abstract or universal, and the judgment we make concerning the order of things and the connection of causes, so that we may be able to determine in the present is imaginary rather than real" (E4p62s). But in its determinate encounters, there can be actual agreement with external causes through the common "infinite power" by which each finite thing exists and produces its effects. As Sangiacomo explains, "Spinoza does not conceive of external determinations as a threat to the causal activity of finite things, but rather as what specifies how and to what extent *each thing brings about its own effects*."[109] What is really good, then, is what is really and mutually useful in the determinate encounter between singularities. It is worth noting that Spinoza defines agreement and use reciprocally. Agreement is not the unconditional condition of usefulness, because common usefulness, determined by the determinate encounter, is also the condition of agreement: "[T]he more a thing is in agreement with our nature, the more advantageous it is to us, that is, the more it is good; and, conversely, the more advantageous a thing is to us, to that extent it is in more agreement with our nature" (E4p31c).

We are now in a better position to understand Spinoza's claim that "To man, then, there is nothing more useful than man" (E4p18s). As shown in the opening Section of this Chapter,

[109] Andrea Sangiacamo, "The Ontology of Determination: From Descartes to Spinoza" in *Science in Context* 28(4), (2015), 516-517, my italics. In this article Sangiacamo argues that Spinoza's "power of acting" is a generalized version of "the force of determination" in Spinoza's exegetical account of Cartesian physics in the *PPC*. Valtteri Viljanen argues for a weaker version of the thesis that external causes are not excluded from internal causes: "obviously such propositions as the famous E1p28 consider finite things *insofar as* they are determined externally, from the "common order of nature," which, however, does not prevent them from being also, at least to some extent, internally determined, that is from existing and acting as determined by one's own nature alone" (Valtteri Viljanen *Spinoza's Geometry of Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 126.

Spinoza does not posit human nature, or the relations between humans, as universally or obviously lupine or divine. Insofar as humans perceive each other as other, that is, as external causes of hate, envy, and fear, intensified by imaginative freedom, they do not agree in nature. *Only* insofar as humans act in common, do they agree in nature. To agree, to be no longer merely external, means to be no longer contrary. Thus Spinoza argues the human being is a god to the human being and not a wolf only when they "repay the other's hate, anger, and disdain toward him, with love and nobility" (E4p46). For humans to "agree in nature" there must be a collective agreement of power (E4p32d). To agree in power is to act in co-operation, that is, to produce effects is common use with others, or as Spinoza puts it, "to form associations, to bind themselves by those bonds most apt to make one people of them, and absolutely, to do those things which serve to strengthen friendships" (E4appxii). Balibar is correct to say that for Spinoza "society is nothing but the unity of contraries," but this unity is determinate and must be found in common usefulness in the encounter between individuals.[110] "For if," Spinoza explains, "two individuals of entirely the same nature," that is, on my reading, who have instituted the in-common in their encounter, "are joined to one another, they compose an individual twice as powerful as each one (E4p18s).[111] In this sense "human nature" and human freedom are *enacted*, or produced through encounters between individuals in their collectivity, rather than universally given in advance.[112] Spinoza's immanent ontology presents us with a

[110] Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, 88.
[111] See also the *Political Treatise*, where Spinoza claims, "If two men make an agreement (*conveniunt*) with one another and join forces, they can do more together, and consequently have more right over nature, than either does alone; and the more they form connections in this way, the more right they will have together "(TP II.13).
[112] Sangiacamo makes a compelling argument that human nature "is a consequence rather than condition" of humans, but he presupposes that individual essences are eternal in a way that is irreducible to their existence. Andrea Sangiacomo, "What are Human Beings? Essences and Aptitudes in Spinoza's Anthropology," *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, 2:2 (2013), 81. I do not have space here to argue against this view of individual essences, but it should suffice to point out the contradiction of this view

concept of human freedom as human collectivity, a concept which denaturalizes imaginative yet destructive universal notions of humanity as sovereign selves or (were)wolves and overcomes imaginative yet ruinous configurations of freedom, making the way for real freedom.

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with his account of individual causation in his "Ontology of Determination," without completely severing essence from existence, thus reintroducing a kind of Platonism or at least dualism into Spinoza's plane of immanence.

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