

HOW NATURAL IS HOBBS'S NATURAL PERSON?

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Abstract: This paper deals with Hobbes's category of 'natural person'. Although this notion could be interpreted in purely natural terms, namely, as referring to the human body and its specific accidents (sensation, passions, speech and reason), it will become clear that its main trait is artificiality. To be more precise, we will show that a natural person is analogous to an actor performing on a stage. Since elaborating a character that acts in accordance with the expectations of an audience involves several tools of artifice, the title of the paper acquires greater significance and calls for a recasting: is Hobbes's natural person *natural* at all? With the purpose of giving a definite answer we shall demonstrate that its genuinely natural feature is the human body, understood not as a physio-biological object, but as the ultimate responsibility *locus* of the person's performance. In other words, natural persons are natural inasmuch as their bodies may be held accountable for their misdeeds.

Keywords: Hobbes; natural person; artifice; responsibility; body.

1. Nature versus artifice

The 'natural person' is both a recurrent and a fundamental concept in Hobbes's political philosophy. Recurrent because, while it did not receive a full definition until chapter XVI of *Leviathan* (1651) as 'he whose words and actions are considered... as his own',³ that is, as someone who owns the words and actions he or she performs, Hobbes's previous works give prominence to the notion repeatedly. Indeed, in the *Elements of Law* (1640) he claims to have evinced 'how a multitude of persons natural are united by covenants into one person civil or body politic'.⁴ In like fashion, he alludes in *De Cive* (1642/7) to the 'multiple natural persons' that 'from fear of each other have coalesced into one civil person'.⁵ After Hobbes's *magnum opus*, the concept continued playing a significant part. In *De Homine* (1658): 'A natural person' is 'that to which the words and actions of human beings are attributed... as if they were its own

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³ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. N. Malcolm (Oxford, 2012), p. 244 [XVI.1].

⁴ T. Hobbes, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, ed. J. Gaskin, (Oxford, 1994), p. 109 [XX.1]. He also states that 'no person, natural or civil, can transfer unto another more power than himself hath' (*Elements*, p. 117 [XX.18]).

⁵ T. Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, ed. Richard Tuck & Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge, 1998), p. 46 [III.5]. A little bit further, Hobbes argues that 'a multitude [*multitudo*] is not a natural person', p. 76 [VI.1. Ann.], and in p. 95 [VII.7], he asserts that 'prior to the foundation of a commonwealth a people does not exist, since it has not been a person, but a multitude of singular persons [*multitudo personarum singularium*]'.

[cui verba et actiones hominum attribuuntur... suae]'.⁶ Also the notion is linked to the peculiar split of the sovereign's personhood, as in of *Behemoth* (1668), where Hobbes explains that 'the king... commands the people in generall never but by a precedent law, and as a politick, not a naturall person'.⁷

Now, if it is recurrent for several reasons, it is fundamental at least for one: natural persons are the main protagonists of the social contract that brings about the State. As the agents that perform 'the pacts and covenants by which the parts of this body politique were at first made, set together and united', they constitute, in *Leviathan's* lexicon, the 'matter' of the commonwealth.⁸ In brief, natural persons are human beings that possess the capacity to build a political society, and thus, they deserve scholarly attention. Nevertheless, this does not tell us much about why the natural aspect of natural persons might be problematic. So, in order to introduce the subject of this paper, we shall start by focusing on what does Hobbes mean by 'natural'.

It is well known that Hobbes's philosophy relies on a fundamental division between nature and artificiality.⁹ To be more accurate, in chapter IX of *Leviathan* Hobbes splits the *genera* of knowledge in two. On the one hand, 'naturall philosophy', that deals with the 'consequences from the accidents of bodies naturall'. On the other, the science that studies 'the consequences from the accidents of political bodies, which is called politiques and civil philosophy', *i.e.*, the sphere of artificiality.¹⁰ Unfortunately, Hobbes does not state here the criterion that enables such a division. To sort it out, we must look into the *Six Lessons to the Professors of the Mathematics* (1656). There, he distinguishes between 'demonstrable [arts]... the construction of the subject whereof is in the power of the artist himself, who in his demonstration does no more but deduce the consequences of his own operation', and 'indemonstrable' arts.¹¹ '[C]ivil philosophy—he adds—is demonstrable because we make the commonwealth ourselves. But because of natural bodies we know not the construction, but seek it from the effects, there lies no demonstration of what causes be we seek for, but only of what they may be'.¹² Due to their divergent ontogenies, these are, as Hobbes holds in *De Corpore* (1655), 'two chief kinds of bodies very different from one another'.¹³ Whereas political bodies are human products, natural bodies are the result of God's creation, since 'NATURE [is] the arte whereby God hath made and governes the world'.¹⁴ As such, natural bodies are given entities in whose complexion human beings had no intervention.

Coming back to the structure set out in *Leviathan*, we might be tempted to equate the natural person with a specific object of study of natural philosophy, namely, the 'body naturall' of 'men in speciall'. Within

⁶ T. Hobbes, *De Homine* in *Opera Latina*, Vol. II, ed. W. Molesworth, (London, 1839), p. 130 [XV.1].

⁷ T. Hobbes, *Behemoth, or The Long Parliament*, ed. P. Seaward (Oxford, 2009), p. 174.

⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 18 [Introduction].

⁹ For an in-depth survey on this subject, see T. Sorell, *Hobbes* (London, 1986), pp. 14-5, 21-4, 137-8; R. Talaska, 'The Unity of Hobbes's Philosophy: Knowing and Making', *Hobbes Studies*, 5 (1), (1992), pp. 90-3; N. Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 151-3; and S. Finn, *Thomas Hobbes and the Politics of Natural Philosophy* (London, 2006), pp. 10-20.

¹⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 130 [IX].

¹¹ T. Hobbes, *Six Lessons to the Professors of Matematicques* in *English Works*, Vol. VII, ed. William Molesworth, (London, 1845), p. 183.

¹² Hobbes, *Six Lessons*, p. 184. For a stark opposition between "natural sciences" and "human artistry", see also W. Sacksteder, 'Man the artificer: Notes on animals, humans and machines', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 22 (1), (1984), pp. 110-1.

¹³ T. Hobbes, *Concerning Body* in *English Works*, Vol. I, ed. William Molesworth, (London, 1839), p. 11 [I.9].

¹⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 16 [Introduction].

this research area, Hobbes identifies a subfield devoted to ‘the consequences from the passions of men’, viz., ‘ethiques’, and one consecrated to the ‘consequences from speech in reasoning, logique’.¹⁵ A thorough examination of the ‘nature of men’ in this sense, some may claim, is what accounts for the ‘three principall causes of quarrel’.¹⁶ By means of an ‘inference made from the passions’ and from ‘way[s] for any man to secure himself so *reasonable* as anticipation’,¹⁷ Hobbes reveals how ‘nature dissociate[s] and render[s] men apt to invade and destroy one another’.¹⁸ A comprehensive analysis of human ‘passions’ and ‘reason’ may also show us what ‘encline[s] men to peace’.¹⁹ Hence, through the investigation of the natural person identified as a natural body we might discover the causes of human conflict and pacific coexistence.

This undertaking, however, would yield limited results. Unlike ‘bees and ants’, whose ‘agreement... is naturall, that of men is by covenant only, which is artificial’.²⁰ To put it simply, nature dissociates or predisposes to peace, but only artificiality associates. So, if we want to learn how individuals coalesce under a ‘common power’, we must enter into a different scientific field: political or civil philosophy. Chapter XVI of *Leviathan*, the last of its first section ‘Of Man’ and the one that precedes the second, ‘Of Commonwealth’, is precisely the place where the object of study of civil philosophy, the body politic, comes into being. There, Hobbes depicts the mechanism of personation ‘by fiction’ through which a ‘multitude’ of human beings, ‘naturally not one... but many’, ‘are made one person’.²¹ Tellingly, it is in this same chapter that Hobbes locates the definition of ‘natural person’.²² Thus, the natural person could be understood as a concept that bridges the gap between the natural and the artificial world. If this is the case, it would not be unsound to presume that the natural person possesses a hybrid character.²³ Certainly, there should be some artificial component inherent to it that may account for the emergence

¹⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 131 [IX]. Besides, Hobbes considers ‘contracting’ as a natural accident of human bodies that falls within the scope of natural philosophy. but as we shall exhibit presently, he changes his mind in *De Corpore*.

¹⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 192 [XIII.6]. This line of reading has been underscored by B. Ludwig, ‘Scientia civilis more geometrico – Die philosophische Methode als arkitektonisches Prinzip in Hobbes’ *Leviathan*’, *Hobbes Studies*, (8) 1, (1995), pp. 55 and 63-5.

¹⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 190 and 194 [XIII.4 and 10], our emphasis.

¹⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 194 [XIII.10]. In the *Elements of Law*, p. 78 [XIV.2], Hobbes is more explicit: ‘it will be expedient to consider in what state of security this our nature hath placed us’ and how ‘[m]en’ end ‘by nature in the state of war’.

¹⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 196 [XIII.14].

²⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 260 [XVII.12].

²¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 248-50 [XVI.13-4]. On this matter, see D. Runciman, ‘What Kind of Person is Hobbes’s State? A Reply to Skinner,’ *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 8 (2), (2000), pp. 268-71.

