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**The Many Moses’s of Hobbes’s *Leviathan*:**

**Covenant, Sovereignty, and Authority**

**Section 1: Introduction**

Many scholars of Thomas Hobbes have turned to Parts Three and Four of *Leviathan* (1651) to better understand and theorize what Hobbes is up to in Parts One and Two, when he introduces his theory of man, sovereign, and state. Reading the latter – often overlooked – sections of the book in service of the former obscures the work of the second, longer half of *Leviathan*, in which Hobbes levels some of his sharpest critiques of his intellectual and religious opponents in the English Civil War. Hobbes manifests all of these features through multiple incarnations of Moses. In working from the section of the Hebrew Bible[[1]](#footnote-1) leading up to and including the first declaration of the covenant at Mount Sinai and the Israelites accepting the covenant (Exodus 19-24)[[2]](#footnote-2) Hobbes focuses on the first communal covenanting scenes because they offer a biblical, textual reflection of his own theorization of how sovereign authority relies on covenant. Although he may always be referred to by the same name, Moses, the Moses that appears in *Leviathan* is not only varied, but it is Moses in multiple incarnations: Moses representing God,[[3]](#footnote-3) Moses as God’s lieutenant, Moses as leader by consent of the people, and Moses representing the people. Each of these incarnations represent an element of the larger argument about sovereignty that Hobbes makes in the work and give insight into how Hobbes positioned himself in the political and theological debates of his tumultuous time.

In the wake of the schism with Rome, English Protestant royalists turned to the Book of Samuel and inauguration of Hebraic kingship to legitimize monarchic rule.[[4]](#footnote-4) The Davidic kingship – requested by the people and granted by God – provided ample theological resources for royalists to argue for monarchy. As Alison McQueen shows, republicans and Parliamentarians turned to what they called the “commonwealth” established by Moses to argue against monarchic rule and support a new founding (a democracy or a constitutional monarchy).[[5]](#footnote-5) The divergent biblical sources reflect contrasting perspectives on the sources of political authority and whether subjects can ever resist or contest that authority. With Moses as the model leviathan figure, Hobbes not only enters a debate about biblical metaphor and political authority. “Moses” provides Hobbes with authority to underpin his own argument, since Scripture carries its own weight of the divine, and in this period, Scripture was taken as the historical record. Between the word of God and actual facts, Moses endows the evidence of the fitness, superiority, and necessity of a leviathan with potentially unmatched authority and legitimacy. That Hobbes, a confirmed royalist, would center the most outwardly theological sections of *Leviathan* on Moses is a curious puzzle to which McQueen proposes “subversive integration”: Hobbes conscripts Moses into his royalist-absolutist tractate to capture the imagery and ideas of his political opponents in service of his own cause.

I agree with McQueen that Hobbes’s Moses-as-leviathan strategy is to subversively integrate, and thus delegitimize his republican and Parliamentarian foes. [[6]](#footnote-6) Where McQueen interprets Hobbes as discussing *one* Moses throughout *Leviathan*, I propose that there are at least four incarnations, as listed above. These four incarnations show that despite Hobbes’s insistence on a unitary representative of the people, the proof of that theory relies on multiple. And yet, even though Hobbes conscripts monarchic, absolutist, and republican features in his Moses’s none can escape a relationship of command-obedience authority.

Command-obedience authority is the authority of a hierarchical relationship, where one person is able to determine the actions of another unidirectionally. Anthony Simon Laden explains a central feature of command-obedience authority as “the right to issue commands [which]… is a capacity to determine unilaterally some piece of the normative environment of those I command.”[[7]](#footnote-7) Command-obedience authority is often collapsed into authority as such. Yet the images of Moses Hobbes relies upon to establish this hierarchical account escape Hobbes’s purposes in various ways. Indeed, when appealing to Moses to demonstrate how well this theory of sovereign authority functioned in biblical times, Hobbes’s evidence requires him to multiply the images of sovereignty: Moses personating the Israelites, Moses personating God, Moses as God the king’s lieutenant, Moses as legitimate ruler by consent of the people. Hobbes may rely on an ordered and tightly built regime of words, but his regime of images is much more untamed. The Mosaic sources Hobbes relies upon to shore up sovereign authority and repress political dissent, this chapter argues, work against Hobbes’s purposes and place dissent at the core of the very practice of authority itself.

