

Loving Well: Affective Economics in Hobbes, Locke and Spinoza
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1. Love and Nature

Against those who think that, for Spinoza, the affects are to be negated or repressed, Hasana Sharp traces Spinoza's account of a transition between what she calls "mad love" and "wise love," *i.e.*, of a recomportment of our affects and desires away from objects whose finite nature precludes our actual possession of them, toward the one "object" that we actually can desire without fear of losing it: nature, and (by consequence) our own space within it. On this reading, Spinoza's problem is not that we desire. Indeed, to live is to desire. Rather, the problem is that we do not desire well, which is to say that we do not live well. According to the logic of mad love, our affects are directed toward an object considered in abstraction from its embeddedness as a finite mode of nature. However, this object-in-abstraction is a confused projection of the imagination. When we love such a projection, we love in constant fear that the object will be taken from us, which amounts to loving in constant fear that the object will be returned to the commons from whence it came, taken from our exclusive possession. Thus, when we do not desire well, we vacillate between "momentary satisfaction" and "terrible sadness" (nn), resulting in an inevitable "sickness of the mind" (E5 P20S). Wise love, by contrast, allows us to redirect our affects away from these imaginative abstractions and to the singular things which other finite modes actually are. As we love these singular things, our love of nature itself (as the infinite collection of singular things) grows as well. Not only will nature not desert us, but by divesting ourselves of the

illusion that we could possess finite modes exclusively, we divest ourselves of the inevitability that the desire to possess them will be disappointed.¹

Thus, at least, would be one way of characterizing the results of Sharp's reading of *Ethics* V. I characterize it as such in order to emphasize the degree to which "Love and Possession" reminds us of the fundamentally moral and political comportment of Spinoza's *Ethics*, a comportment that remains under-emphasized in Anglo-American commentary in particular. More importantly, Sharp's paper helps us to situate Spinoza into the context of early modern political thought, and to identify ways in which Spinoza's thought can contribute to a project of human freedom. The recognition of *conatus* as constitutive of human nature, and thus the consideration of politics in affective terms, specifically in terms of the need to productively channel the affects, was fundamental to the seventeenth century, and unites Spinoza with such otherwise disparate figures as Grotius, Hobbes and Locke.²

Grotius' account can be taken as exemplary, and as framing the issue. In his *De Jure belli ac Pacis*, citing Cicero, he writes of those principles which are first by nature:

Those in accordance with which every animal from the moment of its birth has regard for itself and is impelled to preserve itself, to have zealous consideration for its own condition and for those things which tend to preserve it, and also shrinks from destruction and things which appear likely to cause destruction.³

¹ It would thus not perhaps be too much of a stretch to argue, as indeed Sharp intimates, that it is only by loving finite modes in their singular finitude that we actually love them at all.

² On this, see generally Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993). Tuck emphasizes that these thinkers were responding to challenges raised by an amalgam of skepticism and stoicism.

³ *De Iure Belli ac Pacis* I.2.1.1. I quote the translation in *The Law of War and Peace*, trans. Francis W. Kelsey (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962). The passage is cited in Tuck, 197. It does not seem to appear in the original 1625 edition of the text.

War, as a means of this self-preservation, is thus not contrary to nature; “the end and aim of war being the preservation of life and limb, and the keeping or acquiring of things useful to life, war is in perfect accord with those first principles of nature” (I.2.1.4). Grotius’ discussion carries an ambivalence which will be significant, as emerges quite clearly slightly earlier in the text. There, clearly drawing on the stoics and Lipsius, he defines the “unjust” as “that which is understood to be necessary, although it is repugnant by nature to the reasonable and to society.”⁴ The Grotian analysis suggests three ways in which the desire for something can be analyzed: in relation to necessity, in relation to reason, and in relation to society. One way of putting a central problematic of seventeenth-century political thought is the need to sort out how these relations are to be understood, and how that understanding then maps onto an understanding of justice. Spinoza’s famous resolution of this problematic is a tentative affirmation of the “multitude.”⁵

Situating Spinoza in this way underscores the sharp contrasts between Spinoza and Locke, on the one hand, and Spinoza and Hobbes, on the other. It is these contrasts which I will pursue in what follows. Most broadly, one might say that the contrast revolves around what turn out to be fundamentally different understandings of nature.