²² As Professor Hampsher-Monk indicated to me, the syntagma ‘natural person’ makes an early appearance in *Leviathan*, p. 132 [X.3], concerning the person that bears the sovereign power, whether ‘naturall or civill’.

²³ Several interpreters have recognized the artificialization of the category of natural person as a condition for the ulterior foundation of the person of the State. Cf. C. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, transl. G. Schwab & E. Hilfstein (Westport, 1996), p. 59; R. Brandt, ‘Das Titelblatt des *Leviathan* und Goyas *El Gigante*,’ in *Furcht und Freiheit. LEVIATHAN — Diskussion 300 Jahre nach Thomas Hobbes*, ed. U. Bermbach & K. Kodalle, (Berlin, 1982), p. 205; Lucien Jaume, *Hobbes et l’État représentatif moderne* (Paris, 1986), p. 99; T. Strong, ‘How to write Scripture: Words, Authority, and Politics in Thomas Hobbes’, *Critical Inquiry*, 20 (1), (1993), p. 155; A. Tukiainen, ‘The Commonwealth as a Person in Hobbes’s *Leviathan*’, *Hobbes Studies*, 7 (1), (1994), p. 49; S. Frost, ‘Faking It: Hobbes’s Thinking-Bodies and the Ethics of Dissimulation’, *Political Theory*, 29 (1), (2001), p. 46; A. Martinich, *Hobbes*, (New York, 2005), p. 112; and P. Pettit, *Made with Words: Hobbes on Language, Mind and Politics* (Princeton, 2008), p. 70.

of the 'State... which is but an artificiall man'.²⁴ But this would entail, in turn, that the natural person cannot be boiled down to the accidents of a natural body and that it cannot fall within the scope of natural philosophy. In other words, natural persons would be more alike to political bodies than to natural bodies.

By the same token, Hobbesian natural persons are not to be matched with Rousseau's 'natural men', notably characterized as 'dispersed among [the rest of the animals]', raised 'to the level of the beast's instinct' and only 'with some crude idea of mutual engagements'.²⁵ In their capacity as citizens-to-be or individuals able to contract with each other, natural persons are perforce neither instinctive nor dispersed, but sophisticated and socially articulated. Even in the context of the state of nature, these agents differ from 'brute beasts... [that] had never the power to make any covenant or to understand the consequences thereof, and consequently never took upon them to authorise the actions of any sovereign, as they must do that make to themselves a commonwealth'.²⁶ In other terms, the concept of natural person presupposes a social framework where manners, complex exhibitions of power, 'owning' and 'attributing' words and deeds, and other social features discussed up to chapter XVI are meaningful forms of interaction.²⁷

Far from an unusual approach, the line of reading that examines natural persons *sub specie artificii* has been upheld by several interpreters.²⁸ As we shall soon come to learn, the artificial qualities germane to the natural person are conspicuous. Suffice it to say for now that even Hobbes appears to be dissatisfied with the setup of scientific fields that he outlined in *Leviathan*. Probably owing to the trouble he might have had finding a specific location for the natural person *qua* object of study, in *De Corpore* he modified that schema: 'seeing that, for the knowledge of the properties of a commonwealth, it is necessary first to know the dispositions, affections, and manners of men, civil philosophy is again divided into two parts,

²⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 16.

²⁵ J.-J. Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, in *The Discourses and other early political writings*, ed. V. Gourevitch, (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 134 and 163. To be sure, this is a sketchy overview of a much richer position. For a more balanced approach, see J.-L. Guichet, 'L'homme et la nature chez Rousseau', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, (86), (2002), pp. 69-84.

²⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 422 [XXVI.12].

²⁷ With respect to the social articulation of the state of nature, see G. Kavka, 'Hobbes's War of All Against All', *Ethics*, 93 (2), (1983), pp. 304-5; F. Tricaud, 'Hobbes's conception of the state of nature from 1640 to 1651', in *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*, eds. G. Rogers & A. Ryan, (Oxford, 1988), p. 112; K. Hoekstra, *The Savage, the Citizen, and the Foole: The Compulsion for Civil Society in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes* (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1998), pp. 44-5; D. Boucher, 'Hobbes's Contribution to International Thought, and the Contribution of International Thought to Hobbes', *History of European Ideas*, (41), (2015), pp. 40; P. Sagar, 'Of Mushrooms and Method: History and the Family in Hobbes's Science of Politics', *European Journal of Political Theory*, 14 (1), (2015), pp. 102; and T. Christov, *Before Anarchy. Hobbes and his Critics in Modern International Thought* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), p. 58.

²⁸ Cf. C. Pye, 'The Sovereign, the Theater, and the Kingdom of Darkness: Hobbes and the Spectacle of Power', *Representations*, 8, (1984), p. 91; Jaume, *l'État représentatif*, pp. 96-7; Tukiainen, 'The Commonwealth as a Person', pp. 46-7; P. Dumouchel, 'Persona: Reason and Representation in Hobbes's Political Philosophy', *Substance*, 25 (2), (1996), pp. 72; Y. Zarka, *Hobbes and Modern Political Thought* (Edinburgh, 2016 [1995]), p. 179; Q. Skinner, 'Hobbes and the Purely Artificial Person of the State', *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 7 (1), (1999), p. 12 and 'Hobbes on Representation', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 13 (2), (2005), p. 158; M. Brito Vieira, 'The Elements of Representation in Hobbes' (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2005), p. 131; D. Runciman, *Political Hypocrisy: The Mask of Power, from Hobbes to Orwell and Beyond* (Princeton, 2008), p. 39; G. Newey, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Hobbes and Leviathan* (London, 2008), pp. 109-112 and 121; P. Crignon, *De l'incarnation à la représentation. L'ontologie politique de Thomas Hobbes* (Paris, 2012), p. 246; and Marko Simendic, 'Thomas Hobbes's Person as *Persona* and 'Intelligent Substance'', *Intellectual History Review*, 22 (2), (2012), p. 154.

whereof one, which treats of men's dispositions and manners, is called ethics; and the other, which takes cognizance of their civil duties, is called politics'.²⁹

To summarize our initial standpoint, the natural character of the Hobbesian natural person cannot be taken for granted and requires careful scrutiny. Correspondingly, we shall first inquire in what sense is the natural person artificial. In this process we will arrive at a fairly non-natural category. Considering that we 'make' our natural persons 'ourselves' in the same way we make political bodies, they may be characterized as artifacts akin to the those studied by civil philosophy. The remaining task, then, will be to reveal in what respect it may be claimed that this notion still bears a relevant natural element.

2. What is a person?

In chapter XVI of *Leviathan*, Hobbes defines *person* as follows:

A person is he whose words or actions are considered either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of an other man, or of any other thing to whom they are attributed, whether truly or by fiction. When they are considered as his owne, then he is called a natural person: And when they are considered as representing the words and actions of an other, then he is a feigned or artificial person.³⁰

Deciphered in this fashion, the category establishes a clear-cut contrast with respect to substantialists versions, which à la Boethius construed person as 'the individual substance of a rational nature'.³¹ As far as Hobbes is concerned, being a person is not determined by an ontological consideration, but by an external attribution. The most disruptive instance of his argument relates to everything which, according to Boethius, the term 'person could not be predicated' of.³² That would include universals, accidents, relations, inert bodies, living bodies 'which lack sense [*quae sensu carent*]', and every other entity 'bereft of mind and reason'.³³

In what seems to be an explicit confutation of those exclusions, Hobbes postulates, this time in his Latin edition of *Leviathan* (1668), that 'there are few things of which there may not be persons [*paucae res sunt, quarum non possunt esse personae*]'.³⁴ It is due to the attribution of words and actions by an indeterminate third party, let us say an audience, that the status of person is acquired.³⁵ This means that

²⁹ Hobbes, *Concerning Body*, p. 11 [I.9]. To be sure, this three-fold structure complies with the thematic division of *De Corpore*, *De Homine* and *De Cive*.

³⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 244 [XVI.1-2].

³¹ Boethius, 'Contra Eutychen et Nestorium,' in *The Theological Tractates* (London, 1918), p. 85. Cf. also, 83: 'Person is properly applied to substances'. Pettit, *Made with Words*, p. 55, has alluded to this substantialist model of the medieval notion of person.

³² Boethius, 'Contra Eutychen', p. 83. Even more interesting is Nestorius's opinion, against which Boethius was arguing, who asserted that *πρόσωπον* is instead a form of appearance, the concrete presentation of a nature *ad extra*, as stated by D. Bradshaw, 'The Opuscula Sacra: Boethius and Theology,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*, ed. J. Marenbon (Cambridge, 2009), p. 123.

³³ Boethius, 'Contra Eutychen', pp. 83-5.

³⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 247 [XVI.6].

³⁵ Here we follow F. Tönnies *Community and Society*, ed. J. Harris (Cambridge, 2001), p. 185: 'Each person exists for all the rest and as a part of a *system*... The very fact of treating someone or something as a person necessarily implies recognition as a secondary factor'. Cf., as well, Jaume, *l'État représentatif*, p. 95: 'For Hobbes, a person has the status

a person is anything to which those words or actions may be ascribed, *scilicet*, a human being, a group, an institution, a building, an idol, and even God. The relevant point is that being a person depends on an intersubjective consideration. Indeed, there is a kind of simultaneous interplay between him or her who acts as a natural person (presenting his words and actions as his own) or as an artificial one (presenting the words and actions of another human or thing), and the endorsement that the audience gives to the way those parts are executed. If the public believes that what is being represented behaves as a person, then it is a person.