Moses epitomizes the core theory of *Leviathan*: representative authority, or what Hobbes calls ‘personation.’ This ideal representation is possible due to his artful interpretation of biblical texts.[[8]](#footnote-8) I will show how Hobbes makes those interpretations to construct his Moses by working with the Hebrew text. In so doing, I will also offer a reading of Moses embedded in Jewish political thought that similarly situates him as a figure of covenant, but whose actions lead to a disparate model of sovereignty and authority. Across *Leviathan*, when Hobbes encounters versions of the Hebrew root שמע, it almost always appears as “obey.” This is a crucial verb for how the Israelites relate to the covenant. The root “שמע” most commonly means “hear,” less frequently, “understand” as well. Many Jewish translations of these passages in Exodus translate words with the root “שמע” as “hear” not “obey.” According to Hobbes, covenant is a relationship of obedience between sovereign and subject, but covenant in Jewish context is a relationship of hearing. Hearing is a commitment to be present but adds almost no other conditions. It leaves space for contestation and dissent, and notably, requires the presence of another such that the communal ties of covenant are sustained. A covenant based on relationships of hearing is one where authority circulates and is agonistic, and where sovereignty is in question. The model of authority that emerges out of Jewish covenant is neither Hobbesian nor republican or Parliamentarian, since each replicate command-obedience authority. Furthermore, the seventeenth century dispute over Jewish sources did not read the sources Jewishly or in a Jewish context (but this would have been hard since the first Jews formally allowed back in England after the 1290 expulsion came in around 1655).[[9]](#footnote-9) Hobbes was one of the Western European political theorists who participated in the Hebraic Revival in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[[10]](#footnote-10) With access to Hebrew for the first time, as well as rabbinic texts, scholars read and were inspired by Hebrew Bible and its culture of interpretation.[[11]](#footnote-11) Hebrew Bible is a resource for political thought and the same concepts that were of import in the English Civil War: authority, dissent, sovereignty. Read in its Jewish context, without the framework of Christianity or regime structure and with the millennia of Jewish commentaries as bumpers, authority and sovereignty are not the same concepts but filtered through biblical imagery; they are reconstituted and have new meaning and purpose for an agonistic, democratic politics.

First, I will discuss Hobbes’s theory of representation, which explains how, through covenant, errant individuals in the state of nature authorize a sovereign to personate them as newly formed subjects. To understand Hobbes’s use of Moses, we need to see how Moses exemplifies the theory of sovereign representation. Through the influence of covenant theology, it is apparent how Hobbes drew from contemporaneous ideas about imagistic representation and biblical covenant to motivate the sovereign. In explicating the Moses’s of *Leviathan*, I will show the political theoretical work done through biblical interpretation and how it reinforces the centrality of covenant. There are many incarnations of Moses in *Leviathan*, curious for a book about unitary sovereignty manifest in one representative. Hobbes has to proliferate the Moses’s to articulate command-obedience authority, showing that authority itself is too unruly to fit the command-obedience model. Lastly, I will read the Moses of the sources Hobbes cites to proffer another reading of the relationship between covenant and authority. This turn to Jewish sources represents the turn from a covenant of obedience to a covenant of hearing, in which dissent is possible. The model of authority of a covenant of hearing makes space for dissent, and as the sources show, withstands dissent.

**Section 2: Hobbes’s Theory of Representation**

A significant innovation in Hobbes’s political thought from previous works (*Elements of Law,* 1642; *De Cive*, 1647) is the theory of representation, which makes way for the emergence of the Hobbesian sovereign.[[12]](#footnote-12) The connection between Moses and the theory of representation is twofold: first, as a many-sided leviathan, Moses represents the interweaving of royalist and republican ideas in service of monarchy which bears out in the theorization across Ch. XVI and XVII; and second, the many Moses’s in Part Three of *Leviathan* are iterations of the theory of representation and examples of Hobbes proving his theory with examples from the “historical record,” which we see most clearly by foregrounding the influence of covenant theology on Hobbes. Laying out the framework of Hobbes’s representation first will clarify the significance of the role of covenant theology.