⁴ “Iniustum autem id demum intelligi quod necessarium cum natura rationali ac sociali habet repugnatium” (*De Iure Belli ac Pacis* (Paris, 1625), I.1). The 1645 edition drops the clause about necessity (*Law of War and Peace* I.1.2.1).

⁵ Much recent Spinoza scholarship is concerned with his use of the multitude. In this light, “Love and Possession” is significant because Sharp does not immediately move to consideration of the “multitude” as the locus of political subjectivity. Instead, she focuses what one might call the enabling affects of the multitude: love and joy. Cf. the words of two of Spinoza’s most enthusiastic disciples: militancy today “makes resistance into counterpower and makes rebellion into a project of love;” and “this is the irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist” (Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 2000), 413). I discuss Hardt and Negri’s interpretation, and offer what I take to be a Spinozist critique of it, in my “*Capital sive Natura: Spinoza and the Immanence of Empire*,” *International Studies in Philosophy* 37 (2005), 15-35. Warren Montag suggests that there is a deep ambivalence in Spinoza about the multitude: see his *Bodies, Masses, Power: Spinoza and his Contemporaries* (London: Verso, 1999).

For Locke, nature is fundamentally teleological. Political society is in this sense natural – we are commanded by God to be a part of it – but also couched in juridical terms. In Hobbes, on the other hand, one finds very little about natural law in a juridical sense. Not only that, politics turns out to be unnatural in that to join political society is to separate from nature. Spinoza’s account of our own immanence in nature manages to dispense both with the Hobbesian separation from nature and with the Lockean juridical language.

2. Anti-Locke

According to much received opinion, Locke is the philosopher who justifies and legitimates a regime of exclusive private property rights. It is thus perhaps unusual to notice that his political writings are suffused with a pronounced ambivalence about attachments to objects in this world.⁶ This ambivalence begins with our bodies.

Although it is true that “every man has a property in his own person” (II, 26), it is also true that “person” – a “thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection” (*Essay* 2.27.9) – connotes something quite different from the corporeal structure that is “man.”⁷

⁶ A more thorough account would also consider his discussion of happiness in *Essay* 2.21. Because I want to track the political resonances of Sharp’s reading, I will confine myself to only a brief comment on the *Essay*. What emerges there is that happiness is fundamentally calculative (2.2158), and that a failure to attain happiness is the result of bad calculation of effects; we are thus to regulate the affects by reason (2.21.53). Locke’s account would be deeply unsatisfying to a Spinozist: it involves a detached faculty of the will, and it stacks the calculation with “the rewards and punishments of another life” (2.21.70), which are supposed to have “no proportion” to those of this life. This transcendentalizing of God is precisely what Spinoza tries to overcome; in Locke’s context, it is difficult to see how it would not guarantee the sort of anxiety that, on Sharp’s reading, Spinoza is trying to overcome. For Locke, at the end of the day, I by nature desire finite things, but rationally I know that they are without value, *qua* finite things, and thus impossible to order in any sort of quotidian calculation of what I should do today. My anxiety over losing those things, because they might disappear, is displaced onto an anxiety over losing myself, because someday I will disappear into infinite happiness or unhappiness. Not only do I not possess other things, I do not even possess myself.

All Locke citations are per convention: *John Locke: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); *Two Treatises on Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: CUP, 1960), by treatise and paragraph number; for the *Essays on the Law of Nature*, I cite the text in John Locke, *Political Essays*, ed. Mark Goldie (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), by page number.

⁷ See, e.g., *Essay* 2.27.6, and the discussion in John W. Yolton, “Locke’s Man,” *JHI* 62 (2001), 665-683.