On the face of it, the criterion proposed by Hobbes to specify the *genus* 'person' distinguishes between a field of natural representation and a field of artificial representation. It should be noted, though, that this distinction becomes blurred by the fact that even natural persons are involved in acts of contrivance when they represent themselves. To be more accurate, '...a person is the same that an actor is, both on the stage and in common conversation; and to personate is to act or represent himself, or an other'.³⁶ In consonance with this statement, civil society would consist in a great theater within which persons, both natural and artificial, are compelled to play a part.³⁷

We may ratify this consideration with subsequent claims in Hobbes's later works. In *De Homine*, for instance, he equates the theatrical to the commercial domain: 'Regarding commercial transactions and contracts between those who are absent [*absentium*], these kind of fictions [*fictiones hujusmodi*] are no less necessary in a political society [*in civitate*] than in the theater'.³⁸ The same applies to the ecclesiastical and the juridical in his Latin *Leviathan*: 'its [the person's] proper meaning is a man's face, whether a natural face or an artificial one (a mask), or even a representative face [*tum etiam faciem representativam*], and that not only in the theater, but also in law-court [*Foro*] and in church'.³⁹ In a nutshell, all the spheres of social life are conceptualized through a theatrical lens.

While Hobbes's etymological trawl of the term *persona* did not lack of precedents,⁴⁰ it has some interesting traits of its own that we should bear in mind:

of a nominalist designation, not of an ontological property. It is a question of external designation, that is, a phenomenon for a witness. I am always designated as a person by another'; and D. Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 9: 'It only matters to whom actions belong if there exists an audience for the actions whose own conduct will be shaped by the answer to that question'.

³⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 244 [XVI.3]. Quentin Skinner has recently unearthed the tradition behind the concept of 'civil conversation' and Hobbes's diverging ways of 'imposing civility' in *From Humanism to Hobbes: Studies in rhetoric and politics* (Cambridge, 2018), pp. 179-82.

³⁷ As Zarka, *Modern Political Thought*, p. 180, points out: 'The theory of political representation transforms the state into a gigantic real theater, the boards of which it erects... The institution of the state thus has the function of making a spectacle possible by imposing a single text'.

³⁸ Hobbes, *De Homine*, p. 130 [XV.1].

³⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 1181 [App.]. S. Schlossmann, *Persona und πρόσωπον im Recht und im christlichen Dogma* (Kiel, 1906), p. 20, describes precisely the same expansion of meaning in the Roman notion of *persona*: 'In the end, *personam gerere* did not signify merely to play a part on a stage or a theater, but also to perform a specific function in life'. Cf., as well, M. Fuhrmann, 'Persona, ein römischer Rollenbegriff,' in *Identität. Poetik und Hermeneutik*, Vol. VIII, ed. O. Marquard & K. Stierle (München, 1979), p. 88: 'The recasting of the meaning of *persona* as a role or a character in life is identifiable in spheres... of systems similar to the theater'.

⁴⁰ Aulus Gellius, *The Attic Nights*, ed. J. Rolfe (Cambridge, 1927), p. 399 [V.7], was seemingly the first to refer to the theatrical origin of the word, that is, a mask: 'the head and the face are shut in all sides by the covering of the *persona*, or mask, and only one passage is left for the issue of the voice [which]... makes the sound clearer and more

The word person is Latine: instead whereof the Greeks had *πρόσωπον*, which signifies the face, as persona in Latine signifies the disguise or outward appearance of a man, counterfeited on the stage; and sometimes more particularly that part of it, which disguiseth the face, as a mask or vizard: And from the stage hath been translated to any representer of speech and action, as well in tribunals, as theaters.⁴¹

Suggestively, Hobbes reasserts with this passage the theatrical morphology of every representation. Within the context of social interaction, human beings never exhibit themselves in the bare nudity of their 'natural face[s]', to use Hobbes terminology in his Latin *Leviathan*, but through the mediation of the *persona* they bring into play. In other words, the human being considered as a natural entity concerns a specific field of natural philosophy. Civil philosophy, by contrast, adopts the perspective of the public forum or common conversation, and examines human beings *qua* 'larvae' or 'fictitious faces'.⁴² In *De Homine*, Hobbes's formulation of this reasoning is even more transparent: 'Human beings are not just natural bodies, but also a civil [*civitatis*] ones, namely, parts of a political body [*corporis politici pars*]. Therefore, *they must be regarded both as humans and as citizens*'.⁴³ Actually, we could trace this duality back to chapter XIII of *Leviathan*, where Hobbes repeatedly differentiates between human beings and persons: 'there is no way for any man to secure himself so reasonable as anticipation, that is, by force or wiles to master *the persons of all men* he can', he declares.⁴⁴ And three paragraphs below: 'They use violence to make themselves *masters of other mens persons*, wives, children, and cattle'.⁴⁵ Consequently, fictitious faces seem not to be restricted only to advanced political societies. If 'men's persons' are a feature of the 'naturall condition of mankind', one should expect to find natural persons within the state of nature. To justify this assertion let us delve deeper into this notion.

resonant'. As we can extract from the *Introduction to the Eight Books of the Pelopponesian Wars in English Works*, Vol. VIII, ed. W. Molesworth (London, 1843), p. xx, Hobbes was acquainted with Gellius's work. To be sure, Boethius's *Contra Eutychen*, pp. 85-7, was another important source for this etymology all through medieval theologians. In this respect, cf. M. Hatch Marshall, 'Boethius' Definition of Persona and Mediaeval Understanding of the Roman Theater', *Speculum: A Journal of Mediaeval Studies*, 25 (4), (1950), pp. 473-8.

⁴¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 244 [XVI.3]. Modern genealogies of the notion do not vary significantly from those first accounts. Fuhrmann, 'Persona', pp. 83-94, offers a comprehensive explanation of the transitions that the meaning of *persona* experienced in Rome: from mask to dramatic character, then to civic role, office, profession, duty, familial task, and political personality. M. Nédoncelle's search, '*πρόσωπον* et *persona* dans l'antiquité classique. Essai de bilan linguistique', *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, 22 (3-4), (1948), pp. 277-299, works on a religious seam: the etruscan *phersu*, associated with Persephone. Since the Etruscans employed masks in their rites devoted to the goddess, her name might have stretched to encompass the mask with which she was personated. A. von Pechmann, 'Der Souverän als 'Träger der Persona''. Zur Konstruktion des Gesellschaftsvertrags in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*', *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 59 (2), (2005), pp. 271-2, elaborates a different, non-theatrical, exhumation, linked to the display of *imagines maiorum*. Roman nobles used to exhibit their ancestors' death masks as proof of their lineage.

⁴² For this contrast between '*facies hominis naturalis*' and '*larva*' or '*facies fictitia*', see Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 245 [XVI.1].

⁴³ Hobbes, *De Homine*, p. i [Ep. Dedicatoria]; our emphasis.

⁴⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 190 [XIII.4]; our emphasis.

⁴⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 192 [XIII.7]; our emphasis. We could read *On the Citizen*, p. 102 [VIII.1], in the same manner: 'The most important things to know here are the ways in which the right of dominion is acquired over men's persons [*in personas hominum*]'.

3. The authorized version of oneself

The pivotal demarcation of author and actor sheds additional light on the inherent artificiality of the concept of person:

Of persons artificial, some have their words and actions *owned* by those of whom they represent. And then the person is the *actor*, and he that owneth his words and actions is the AUTHOR: In which case the actor acteth by authority. For that which in speaking of goods and possessions is called an *owner*... speaking of actions is called author. And as the right of possession is called dominion; so the right of doing any action is called AUTHORITY.⁴⁶

Despite the fact that the paragraph starts with a reference to artificial persons, it could be argued that the same dichotomy dwells within natural person.⁴⁷ Since Hobbes claims that he is ‘speaking of actions’, viz., of acts executed either by natural or artificial persons, we could thus presume that the concept of authority, and the correlative unfolding of author and actor, applies indistinctly to any kind of person. Whereas in the case of artificial persons author and actor are two different subjects, with respect to natural persons those aspects, though still distinguishable, overlap on the same subject. Hobbes’s *Answer to Bramhall* (1682 [1668]) may shed some supplementary light on this topic: ‘In the same sense we use the word in English vulgarly, calling *him that acteth by his own authority, his own person*, and him that acteth by the authority of another, the person of that other’.⁴⁸ Similarly, in the *Latin Leviathan* we discover an alternative label for a natural person: *persona propria*.⁴⁹ With its straightforward reference to the semantics of property, the *persona propria* amounts to a manifestation of oneself for which one can claim ownership. As Hobbes will clarify later on, a human being acting in the character of a natural person ‘representeth no mans person, but his own’.⁵⁰ To be a natural person means, in Coriolanus’s words, to act ‘as if a man were author of himself’.⁵¹

Thus, the locution ‘natural person’ denotes the authorized version of someone that results from the sifting of the variegated behaviors he or she is capable of. Because it hides as much as it shows, duplicity is essential to this mask.⁵² Again, when natural persons speak or act, they are fully aware that they are

⁴⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 244 [XVI.4].

⁴⁷ Fortunately, we are not alone in this contention. Cf. Tukiainen, ‘Commonwealth as a Person’, pp. 46-7, and Pettit, ‘Made with Words’, p. 160, n. 3. This is not the only case in which the artifice acts as a model for the natural. See *Leviathan*, 16, where Hobbes argues that ‘NATURE [is] the art by which God hath made and governes the world’. Besides, this same strategy has been recently implemented by J. Frow, *Character and Person* (Cambridge, 2014), p. vii: ‘viewing persons as somewhat similar to fictional characters... allows us to understand persons not as ontological givens but as constructs, which are in part made out of the same materials as fictional characters’.

⁴⁸ T. Hobbes, *An Answer to Bishop Bramhall’s Book, Called ‘The Catching of Leviathan’* in *English Works*, Vol. IV, ed. William Molesworth (London, 1840), p. 311, our emphasis.

⁴⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 245 [XVI.1].

⁵⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 156 [XXII.9].

⁵¹ Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Coriolanus*, ed. J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 2009), p. 114 [V.3.36].

⁵² E. Canetti, *Masse und Macht* (Hamburg, 1960), p. 431, has thematized the ‘distance [*Distanz*]’ generated by the mask between its holder and the spectator. Von Pechmann, ‘Der Souverän’, p. 270, also alludes to this ambiguity: ‘As for the actor, the mask is an appearance that hides [*versteckt*] the essence. For the spectator, the mask is a manifestation that represents [*vorstellt*] the essence’. P. Rolnick, *Person, Grace, and God* (Grand Rapids, 2007), p. 12, tracks down this duality in the origin of the term: ‘Since Persephone was reputed to spend part of the year above ground and part below, the revealed and the hidden, the communicated and the concealed, the visible and the unseen below surface, are early associated with *persona*’.

appearing on a civil stage. This means that they commit themselves to the words and actions they present to the public and, simultaneously, that they are concealing other possible self-presentations, which remain unauthorized.⁵³ These delicate contrivances urge us to analyze natural persons *qua* artifices, and not *qua* natural entities.

Furthermore, from this vantage point our actions are judged according to the particular parts we represent on the stage of a relatively sophisticated society. *Persona* and *office* are two sides of the same coin: the part played by a natural person comes along with a matching expectation regarding his or her appropriate behavior, *i.e.*, the *office* of that representation.⁵⁴ Of course, with the term office we do not mean the sort of functions pertinent to public officials. Rather, it is about the implicit *decorum* that belongs to the proper presentation of one's own *persona*.⁵⁵ Our capacity of self-personation is therefore restricted by rules of coherence. Conversely, Hobbes held in the *Elements of Law*, insincerity in our rendition is tantamount to absurdity or contradiction, and is analogous to an act of injustice:⁵⁶

There is a great similitude between what we call injury, or injustice in the actions and conversations of men in the world, and that which is called absurd in the arguments and disputations of the Schools. For as he, that is driven to contradict an assertion by him before maintained, is said to be reduced to an absurdity; so he that through passion doth, or omitteth that which before by covenant he promised not to do, or not to omit, is said to commit injustice... And so injury is an absurdity in conversation...⁵⁷

Hobbes's admonition against hypocrisy is quite sensible. The hypocrite's performance is absurd because the multiple self-presentations he or she displays are contradictory. Hence, he or she breaches the implicit agreement established with his or her audience: the mask is not trustworthy anymore. Each one of the natural persons has the responsibility of presenting a consistent person and acting as a predictable (or

⁵³ Pettit, 'Made with Words', p. 59, elaborated this notion of natural persons as authorized versions of oneself: 'persons in Hobbes's sense are agents who relate in a certain way toward others... authorizing their own words and actions as signs of their minds, and inevitably taking others to authorize their words and actions in the same way'. Cf. also Newey, *Guidebook to Hobbes*, p. 107, and Simendic, 'Hobbes's Person', p. 154.

⁵⁴ C. Condren has delved into the specificity of early modern offices in *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 7: 'so far from merely being roles assumed, official could be formalized as moral beings, making even the notion of an office as a duty itself sometimes misleadingly incomplete'. Also, p. 54: 'Office was a matter of belonging, of formal relational identity through responsibility... No man, wrote Edmund de Bohun, is without office, no aspect of life without rule'.

⁵⁵ K. Haakonsen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 41-2, warns in this regard: '*Officia* in the broader sense are thus not simply 'duties', as the term normally rendered in English. They are the offices of life which encompass clusters of specific duties and rights, and we are bound to them by an *obligatio*, or moral necessity'. Actually, these considerations are very close to what E. Goffman called the 'personal front' in *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh, 1956), pp. 14-15.

⁵⁶ Pettit, 'Made with Words', p. 62, developed perspicuously this link between self-contradiction and mask failure: 'to represent oneself in such a malfunctioning guise is to invite dismissal by others... such absurdity or self-contradiction, in particular the public reduction to absurdity, is its own penalty'. According to Frost, 'Faking It', p. 44, these subjects become 'socially illegible'. D. Raphael, 'Hobbes on Justice', in *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*, G. Rogers & A. Ryan, (Oxford, 1988), p. 160, objects that Hobbes's reasoning is incomplete: 'The full implications of the comparison between promise-breaking and self-contradiction are not brought out, and were probably not realized, by Hobbes himself'.

⁵⁷ Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, p. 88 [XVI.2]; also, *On the Citizen*, pp. 43-4 [III.3].

legible) interlocutor.⁵⁸ Throughout time, our masks accrue a collection of attitudinal traits from which we cannot disentangle. As it happens, we act conditioned by a trail of sedimented significations resulting from our previous self-representations. Even when Hobbesian actors behave spontaneously, they orientate themselves in agreement with the diffuse, but perceptible, pattern of their past renditions. Compliance with these diachronic bonds is part of the duty of a proper natural person. As in ancient Rome, in early modern Britain everybody was supposed to fulfill a limited set of actions and gestures.⁵⁹

As we asserted before, this theatrical conception of human beings as natural persons should not exclude the state of nature. Even 'where men have lived by families small families to robbe and spoyle one another... men observed... the lawes of honour',⁶⁰ that is to say, there were expectations regarding people's behavior. Moreover, due to the fact that families are 'united in one person representative... the father or master [who] ordereth the whole family',⁶¹ they imply acts of personation, role distribution and displacement of words and actions. Relevant to this premise is Hobbes's idea of the 'antient Germans', who were 'divided amongst an infinite number of little lords... that continually had wars one with another',⁶² but whose manners and symbology of power was particularly rich. Indeed, '[s]cutchions and coats of arms haereditary... are honourable... for their power consisteth either in such privileges, or in riches, or in some such thing as is equally honoured in other men'. In spite of the fragility of their state formations, they managed to elaborate an original mechanism of attribution and delegation of power, '[f]or there never was any such thing known, where the German customes were unknown'.⁶³

In sum, when Hobbes resorts to the dramatic morphology of representation, he invites us to uncover the equivocal configuration of a person who speaks and acts, whether for herself, or for another, before an audience. To represent oneself or another, in purity, means to enter into a world of *vincula artificialia*, of actors who venture words and actions and wait for the public's stamp of approval.⁶⁴ What is significant here is that all our interactions are mediated through a mask. So, at least on a preliminary basis, we should answer negatively the question with which our disquisitions commenced: Hobbes's natural person is fairly *not* natural.

4. Conceptual borders: what a person is not

But, how does a human being become a natural person? Or, more exactly, how does he or she manage to secure his or her eligibility for a natural personality? As everything in life, the theatrical dynamics of civil society operate within certain boundaries. In principle, not every human body equates to a natural person:

⁵⁸ With regard to the responsibilities attached to personation, Runciman, *Political Hypocrisy*, p. 39, adds: 'Natural persons must also put on the appearance that best suits their role as subjects –individual subjects have an obligation, not to be themselves, but to be a civilly sustainable version of themselves'.

⁵⁹ We borrow this notion of the diachronic aspect of a *persona* from Fuhrmann, 'Persona', p. 92. C. Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley, 2001), p. 26, argues that Roman *decorum* '...with its elaboration of roles and masks, was *proprius*, one's own, appropriate to oneself, one's way of defining, of realizing, of creating a self'.

⁶⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 254-6 [XVII.2].

⁶¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 368 [XXII.26].

⁶² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 144 [X.51].

⁶³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 144 [X.50].

⁶⁴ The locution *vincula artificialia* appears in Latin *Leviathan*, p. 329 [XXI.5].

...Children, fooles, and mad-men that have no use of reason, may be personated by guardians, or curators, but can be no authors (during that time) of any action done by them, longer then (when they shall recover the use of reason) they shall judge the same reasonable.⁶⁵

To express it plainly, the absence of reason entails the impossibility of being attributed the role of author of one's own actions.⁶⁶ With this characterization in mind, we seem to return to the substantialist point of departure. Indeed, we encounter an objective aspect according to which the Boethian definition of person would become acceptable again: in order to certify the presence of a natural person, the audience must acknowledge the existence of a subject in full possession of his or her cognitive faculties. Actually, in his *Answer to Bramhall*, Hobbes appears to validate this contention inasmuch as he states that person 'signifies an *intelligent substance*, that acteth any thing in his own or another's name, or by his own or another's authority'.⁶⁷ Are we, then, to infer that Hobbes understates his former assertions regarding the conventional make-up of persons?⁶⁸

To be sure, possessing rational faculties serves as a necessary condition to qualify for the status of natural person. The ability of self-representation presupposes beyond doubt certain capacities specific to human beings such as reason and speech. Yet, the attributive structure which sets up natural personality never ceases to operate. An intelligent substance is not *eo ipso* a person.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 248 [XVI.10].