Thus, I have a property right over my person, but not over my own biological organism. He writes that “men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise maker,” they “are his property, whose workmanship they are, made to last during his and not another’s pleasure” (II, 6). Suicide is for that reason forbidden (*ibid.*), as is selling oneself into slavery (II, 23). The latter especially contrasts sharply with Grotius.⁸ In the language of property that Locke uses, one might suggest that our possession of our body is as a usufruct, or perhaps an easement; our status on earth is similarly a tenancy.⁹ So too, the right to war in self-preservation delineated in Grotius is preserved, but only as an effect of the right to punish those who violate the law of nature by destroying God’s other tenants (II, 8). Thus, punishment is tied to God’s command that we preserve ourselves and others. Finally, property, which had been a simple matter of first possession in the Grotian account (1.2.1.5), becomes subject to a full range of natural-juridical stipulations in Locke.

Insofar as Spinoza’s account of *conatus* admits of even fewer juridical structures than Grotius’, one should expect to see a contrast between Locke and Spinoza on property, and indeed, on Sharp’s reading, Spinoza identifies what we would now call liberalist property relations as one of the primary sources of anxiety and as one of the sad affects. Specifically, in mad love, we love excessively what one would now call “rivalrous goods” – things that we cannot all possess, because they cannot be shared. To

⁸ Grotius says that one might sell oneself into slavery due to one’s own weakness or financial insecurity (II.5.27), though *strictu sensu* one cannot legally alienate one’s body (II.6.6), presumably because it is not detachable. Suicide is more complicated. Grotius claims that “by nature a man’s life is his own, not indeed to destroy, but to safeguard” (II.17.1.1), though when he endorses a ban on suicide (II.19.5.2), it is in the context of a discussion of common law, not natural law.

⁹ Cf. James Tully: “man’s property is the right to use and preserve what is essentially God’s property, similar to a tenant’s property” (*A Discourse on Property: John Locke and His Adversaries* (Cambridge: CUP, 1980), 114). Richard Ashcraft concisely remarks that for Locke we are God’s “productive tenants” (*Revolutionary Politics and Locke’s Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986), 261).

the extent that Locke imposes moral limits on property, his analysis can thus be seen as an attempt to address the problems of mad love. The complexity of his account, and the ambiguities in interpretation that it licenses, should serve to indicate the precariousness of exclusive property rights as a resolution of these problems. In particular, Locke's repeated invocation of natural law can appear as a *deus ex machina* which resolves issues of rivalry before they can emerge.¹⁰

The *Second Treatise's* discussion, nominally on the justification of property in the commons, revolves around productive use of the earth and its resources. Locke frames the question as one of how individual property might come to be morally justified, given a context in which God may be presumed to have given the earth to people in common. In particular, he is concerned to show, against Filmer, that individual consent is not necessary: so long as one leaves "enough and as good" for others, they have no reason to complain of an act of appropriation.¹¹ The concern here is one of security: as Locke puts it, "if such a consent as that was necessary, Man had starved, notwithstanding the plenty God had given him" (II, 28). Thus, possession (at least initially) is a matter of appropriating things *out of* the commons, *i.e.*, of separating them from their connectedness with other natural things and closing them off for individual use.

¹⁰ It of course matters tremendously in this context how one reads Locke on property. In general, I do not agree with commentators who think that Locke wrote the *Second Treatise* as a whole, or chapter 5 in particular, "in order to justify private property." For reasons of space, I will not defend a full reading of Locke on property here. That said, and however one resolves the details of an interpretation, I think it is fairly clear that property relations are subordinate to, and governed by, the need to fulfill God's command that we preserve ourselves and our species. Thus, Locke's claim is that property rights, heavily circumscribed by the laws of nature, are a legitimate way to secure *conatus*.

¹¹ For a discussion of various strategies for reading Locke as answering Filmer, see Gopal Sreenivasan, *The Limits of Lockean Rights in Property* (Oxford: OUP, 1995), 21-25; Sreenivasan also suggests that the sufficiency proviso is basis for Locke's position (48). That Locke is addressing Filmer and not (say) Hobbes is emphasized by Laslett's note in *Two Treatises*, 286n, comparing Locke's and Filmer's presentation of the consent problem with Hobbes, Grotius and Pufendorf.