⁶⁶ According to Q. Skinner, 'Hobbes and the Purely Artificial Person of the State', *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 7 (1), (1999), pp. 13-4, 'the category of natural persons [is] a remarkably narrow one' since it entails two conditions: being 'capable of autonomously choosing whatever roles they may wish to assume in social life', and 'being capable of voicing his own thoughts, making his own promises, agreeing the terms of his own contracts and covenants'. Both provisos would exclude servants, who 'are not to be counted as natural persons'. We believe this assertion is unfounded. Despite the fact that the *paterfamilias* speaks on behalf of his servants, he does it in so far as the servant is part of his familial corporation. As a private person, the servant maintains the right to choose his or her loyalties and speaks or acts in his or her own name, something from which fools are precluded.

⁶⁷ Hobbes, *Answer to Bramhall*, p. 310, our emphasis. Also, in Latin *Leviathan's* Appendix, p. 1179, Hobbes seems to subscribe a substantialist consideration: 'person... is a Latin term, meaning any individual thing whatsoever that acts whatsoever way, either by its own will or by the will of another'.

⁶⁸ Actually, this is the tip of the iceberg with respect to the dissonances in Hobbes's descriptions of the notion of person throughout his work. Both D. Copp, 'Hobbes on Artificial Persons and Collective Actions', *The Philosophical Review*, 89 (4), (1980), p. 583; F. Tricaud, 'An Investigation Concerning the Usage of the Words 'Person' and 'Persona' in the Political Treatises of Hobbes', in *Thomas Hobbes: His View of Man*, ed. J. G. van der Bend (Amsterdam, 1982), pp. 89-96; and A. Martinich, 'Authorization and Representation in *Leviathan*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 325-332, have thoroughly explored its many modifications. A. Matheron, 'Hobbes, la Trinité et les caprices de la représentation', in *Thomas Hobbes: philosophie première, théorie de la science et politique*, eds. J. Bernhardt & Y. Zarka (Paris, 1990), pp. 381-390; A. Martinich, *The two gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 206-8; and Crignon, *De l'Incarnation*, pp. 368-373, have focused, instead, on the contortions suffered by Hobbes's concept of persona when he tries to apply it to the Holy Trinity.

⁶⁹ Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 1181 [Appendix]: 'Bellarmino and almost all the other Doctors define a 'person' as an intelligent first substance... Bellarmino did not understand the force of the Latin term 'person'. If that term means first substance, would not *πρόσωπον* mean the same in Greek? But that is not true; for its proper meaning is a man's face [*faciem hominis*] whether a natural face or an artificial one (a mask [*larvam*])'. Here, we follow Simendic's reasoning, 'Hobbes's Person', pp. 159-60: 'Hobbes does not identify an intelligent substance with a person... [since] that would make Hobbes a tritheist... in this context, the only relevant property of intelligent substance is its *ability* to assume the role of a specific person'.

At bottom, the common denominator which childhood, madness, and stupidity exhibit is the incapacity, sanctioned by a relevant audience, to perform a part on the public stage of 'common conversation'.⁷⁰ In factual terms, any relatively complex social group may stop treating an individual as a natural person if there is some kind of intersubjective consensus concerning his or her impossibility of carrying out a public self-representation. Thanks to its latitude, the notion of *folly* captures quite handily the whole set of beings that do not pertain to the social theater. Therefore, and although personation is an activity specific of rational human beings, it consists in an ability with demanding requirements. A natural person cannot be defined simply as an intelligent substance, because it entails the performance of some supplementary 'virtues'.

So, what are these additional qualifications that a subject must meet in order not to be mistaken for a madman, or a fool? Hobbes brings out two virtues to that end. The first one is good wit: 'Those that observe their [men's thoughts] similitudes, in case they be such as are rarely observed by others, are said to have a *good wit*, by which, in this occasion is meant a *good fancy*'.⁷¹ The second is discretion:

But they that observe their differences and dissimilitudes, which is called distinguishing, and discerning, and judging between thing and thing; in case, such discerning be not easie, are said to have good judgment: and particularly *in matter of conversation and businesse, wherein times, places, and persons are to be discerned, this vertue is called DISCRETION*.⁷²

Stricto sensu, discretion is the essential component of self-representation, since the absence of an adequate understanding of the conversational scenario dissolves the credibility of the person we venture on social interaction.⁷³ Furthermore, this quality consists in a fundamental virtue for multiple discursive and literary genres. The proper assessment of temporal, spatial, and personal circumstances acts as a precondition for the correct enactment of a human being's techno-poietic capacities.⁷⁴ Certainly, '...in every discourse whatsoever, if the defect of discretion be apparent, how extravagant soever the fancy be, the whole discourse will be taken for a sign of want of wit'.⁷⁵

This preponderant role of discretion is corroborated when we are not capable of acting in tune with the rules of the social stage:

'tis the want of discretion that makes the difference. Again in *profest remissnesse* of mind, and familiar company, a man may play with the sounds, and aequivocall significations of words; and

⁷⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 244 [XVI.3]. In Frost's terms, 'Faking It,' pp. 49-50: 'They are effectively 'unintelligible' beings, destitute of ethical identity and consequently denied political personhood... Hobbes explicitly rejects appeals to nature in explanations of... who or what a person is'.

⁷¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 104 [VIII.3]

⁷² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 104 [VIII.3]; our emphasis.

⁷³ Brito Vieira, *Elements of Representation*, pp. 86-7, has detected with great acuteness the role of dissimulation and discretion in the elaboration of a natural person. J. Freund, 'Anthropologische Voraussetzungen zur Theorie des Politischen bei Thomas Hobbes', in *Furcht und Freiheit. LEVIATHAN — Diskussion 300 Jahre nach Thomas Hobbes*, eds. Udo Bernbach & Klaus Kodalle (Berlin, 1982), p. 127, had already noticed the importance of 'simulation [*Nachahmung*]': '[Hobbesian] anthropology explains how human beings create themselves. This self-production is perhaps an act of dissembling... but it is certainly something artificial [*etwas Künstliches*]'.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ C. Condren, *Hobbes, the Scriblerians, and the History of Philosophy* (London, 2012), p. 44, vouches for a similar opinion: '...discretion as a controlled imagination was a virtue that reached beyond poetry and was symptomatic of a degree of overlap between poetry and philosophy and the persona appropriate to each'.

⁷⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 108 [VIII.9].

that many times with encounters of extraordinary fancy: but in a sermon, or in publique, or before persons unknown, or whom we ought to reverence, *there is no gingling of words that will not be accounted folly.*⁷⁶

Folly functions here as a loose term connoting any failed representation: incompetence in the handling of discretion is tantamount to the fall of the mask before the public. As we established before, our self-representation looks like a wager that we expect to be validated by the participants of our social interactions. Hence, our main aim must be to assure the credibility of the character we lay out in front of the audience. In *De Homine* Hobbes mentions an interesting example:

In the theater we understand that he who speaks is not the actor himself, but another one [*loqui non ipse histrio, sed aliquis alius*]. For example, for a certain time Agamemnon is without doubt the actor who plays the part of Agamemnon under a fictitious face [*faciem fictitiam*]. Nevertheless, afterwards, and without his fictitious face, we acknowledge that we are dealing with the actor [*actore*] himself, and not with the person formerly represented [*personam acturus erat*]. Regarding commercial transactions and contracts between those who are absent, these kinds of fictions are no less necessary in a political society than in the theater.⁷⁷

That being said, we still should determine what is it that the mask withholds from the audience. Or, more precisely, what is revealed when the *persona* falls apart. In Hobbes's account, if we want to perform successfully in a social setting, we must take control of what we may identify as *natural*, that is, the accidents of our bodies, our passions, thoughts and words. Precisely, what madness, immaturity, and stupidity –to wit, those conceptual borders of the natural person– disclose is the unbridled intensity of the passions: 'to have stronger, and more vehement passions for any thing, than is ordinarily seen in others, is that which men call MADNESSE'; and 'all passions that produce strange and unusuall behaviour, are called by the generall name of madnesse'.⁷⁸ This may be attributed to a faulty constitution of the organs, an injury, or excessive booze intake, but Hobbes seems only preoccupied with its externalization. Besides, Hobbes adds:

...that madnesse is nothing else, but too much appearing passion, may be gathered out of the effects of wine, which are the same with those of the evil disposition of the organs. For the variety of behaviour in men that have drunk too much, is the same with that of mad-men... For the effect of wine, does but remove dissimulation; and take from them the sight of *the deformity of their passions*. For, (I believe) the most sober men, when they walk along without care and employment of the mind, would be unwilling *the vanity and extravagance of their thoughts at that time should be publicquely seen*: which is a confession, that passions unguided, are for the most part meere madnesse.⁷⁹

While discretion was an active and creative ability, the kind of dissimulation we encounter here has a negative function, comprising caution and concealment of our spontaneous mental activity. Insanity,

⁷⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 108 [VIII.10], our emphasis.

⁷⁷ Hobbes, *De Homine*, p. 130 [XV.1]. However, in this respect theater might be the exact specular inversion of real life, as construed by R. Barthes in *Empire of Signs*, trans. R. Howard (New York, 1982), p. 61: 'its function is essentially to manifest what is supposed to be secret ('feelings', 'situations', 'conflicts'), while concealing the very artifice of such manifestation (machinery, painting, makeup, the sources of light)'.

⁷⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 110 [VIII.16] and 112 [VIII.20].

⁷⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 114 [VIII.23], our emphasis.

inebriation, and –we might add– immaturity or stupidity, provide a behind-the-scenes access to what must never be shown about a natural person, namely, human passions and thoughts in an ‘unguided’ form.

In order to execute a convincing performance a natural person must sift those *natural* components. The difference between a subject capable of authoring his or her own words and actions and a lunatic is not defined by their passionate or mental complexions. Even ‘the most sober men’, as we have just shown, entertain ‘extravagan[t] thoughts’. What is of significance here is the image we project before our audience, a task that demands a proficient mastery of the arts of discretion and dissimulation. When we behave in an unplanned, seemingly natural way, talking and acting in our own names, we are still displaying a fictitious entity: our person. Therefore, Hobbes’s portrayal of natural persons as actors, that is, as individuals whose office consists in posturing and counterfeiting, is not fanciful.

5. The Baroque façade

Further theoretical support for this particular conceptualization of the natural person may be found in the well-known Hobbesian distinction between *foro interno* and *externo*.⁸⁰ Despite the fact that our philosopher introduces this division when dealing with the obligatoriness of natural law, it inevitably opens up a pervasive demarcation of two non-symmetrical jurisdictions germane to human interaction. In a Hobbesian outlook, the exterior trumps the interior because our public characters are more tangible than our inner passions and thoughts: ‘...the characters of mans heart, blotted and confounded as they are, with dissembling, lying, counterfeiting, and erroneous doctrines, are legible onely to him that searcheth hearts’.⁸¹ The masked subject, along with the cracks in his or her disguise, is all we have at our disposal for an inquiry into his or her designs. ‘The best signes of passions present, are in the countenance, motions of the body, actions, and ends, or aimes, which we otherwise know the man to have’.⁸² To state it bluntly, Hobbes’s political philosophy favors the external appearance of human beings over their beliefs and passions. In the *Elements* he already held that

...no human law is intended to oblige the conscience of a man, but the actions only. For seeing no man (but God alone) knoweth the heart or conscience of a man, unless it breaks out into action, either of the tongue, or other part of the body; the law made thereupon would be of none effect, because no man is able to discern, but by word or other action, whether such law be kept or broken.⁸³

As he clarifies in *Leviathan*, this contention is especially pertinent in the religious sphere:

...worship consists in the opinion of the beholders: for if to them the words, or actions by which we intend honour, seem ridiculous, and tending to contumely; they are no worship; because no signes of honour; and no signes of honour, because a signe is not a signe to him that giveth it, but

⁸⁰ Cf. Hobbes, *Elements*, p. 97 [XVII.10]; *On the Citizen*, pp. 53-5 [III.27-9]; and *Leviathan*, p. 240 [XV.36-7].

⁸¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 18 [Introduction].

⁸² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 94 [VI.56]. Cf. Zarka, *Modern Political Thought*, p. 66: ‘The proper character of language signs, in opposition to other signs (gestures, behaviors, attitudes, etc.) is ambivalence. Language can reveal our thoughts as well as mask them’.

⁸³ Hobbes, *Elements*, p. 142 [XXV.3].

to him to whom it is made... [Thus] private [worship] is in secret free; but in the sight of the multitude, it is never without some restraint, either from the lawes, or from the opinion of men.⁸⁴

In any case, this preeminence of outward appearance, both on the social and on the religious theater, was swiftly recognized by Hobbes's contemporary readers.⁸⁵ After having read *De Cive*, Grotius relates to his brother that the English philosopher 'thinks it is the duty of each private individual to follow the official religion of his country –if not with internal assent, then at least with *outward observance*'.⁸⁶ Similarly, the whole first section of Bramhall's *Catching of Leviathan* (1658) inveighs against the deleterious imbalance established by Hobbes between outward obedience to official religion and genuine inner beliefs: 'He who *unteacheth* men their duty to God, may make them 'eye-servants', so long as their interest doth oblige them to obey, but is no fit master to teach men conscience and fidelity'.⁸⁷ Eachard picks up the thread with the preposterous remarks of his character Philautus, a tongue-in-cheek caricature of Hobbesian philosophy in his *Some opinions of Mr. Hobbs* (1672):

I am just what you see me to be. But some people I find, have two *men* to take care of; an *outward man*, and an *inward man*: for my part, I am able to maintain but one; and if I can shift it, that shall take no hurt, for want of looking after.⁸⁸

As for Tenison, he objects that only '...true goodness is both the creator and preserver of peace: unlesse a man obeyeth for conscience sake, all the cords of outward pacts and covenants will not hold him'.⁸⁹ Rosse, as well, criticizes Hobbes in the Preface to his *Leviathan Drawn out with a Hook* (1653) for having revealed how to 'dissemble in matter of religion'.⁹⁰ Also, Thomas White underscores that obedience without faith is ineffectual, 'the *outward carriage* and action of man being naturally proportionable to his inward substance'.⁹¹ Last, but not least, during the public recantation of his 'hobbism' Daniel Scargill could not eschew hinting at the aporetic nature of his position. To abjure a doctrine known to promote insincerity in our public interventions may be decoded as a further act of dissimulation:

Now, lest any one should mistake or suspect this confession and unfeigned renunciation of my sinful and accursed errors, for an act of civil obedience or submission in me, performed according

⁸⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 562-4 [XXXI.11-2]. Cf. as well *Leviathan*, p. 794 [XLII.19]: 'no man is able to discern the truth of another mans repentance, further than by externall marks, taken from his words, and actions, which are subject to hypocrisie'.

⁸⁵ Present-day interpreters have also pressed the issue. Cf. J. Bowle, *Hobbes and his critics: a study in seventeenth century constitutionalism* (London, 1969), p. 43; Frost, 'Faking It', p. 42; Brito Vieira, *Elements of Representation*, pp. 87-8; and K. Hoekstra, 'The End of Philosophy: The Case of Hobbes', *Proceedings of the Aristotelean Society*, 106, (2006), p. 40.

⁸⁶ Grotius, *Epistolae* (Amsterdam, 1687), p. 952, cited in Jon Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan: The Reception of the Political and Religious Ideas of Thomas Hobbes in England 1640-1700* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 34-5.

⁸⁷ J. Bramhall, *The Catching of Leviathan or the Great Whale*, in *Works*, Vol. IV (London, 1844 [1658]), p. 520.

⁸⁸ J. Eachard, *Some opinions of Mr. Hobbs considered in a second dialogue between Philautus and Timothy* (London, 1672), p. 2.

⁸⁹ T. Tenison, *The Creed of Mr. Hobbes Examined; In a Feigned Conference between him and a Student in Divinity* (London, 1670), pp. 158-9.

⁹⁰ A. Ross, *Leviathan Drawn out with an Hook* (London, 1653), p. vi; cf. also, p. 26: 'It is the curb of conscience that restrains men from rebellion, there is no outward sorce or law so powerful, as that inward law of the conscience'.

⁹¹ T. White, *The Grounds of Obedience and Government* (London, 1655), p. 31.

to my former principles... I call the Searcher of all hearts to witness, that I loath and abhor such practices as the basest and most damnable hypocrisy.⁹²

To be sure, this duality, and the subsequent prominence bestowed to the subject's façade, is not a Hobbesian eccentricity, but a *communis opinio* among various intellectual minds of the late Renaissance and the Baroque.⁹³

Even Descartes, who broadly speaking could be dubbed as a philosopher of interiority, thought it necessary for his journey towards the truth to present himself under a mask: 'As actors put on masks [*personam induunt*], so that their faces will not show shame [*moniti ne in fronte appareat pudor*], so I will step forward masked [*larvatus prode*] into this theater of the world, where until now I have been a spectator'.⁹⁴ *Larvatus prode* acts, then, as a precondition to attain the certitude of *cogito sum*. The road to the first principle requires a specific self-representation, without which it may be unreachable.⁹⁵ By the same token, but coming from a land much more fond of masquerades, Paolo Sarpi synthesized in a sentence this aspect of early modern sensitivity: 'I am forced to wear a mask [*personam coactus fero*]. There is fairly no one in Italy who could live without one'.⁹⁶ The opinion of this leading figure of Venetian *cognoscenti* should not be overlooked. After all, Hobbes was well acquainted with Fulgenzio Micanzio, Sarpi's personal secretary.