Locke specifically invites us to consider our actions of appropriation as not affecting others by introducing two provisos. An appropriation does not violate the tenants of natural law when it leaves “enough and as good” for others (II, 27), and when the products thus appropriated or produced are not allowed to spoil or waste (II, 31). These spoilage and sufficiency provisos operate in the context of Locke’s focus on labor: objects are to be taken out of nature and appropriated because nature by itself is not productive. That we are to labor in this way is God’s command, a point that Locke frequently makes throughout his writings.¹² Locke’s message is perfectly clear: goods which are held in common are wasted; nature is not really productive unless enclosed:

There cannot be a clearer demonstration of anything than several nations of the Americans are of this, who are rich in land and poor in all the comforts of life; whom nature having furnished as liberally as any other people with the materials of plenty, i.e., a fruitful soil, apt to produce in abundance what might serve for food, raiment, and delight, yet for want of improving it by labor have not one-hundredth part of the conveniences we enjoy. And a king of a large and fruitful territory there feeds, lodges, and is clad worse than a day-laborer in England (II, 41).

The myriad factual mistakes in Locke’s account should not distract one’s attention from his essential point, which is that it is my individual productive power – the “admixture” of my labor with objects in the world – that allows me to rightfully claim to own them. I am granted this claim right because my labor is in fulfillment of God’s commandment to preserve self and species.¹³

¹² God gave the earth “to the use of the industrious and rational – and labor was to be his title to it” (II, 34). Compare the formulation in the *Essays on the Law of Nature*: because we have faculties which are able to do things, and because God gave us nothing in vain, we know that “God wills that we do something” (ELN, 105). Cf. Ashcraft, *Revolutionary*, 261ff, citing also I, 85-86.

¹³ Hence: “whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property” (II, 27). This passage has been notoriously difficult to interpret. My sympathies lie with Tully and the “maker’s right” reading; see his *Discourse on Property*. For a recent critique of Tully, and defense of the more traditional “admixture” interpretation, see A. John Simmons, “Maker’s Rights,” *Journal of Ethics* 2

Of course, such possession is not secure, since having the right to things does not guarantee that I have the power to keep others away from them. This is why, Locke says, we enter into government in the first place, and why people will generally attempt to institute a new government if theirs dissolves. Hence, “the great and chief end ... of men’s uniting into commwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property. To which in the state of nature there are many things wanting” (II, 124).¹⁴ The state of nature turns out to be a poor place in which to find security: there is no agreed standard for right and wrong (II, 124); there is no judge in the state of nature (II, 125); and there is no power to back up juridical decisions. As Locke’s language makes clear, the first two defects are a product of the affects and of mad love, and the third is an artifact of Locke’s separation of juridical and physical power.¹⁵

Political society is thus explicitly specified in terms of the security it provides for finite things that one is afraid of losing. Natural law, were it enforceable, would at least contain the miseries of mad love. How one forms government, as the enforcement mechanism for this law, thus matters as well. Hence Locke’s complaint against absolute monarchy, where one’s entire right is handed over to an individual “corrupted with flattery and armed with power” (II, 91). He does not think anyone with sense would be fooled by defenses of the giving absolute juridical right to monarchs:

This is to think that men are so foolish that they take care to avoid what mischiefs may be done them by polecats or foxes, but are content, nay, think it safety, to be devoured by lions (II, 93).

(1998), 197-218. I do not think that anything in what follows hinges on settling the debate between Tully and Simmons.

¹⁴ Property is defined broadly. The state of nature is full of “fears and continual dangers ... [to people’s] lives, liberties, and estates, which I call by the general name ‘property’” (II, 123).

¹⁵ People are both biased and ignorant of the law of nature (II, 124; *cf.* the fuller account of this at ELN 109ff); as for the second reason: “with too much heat in their own cases, as well as negligence and unconcernedness to make them too remiss in other men’s” (II, 125).