Masking and concealment, as we have seen, were trending topics in every dimension of social life. Politics, not surprisingly, was a fertile (and sometimes notorious) field for their thematization. In particular, the issue of dissimulation has been central to the reason of State and the Tacitist traditions, in full bloom during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁹⁷ It would be misleading, however, to interpret them as

⁹² D. Scargill, *The recantation of Daniel Scargill publicly made before the University of Cambridge, in Great St Maries, July 25. 1669* (London, 1669), p. 5. J. Parkin, 'Hobbesism in the later 1660s: Daniel Scargill and Samuel Parker', *The Historical Journal*, 42 (1), (1999), pp. 86-96, reconstructs the history of the *Recantation* and claims that this passage is an interpolation due to the revision done by the consistory court: 'In fact, the addition fundamentally destabilizes the whole text, leaving its sincerity even more doubtful by drawing attention to the fact that recanting Hobbesists are intrinsically unreliable. In this sense, Scargill may have had a last laugh', p. 95.

⁹³ Cf. S. Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980). Particularly, p. 162: 'Theatricality, in the sense of both disguise and histrionic self-presentation, arose from conditions common to almost all Renaissance courts... [It was] a society whose members were nearly always on stage'. Also, P. Zagorin, *Ways of lying: dissimulation, persecution, and conformity in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass, 1990), p. 14: 'The phenomenon of dissimulation rationalized by doctrine was so extensive that it was like a submerged continent in the religious, intellectual, and social life of early modern Europe'. Additionally, with regard to the Baroque period, A. Forcione, *Majesty and Humanity: Kings and Their Doubles in the Political Drama of the Spanish Golden Age* (New Haven, 2009), p. 87, maintains: 'in that theater of power that is human society, one can observe an increasing sense of the individual as being necessarily implicated in a situation that demands self-division, a splitting apart and a creation of a persona'. Lastly, James Johnson, *Venice Incognito: Masks in the Serene Republic* (Berkeley, 2011), p. 88, summarizes: 'The rhetoric of masking saturates the age'.

⁹⁴ Descartes, *Cogitationes Privatae*, in *Oeuvres*, Vol. X, eds. C. Adam & P. Tannery (Paris, 1908), p. 213.

⁹⁵ J. Cottingham, *Cartesian Reflections: Essays on Descartes's Philosophy* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 272-3, asks the appropriate question: 'What kind of *persona* did Descartes himself have in mind? ...Going on stage is a daunting business, and the mask conceals awkwardness and embarrassment'.

⁹⁶ P. Sarpi, *Lettere ai Galicani*, p. 133, quoted in J. Kainulainen, *Paolo Sarpi: A Servant of God and State* (Leiden, 2014), p. 112.

⁹⁷ As regards the link between dissimulation and those traditions, cf. P. Burke, 'Tacitism, skepticism, and reason of state', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, eds. J. Burns & M. Goldie (Cambridge, 1991), pp.

mere apologies of deceit or duplicity. Instead we should think of those theoretical renditions as branching out from a *Weltanschauung* which considered theatricality to be the spontaneous morphology of human behavior.⁹⁸

All in all, the concept of natural person connotes a particular standing attributed to a body and elaborated through an interplay between the one bearing that person and his or her spectators.⁹⁹ If Hobbes focuses on the external display of human agents, it is due to his *usum personae civilem* approach on the subject.¹⁰⁰ To examine human passions and thoughts disengaged from the artificial dimension of a person would amount to thinking of human beings in purely physiological terms. As we have come to discover, though, natural persons are not the natural effects of a causal chain we ignore, but the products of our 'own operation'.¹⁰¹

6. The natural body as imputability *locus*

Thus, we are left with a somewhat paradoxical conclusion: To be granted the status of natural person depends on the artificial reworking of what Hobbes understands as the *natural* or given complexion of human beings. But, if this is so, what accounts for the *naturalness* of this person? Or, to state it simply, why did Hobbes decide to name it a *natural* person?

In accordance with our previous reasoning, we know that human beings present *in foro externo* a thick mask that controls and sifts our natural traits. By contrast, it has not yet been established what happens when an individual infringes a social norm. It is in this regard that Hobbes redefines the natural component of the person, which no longer refers to unbridled passions and thoughts, but acts as an imputability *locus* for the actions and infractions.

Taken at face value, to commit an infraction might be equated to ruining one's public *persona* or reputation. For practical purposes, this implies that the person in question loses the capacity of influencing others, being no longer reliable in common conversation. Hobbes would characterize this situation in terms of a breach of the 'compleasance law', which demands from every citizen 'to strive to accommodate himself to the rest... The observers of this law, may be called SOCIABLE (the Latines called the *Commodi*),

479-488); R. Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572-1651* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 108; and H. Höpfl, 'Orthodoxy and Reason of State', *History of Political Thought*, 23 (2), (2002), p. 227.

⁹⁸ Cf. J-C. Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550– 1750* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 75: 'The masks courtiers wore were to be taken as texts, not pretexts; they were figurative expressions of communal ideals, not mere dissimulations of private motives'.

⁹⁹ According to Jaume, *L'État représentatif*, p. 96, 'far from being a brute *factum* given to sensation, [a person] is a *constructum*... a way of redirecting signs to a common source, so as to form a synthetic unity which is 'someone' to ourselves'. Similarly, Dumouchel, 'Persona', p. 74, asserts that the mask allows for 'the characters [to be] thus reduced to a unity of expression'. Crignon, *De l'Incarnation*, pp. 99-102, delves into the problem of individuation in *De Motu* and *De Corpore*, where Hobbes resorts to the figure of the river. In virtue of the continuity of movement, and despite the fluctuations in their matter, both the river, the human being, and the State, would acquire a particular identity. Simendic, 'Hobbes's Persona', p. 161, argues that a *persona* should be regarded as an accident, but that 'does not imply that body and its accidents are two separate things'. In terms of Hobbes, *De Corpore*, VIII.2, an accident is a 'manner by which a body is conceived [*concipiendi corporis modum*]'.
¹⁰⁰ Cf. Hobbes, *De Homine*, p. 130 [XV.1]
¹⁰¹ Hobbes, *Six Lessons*, p. 183.

the contrary, stubborn, insociable, froward, intractable'.¹⁰² Notorious individuals 'are to be left or cast out of society as cumbersome thereunto'.¹⁰³ Furthermore, our reputation is liable to punishment under the legal notion of ignominy, 'the infliction of such evil, as is made dishonorable; or the deprivation of such good, as is made honourable by the commonwealth'.¹⁰⁴

Yet, punishing the *person* of the offender will not suffice to maintain social order. Hobbes, who declared to have lived during 'the highest of times' in terms of 'injustice' and 'folly',¹⁰⁵ knew very well that a political community does not function as a vanity fair, or a prestige contest, where the biggest risk is suffering the asperity of social condemnation.

The genuine *natural* component of a natural person emerges precisely on the occasion of serious misdeeds. When a natural person commits a crime, he or she loses his or her mask and is reputed dishonorable. But if this 'artificial' penalty is not enough, what is left to punish? The remaining item accountable for the infraction is a de-personated body. To wit, the body formerly concealed, albeit under a different perspective: not in physiological terms, as an object of natural philosophy, but as the only punishable feature of a failed personation. We have finally arrived at the *natural* attribute of Hobbes's natural person, which also acts as a precondition for every social relationship. Although it is true that 'fictions are no less necessary in a political society than in the theater', that does not mean that fiction substitutes reality entirely. 'The bonds, by which men *are bound*, and obliged... have their strength not from their own nature, (for nothing is more easily broken than a mans word), but from fear of some evil consequence upon the rupture'.¹⁰⁶ Unlike *dramatis personae*, natural persons speak and act on the stipulation that their bodies are liable to punishment if they infringe a norm.¹⁰⁷ The fictitious world of common conversation rests on the foundation of imputable bodies. Or, less figuratively, the artificial bonds of a political society gain reality through the damage exerted over human flesh.¹⁰⁸ This is the qualitative difference between natural persons and artificial or fictitious persons. What we do or abstain from doing in real life may have serious consequences for our bodies. Hobbes seems, in this respect, troubled by the same misgivings that beset Thomas the Apostle: behind the mystical, or ethereal, person he needs to corroborate the backing of a mutilated body.

We may recognize the outflanking of the natural body over the theatrical mask when the subject takes cognizance of the imminence of his or her punishment:

...a person bound by agreement is normally trusted to perform (for trust is the only bond of agreements), but when people are being led out to punishment (whether capital or not), they are

¹⁰² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 232 [XV.17].

¹⁰³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 232 [XV.17].

¹⁰⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 490 [XXVIII.19].

¹⁰⁵ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, p. 107.

¹⁰⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 202 [XIV.7].

¹⁰⁷ Runciman, 'What kind of Person', p. 275, throws light on this issue: 'When the actor takes this [Agamemnon's] part on the stage, the words and actions performed are understood to belong to Agamemnon, yet no-one expects Agamemnon to take responsibility for them... To put it simply, Agamemnon's threats spoken by an actor are not really carried out (no-one 'really' dies), while the state's threats spoken by the sovereign are'.

¹⁰⁸ Elaine Scarry has elaborated this point in *The Body in Pain. The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 124-5: 'injuring is relied on as a form of legitimization... a disembodied idea that has no basis in the material world... can borrow the appearance of reality from the realm that from the very start has compelling reality to the human mind, the physical body itself'.

held in chains or escorted by guards; that is the clearest indication that they are not seen as sufficiently obligated by an agreement not to resist. It is one thing to agree: If I do not such-and-such by a certain date, kill me. It is another thing to agree: If I do not such-and-such, I will not resist your killing me. Everyone makes use of the first mode of agreement if there is need to do so, and sometimes there is; no one uses the second mode, and there never is a need to do so.¹⁰⁹

Even though our author claims that there is no injury in resisting a punishment, he presents the situation as a paradoxical one: 'kill me', says the person of the individual still subject to the artificial constraints of the audience, but 'do not kill me' expresses the natural body, real recipient of the punishment. In so far as the *persona* is no longer trustworthy, 'for trust is the only bond of agreements', his or her acts of dissimulation are no longer effective. Simultaneously, the natural body acquires total visibility.¹¹⁰ This depersonalized exhibition of our raw natural body reveals the responsibility *locus* of the errors done under the cloak of a public *persona*. Indeed, 'being force, a man is not obliged not to resist [punishment]'.¹¹¹ There is no artifice, nor contrivance here. We are just witnessing a clash of natural forces, since from 'bodily fear... a man cannot see how to be delivered, but by the action'.¹¹²

Interestingly, Hobbes hints at a similar contention with respect to sovereigns. To be sure, due to his or her incapacity to commit injustice, the representative of the State is not liable to any sort of lawful punishment.¹¹³ However, Hobbes does mention 'naturall punishments' congruent with careless sovereigns: 'he that will do any thing for his pleasure, must engage himself to suffer all the pains annexed to it; and this pains are the naturall punishments... And hereby it comes to pass that... negligent government of princes [is naturally punished] with rebellion, and rebellion, with slaughter'.¹¹⁴ If the ruler's public performance fails, his or her natural body might be subject to the 'evill consequences' of those acts.¹¹⁵

All things considered, the natural aspect inherent to the natural person does not appear when the self-representation is successful. To the contrary, it remains concealed. But, if the individual perpetrates an offense, he or she is compelled to own it up, both with his or her public persona (or reputation) and with

¹⁰⁹ Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, pp. 39-40 [II.18]; also, *Leviathan*, p. 214 [XIV.29].

¹¹⁰ This situation is homologous to Richard II's deposition in E. Kantorowicz, *The King's two Bodies*, (Princeton, 1957), p. 40: 'All those facets are reduced to one: to the banal face and insignificant *physis* of a miserable man, a *physis* now void of any metaphysis whatsoever. It is both more and less than Death. It is the *demise* of Richard, and the rise of a new body natural'.

¹¹¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 214 [XIV.29]. The same applies to torture: '...what is in that case confessed, tendeth to the ease of him that is tortured... for, whether he deliver himself by true or false accusation, he does it by the right of preserving his own life' (*Leviathan*, p. 214 [XIV.30]).

¹¹² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 464 [XXVII.20].

¹¹³ See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 330 [XXI.7]: 'Nothing the sovereign representative can doe to a subject... can properly be called injustice', and p. 486 [XXVIII.12]: 'Hurt inflicted on the representative of the commonwealth is not punishment, but an act of hostility'.

¹¹⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 572 [XXXI.40]. M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1995), p. 29, drafts a similar analogy between the king and the condemned: 'the condemned man represents the symmetrical, inverted figure of the king... If the surplus power possessed by the king gives rise to the duplication of his body, has not the surplus power exercised on the subjected body of the condemned given rise to another type of duplication?'.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 484 [XXVIII.8]: 'such hurt, though in respect of God who is the author of nature it may be said to be inflicted and therefore a punishment divine; yet it is not contained in the name of punishment in respect of men'.

his or her body. This is precisely the conceptual background within which the Hobbesian distinction between corporal punishment, pecuniary sanctions, and ignominy, makes sense.¹¹⁶ To the extent that a subject bears an artificial mask, he or she is liable to monetary or, so to speak, reputational punishments in the same sense as corporate persons are. But, as regards the first type of penalties, our *persona* is immune to them, 'for from corporall punishments nature hath exempted all...'.¹¹⁷ The natural body attached to our person is the collateral of imputability we must guarantee if we wish to enter into a political society. As every Christian knows, 'ransome is to be paid before salvation can be acquired'.¹¹⁸ In a nutshell, Hobbes's State requires citizens who acknowledge themselves as authors of their actions, that is to say, as agents capable of fulfilling their promises. Unlike 'bruit beasts', with which 'to make covenants... is impossible',¹¹⁹ human beings can covenant with each other because they are capable of keeping their promises.¹²⁰ But the reliability of our promises depends ultimately on the possibility of holding our bodies accountable in case we break them. Natural persons are in this regard unique entities: the only ones that can put their bodies on the line and stand up for any action or, more importantly, for any infraction.¹²¹

In light of these considerations, we should point out that the naturalness of the natural person is different from the naturalness of the human body. Natural in the syntagma 'natural person' is strictly linked to accountability. A human body that lacks of a natural person (as a child, a fool or a lunatic) cannot be held accountable for its actions. Conversely, the body liable to be imputed is what is left after an ill-fated self-personation and not an object that falls within the scope of natural philosophy.

7. Conclusion

To summarize, we have been trying to identify on what grounds Hobbes's natural person is *natural*. In the process, we discovered that a natural person is not natural at all. As it turns out, the act of self-personation entails a whole range of artificial devices. Not content with that, we concluded that to be a natural person

¹¹⁶ Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 276 [XVIII.14]: 'to the sovereign is committed the power of rewarding with riches, or honour; and of punishing with corporall, or pecuniary punishment, or with ignominy...'. Later on, *Leviathan*, pp. 490-2 [XXVIII.20-21]), Hobbes adds two ulterior forms of punishment, namely, prison and exile. We may assume, however, that he is treating them as sub-types of corporal punishments.

¹¹⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 352 [XXII.10]. Cf. as well, p. 488 [XXVIII.16]: 'Corporall punishment is that, which is inflicted on the body directly, and according to the intention of him that inflicteth it'.

¹¹⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 728 [XXXVIII.25]. Pace Crignon, *De l'Incarnation*, pp. 347 and 363-8, who argues that Hobbesian representation ends up 'disincarnated', we believe that there are elements of a Christological typology, since Christ's ransom was strictly corporal: 'Christs sufferings' were 'a sufficient price for the sins of all mankind' (*Leviathan*, pp. 760-2 [XLI.2]).

¹¹⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 212 [XIV.22]

¹²⁰ In this sense, Pettit, *Made with Words*, p. 61, has asked: 'Why would people keep and be expected to keep the simple commitments they make in authorizing their words?'. F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, transl. C. Diethe (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 37-8 [II.3], may have an answer: 'To be answerable to oneself... perhaps there is nothing more terrible and strange in man's prehistory than this technique of mnemonics. 'A thing must be burnt in so that it stays in the memory: only something that continues to hurt stays in the memory''.

¹²¹ Cf. Runciman, 'What kind of Person', p. 272, n. 10: 'Representatives may represent other representatives... but at some point, the chain must end with a natural person, who takes responsibility for the actions performed'. In *Political Hypocrisy*, p. 39, Runciman conveys that '[b]eing possessed of a 'natural' personality... [means] that responsibility attaches to people 'naturally', rather than 'artificially''.

is tantamount to artificially concoct, alter or hide what is *natural* in a human individual, to wit, bodily accidents such as passions and thoughts. That being so, we managed to find a way out of this aporetic situation by arguing that the naturalness of natural persons resides in their capacity to answer for their actions with their natural bodies. In order to constitute oneself as author of one's own acts, it is necessary, on the one hand, to undergo a step of de-physicalization, that is, to mediate our interactions with other human beings through a person or mask. But, simultaneously, our self-representation must allow room for a return to the tangibility of our bodies, *locus* of responsibility for the actions done in our names.

With this in mind, we can embark on one last consideration. It has been contended that the mechanization (and the corresponding artificialization) of the State was only possible due to a prior mechanization of human reality.¹²² Our thesis shares the same impression: to construct a big artifice such as the State, human beings must be able to construct themselves as artifacts. The person by fiction of the State relies on an analogous, first order, contrivance: the self-personation of individuals.¹²³ At the beginning of *Leviathan*, Hobbes claims that human beings are both matter and artificer of the political body. He adds, though, that this *techné* is of a mimetic kind: 'art goes yet further, imitating that rationall and most excellent worke of nature, man. For by art is created the great LEVIATHAN called a COMMON-WEALTH, or State (in latine CIVITAS) which is but an artificiall man'.¹²⁴ In what sense does art imitate man? Our investigation contributes to a precise interpretation of this assertion. What the political artificer does is to replicate the primitive act of personating, this time so that 'a multitude of men are made one person'.

¹²² This is mainly Schmitt's coinage, *The Leviathan*, p. 59: 'The first metaphysical leap was made by Descartes at precisely the moment when the human body was conceived to be a machine and the human being, consisting of body and soul, was postulated to be in its entirety an intellect on a machine. The transfer of this conception to the 'huge man', the 'state'... was consummated by Hobbes... The mechanization of the concept of the state thus completed the mechanization of the anthropological image of man'. In this regard, Hoekstra's reproach concerning Schmitt's 'hypertrophied distinction between nature and artifice' seems unfair, *cf.*, 'The Savage', p. 14, n. 29.

¹²³ What Tricaud, 'An investigation', p. 93, describes as a flaw in Hobbes's theory of persons, namely, the fact that 'the notion of person as a role overlaps that of the person as a corporate body', works for us as the cypher that guarantees a safe passage from the individual to the group dimension.

¹²⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 16 [Introduction].