Political society, then, steers a middle course between the insecurities of the state of nature and of absolute monarchy. Hence, although government is the correct remedy for the “inconveniences of the state of nature,” absolute monarchy will remedy none of them (II, 13). The problem with both nature and autocracy is that the law of nature, defined as God’s command for how we should live, is unenforceable.

What emerges as the most general point about the contrast between Locke and Spinoza is that Locke sharply separates physical and juridical power, and then subordinates the former to the latter. In the early *Essays on the Law of Nature*, Locke complains of those “who trace the whole law of nature back to each person’s self-preservation;” the result of such theory would be that “virtue would seem no to be so much man’s duty as his convenience” (116). His definition of “political power” in the *Second Treatise* is along the same lines:

The right of making laws with penalties of death and, consequently, all less penalties for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community in the execution of such laws and in the defense of the commonwealth from foreign injury; and all this only for the public good (II, 3).

Power on its own – the “use of force without right” – is “war” (II, 232). If one insists on nonetheless calling this a form of power, it is “despotic:” “an absolute, arbitrary power one man has over another to take away his life whenever he pleases” (II, 172).¹⁶ Natural law language serves the same function here as it does in the state of nature. Only in the last instance, when one confronts despotism, is there even a glimmer of ambivalence

¹⁶ The contrast is also apparent in the *Essay*, where Locke defines “power” as the ability to do or not do something, depending on one’s will (2.21.27) – this created by the absence of physical constraint. A more complete account would need to carefully specify the relation between the “will” which is operative in the definition of power, and the “desire” which gives rise to the affects.

about the potentia/potestas relation in Locke. In situations where the executive power has transgressed the will of the legislative, “in all states and conditions, the true remedy of force without authority is to oppose force to it” (II, 155).¹⁷ But even this is cast in juridical terms: by failing to preserve his subjects, a despot has declared war on them, and so they can exercise their “appeal to heaven” as part of the divine command of preservation and ban on self-enslavement (II, 168).

The contrast with Spinoza can be further specified in that the law of nature in Locke is that of the transcendental lawgiver that Spinoza critiques in the TTP. As noted above, God does not want his property destroying itself or its other components, as evidenced by the prohibitions on suicide and selling oneself into slavery, as well as the general claim that every person ought “when his own preservation comes not in competition ... preserve the rest of mankind” (II, 6). All of this is the transcendentalizing of the Spinozist *conatus*: all things for Spinoza attempt to persevere in their own being, not because this is what God tells them to do, but because that is what it means to exist. In other words, Locke writes juridical power into the order of the universe, which is the move that Spinoza refuses by declaring God to be immanent, as *deus sive natura*. When Locke claims that “God Almighty himself is under the necessity of being happy” (*Essay* 2.21.50), the claim thus strikes the Spinozist ear as evidence of a fundamental confusion as to what God is.¹⁸

¹⁷ That Locke is defending the right to revolt against a bad government is the central thesis of Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*.

¹⁸ In other words, the point is not that Locke’s theory is grounded in theology, it is that the model of God is anthropomorphized. On this bilateral relation between God and politics in Locke, see Vivienne Brown, “The ‘Figure’ of God and the Limits to Liberalism: A Rereading of Locke’s *Essay* and *Two Treatises*,” *JHI* 60 (1999), 83-100.

3. Anti-Hobbes

If Locke resolves issues of juridical versus physical power by subordinating the latter to the former, Hobbes is deeply ambivalent about the relation between them. Historically, that ambivalence has been lost in the collapse of Hobbes to Spinoza. In his *Epistola* of 1671, for example, Johannes Melchior accuses Spinoza of following that “English Machiavelli” Hobbes; the Cambridge Platonist Henry More, arguing that nature and God really are distinct, proclaims that Spinoza’s work is “pure, really pure Hobbesianism.”¹⁹ Indeed, it does look on the surface as though Hobbes is moving in a Spinozist direction. The Grotian defense of war as an aspect of *conatus* becomes a generalized right to everything in the state of nature. Hence, a law of nature is “a Precept, or generall Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same.” Since the natural condition is a *bellum omnium contra omnes*, he follows that “in such a condition, every man has a Right to every thing; even to one another’s body.” The fundamental insecurity thereby induced generates “a precept, or generall rule of Reason,

¹⁹ “*Purus putus Hobbianismus est.*” For Melchior, see J. J. V. M. De Vet, “Letter of a Watchman on Zion’s Walls: The First Reaction of Johannes Melchior to Tractatus Theologico-Politicus,” in *L’Hérésie Spinoziste: la discussion sur le Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, 1670-1677, et la réception immédiate du spinozisme*, ed. Paolo Cristofolini (Amsterdam: APA-Holland UP, 1991), 36-48 (qt p. 38). For More, see his *Opera Omnia* (London, 1675-9), I, 595, quoted and discussed in Luisa Simonutti, “Premières réactions anglaises au *Traité théologico-politique*,” in *L’Hérésie Spinoziste*, 123-137: 132. For more on this assimilation, see the other essays in *L’Hérésie Spinoziste*, as well as the more general discussion in Paolo Rossi, *The Dark Abyss of Time: The History of the Earth and the History of Nations from Hooke to Vico*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago: U. Chicago Press, 1984). Whether or not Spinoza is influenced by Hobbes is a matter of much contemporary debate. The following citations are exemplary. *Sic apparetur*: Jean Bernhardt, “*Intelligibilité et Réalité chez Hobbes et chez Spinoza*,” *Revue philosophique de la France et de l’étranger* 2 (1985), 115-133. *Sed contra*: Karl Schuhmann, “*Methodenfragen bei Spinoza und Hobbes: Zum Problem des Einflusses*,” *Studia Spinozana* 3 (1987), 47-86. *Resolutio*: for more nuanced accounts, see Emilia Giancotti, “The Birth of Modern Materialism in Hobbes and Spinoza,” in *The New Spinoza*, ed. Warren Montag and Ted Stolze (Minneapolis: U. Minnesota Press, 1997), 49-63; and Noel Malcolm, “Hobbes and Spinoza,” in *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 27-52.

*That every man, ought to endeavour Peace, as farre as he has hope of obtaining it.*²⁰ It is a commonplace to explain the next step as a collective action problem or a prisoners' dilemma: in a Hobbesian natural state, it is individually rational to war against others, but collectively rational to cooperate and form a political society. I do not wish here to contribute to a discussion about what all of this means for interpreting Hobbes, except to note that the relation between physical power and juridical right is actually quite difficult to discern in this context.

In the Latin *Leviathan*, speaking of the institution of a commonwealth, Hobbes writes that the reduction of the multitude to the social contract is so “that the power [*potentia*] of every will is used for the common defense and peace.” He adds that “he who bears the person of the commonwealth is said to have all [the] power [*potestatem*].”²¹ How this is to happen is a point of tension in Hobbes's work. In his early work, *De Cive* in particular, individuals transfer their *potentia* to the commonwealth; as of *Leviathan*, they instead authorize the commonwealth to act on their behalf.²² In both cases, it seems clear that the state is supposed to both be a fictive representation and also to embody the real power of the multitude, to constitute the “real Unitie of them all, in one and the same Person” (L 17, 120). Thus united, the “multitude” becomes a “people.” Hobbes is quite clear that a “multitude” cannot act as such but that a “people” can; how the transition between them happens, and the nature of the

²⁰ *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), references by chapter and page (here L 14, 91-2, emphasis in original).

²¹ “*ut potentia omnium arbitrio suo ad pacem et communem defensionem uteretur. Is autem, qui civitatis personam gerit, summam habere dicitur potestatem*” (*Opera Philosophica quae latine scripsit omnia*, ed. William Molesworth (London, 1839) [=OL], III, 131). *Potentia* is defined at OL III, 68.

²² This is somewhat contentious point in the Hobbes literature which space constraints prohibit my fully defending here. The best presentation of the reading is found in Yves Charles Zarka, *Hobbes et la pensée politique moderne* (Paris: PUF, 1995).

represented status of the state, are extremely murky topics, and, for the present purpose, perhaps best illustrated by way of contrast with Spinoza.

One way to draw that contrast is through their differing accounts of the relation between politics and nature. In the *Political Treatise*, Spinoza explicitly says that “because people, as we say, are more led by affect than by reason, it follows that the multitude is not led by reason, but by some common affect naturally to come together, and want to be led as if by one mind.”²³ Hence “man by nature desires the civil state, and it cannot happen that men ever dissolve it all the way.”²⁴ The contrast with Hobbes, for whom fear of the dissolution of the commonwealth at the very least overdetermines the rhetorical strategy of *Leviathan*, is striking.²⁵ For Hobbes, the creation of the commonwealth is precisely not natural. Rather, the institution of the commonwealth “is like a creation out of nothing by human wit,”²⁶ and “man is made fit for society not by nature, but by training.”²⁷ That is, and paradoxically, the Hobbesian accounting of nature requires that nature be precisely what is left behind in political theory. He writes:

If Nature therefore have made men equall; that equalitie is to be acknowledged: or if Nature have made men unequal; yet because men that think themselves equall, will not enter into conditions of peace, but upon Equall terms, such equalitie must be admitted (L 15, 107; cf. DC 3.13).

²³ “Quia homines, uti diximus, magis Affectu quam Ratione ducuntur, sequitur, multitudinem non ex Rationis ductu, sed ex communi aliquo affectu naturaliter convenire, et una veluti mente duce velle” (6.1).

²⁴ “statum civilem homines natura appetere, nec fieri posse, ut homines eundem unquam penitus dissolvant” (6.1).

²⁵ “It may be perceived what manner of life there would be, where there were no common Power to feare [*i.e.*, in the state of nature]; by the manner of life, which men that have formerly lived under a peacefull government, use to degenerate into, in a civill Warre” (L 13, 90). On *Leviathan* as a polemical political intervention, see also Quentin Skinner, “Conquest and Consent: Thomas Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy,” in *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement 1646-1660*, ed. G. E. Aylmer (Archon Books, 1972), 79-98.

²⁶ *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic* [MSS circulated 1640; printed 1650], rpt. as *Human Nature and De Corpore Politico*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: OUP, 1994), 20.1

²⁷ Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, ed. and trans. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverstone (Cambridge: CUP, 1998) [= DC], 1.2, note.

As in Locke, then, the Hobbesian account depends on assigning a negative role to nature. Nature by itself is unhelpful; the mad loves it generates have to be regulated by the physical force which makes juridical decrees what they are. Importantly, destructive desires are to be conquered, not transformed.

This Hobbesian conquest allows one to indicate Spinoza's departure from Hobbes. Of wise love, Spinoza writes that "nothing in nature is given which is contrary to this intellectual love, or which is able to cancel it."²⁸ In other words, wise love toward God is beyond such logics of conquest. Earlier, Spinoza had defined contrariety explicitly defined in terms of opposition: "if two contrary actions are instigated in the same subject, a change must necessarily take place in both or in one of them until they cease to be contrary" (E5 Ax 1). Hence, in contrast to the space of Hobbesian politics and meaning – the commonwealth – *scientia intuitiva* in Spinoza is meant to go beyond such contrariety. One might suggest from the point of view of the *Ethics* that the Hobbesian horizon has only two alternatives: the confusion which constitutes the passive affects, and second-order knowledge through universals. These two are presented as contraries, the second operative by sovereign fiat over the first, which means that they can only vacillate: there is no way to move beyond them and hence no way to move beyond the artificial imposition of transcendence. And in that context, there is no way truly to be happy.

²⁸ "Nihil in Natura datur, quod huic Amori intellectuali sit contrarium, sive quod ipsum possit tollere" (E5P37).