Bryan Garsten argues that one of the unique contributions of Hobbes’s theory of representation is that it was never a representation of “a popular or a divine will.” Rather, the theory of representation made it possible for entities that could not speak or act for themselves to do so with an intermediary.[[13]](#footnote-13) Where McQueen points to the analysis of Moses as indicative of Hobbes’s strategy of “subversive integration,” Garsten argues that it is the theory of representation itself that brings together royalist and republican, as well as civil and ecclesiastical, views on the source of political authority.[[14]](#footnote-14)

The theory of personation is introduced and explicated in Ch. XVI, in which Hobbes explains the differences between “person” and “persona,” “natural” and “artificial,” and “author” and “actor,” and how personation (sometimes called representation) allows a natural person to authorize another to act as them; the actor personating the authorizer is an artifice of the authorizer.[[15]](#footnote-15) What distinguishes a natural and an artificial person is that a natural person’s words and actions are attributed to himself properly, but when someone is representing the words or actions of another, the representer is artificial, a persona, a façade.[[16]](#footnote-16) The people who create the artifice are imitating nature, “the Art whereby God hath made and governes the World” [[17]](#footnote-17) and are also imitating God by creating a (artificial) person, the sovereign, even if the sovereign is a “Mortall God” (121). The medium of the artifice of sovereignty is covenant.

The sovereign is authorized as an artificial person through the covenants made “between every man and every man.”[[18]](#footnote-18) Sovereign authority is dependent on the personation of the covenant because only when the people are united through in covenant can a sovereign emerge its representation. If the leviathan is meant to unite the civil and ecclesiastical authorities to squelch further conflicts, that the mechanism through which the sovereign emerges and rules has deep religious roots shows that this unification is woven into the making of the sovereign, a much deeper meeting of the political and the theological than the institutional structure that is described in Part Two.

When “every man [covenants] with every man,” they take the first steps toward creating a unity out of the multitude, and transfer and renounce their rights to the sovereign. Out of the sovereign comes the state, and the sovereign’s power over the civil and ecclesiastical authority. As individual actors, the subjects authorize the sovereign and the emergent state to act on their behalf – the sovereign’s words and actions represent the words and actions of the authorizers. While personation can be done between two “natural” persons, in this case, natural people create a unity through representation by way of covenanting, and singularly authorize a “public person” to act on their behalf.

Quentin Skinner explains this play across terms by emphasizing the influence of the theater on Hobbes,[[19]](#footnote-19) given the history and etymology of the particular words used. In constituting what he calls Hobbes’s “general theory of action,”[[20]](#footnote-20) Skinner argues that the language of the theater, in which “‘bearing’ or ‘presenting’ *dramatis personae*” indicated “mimesis,”[[21]](#footnote-21) and is further evidenced by the fact that “*persona* is, in Latin, the ordinary word for a theatrical mask.”[[22]](#footnote-22) The persona is the artificial, the not-quite imitation of the natural – the representation. Or, as Hobbes also calls it, personation: “…to *Personate*, is to *Act*, or *Represent* himself, or an other; and he that acteth another, is said to beare his Person, or act in his name.”[[23]](#footnote-23)

This is where relationship between person and persona and author and actor reemerges: “Then the Person is the I; and he that owneth his words and actions, is the AUTHOR: In which case the Actor acteth by Authority.”[[24]](#footnote-24) Here, Hobbes writes that that actor is the one whose actions and words are owned by the author, the one with authority. As Skinner argues, the persona, or artificial person, can represent the natural person because he has been authorized.[[25]](#footnote-25) In addition to the influence of theatrical references, the theoretical importance Skinner places on the word “attribution,” which he says is a legal word “chosen with care”[[26]](#footnote-26) suggests that covenant theology did not play as significant a role in Hobbes’s thinking as I will argue below. The preeminence of contract in this period reached even theology, that it also reached a scholar such as Hobbes is to be expected.

This act of covenanting consolidates authority in the sovereign, an artifice. However, the very nature of authorization and personation tethers the people in unity to the sovereign, because the very act of covenanting creates the people: “*I Authorise and give up my Right of Governing my selfe, to this Man, or to this Assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy Right to him, and Authorise all his Action in like manner*.”[[27]](#footnote-27) The process of creating the sovereign in Ch. XVII follows the process laid out in Ch. XVI; the sovereign, who is said to be “the Multitude so united in one Person,” is the public person.[[28]](#footnote-28) Moses exemplifies the relationship of personation to Hobbes:

“The true God may be Personated. As he was; first, by *Moses*; who governed the Israelites, (that were not his, but Gods people,) not in his own name, with *Hoc dicit Moses*; but in Gods Name, with *Hoc dicit Dominus*. Secondly, by the Son of man, his own Son, our Blessed Saviour *Jesus Christ*, that came to reduce the Jewes, and induce all Nations into the Kingdome of his Father; not as of himselfe, but as sent from his Father. And thirdly, by the Holy Ghost, or Comforter, speaking, and working in the Apostles: which Holy Ghost, was a Comforter that came not of himselfe; but was sent, and proceeded from them \*both on the day of Pentecost.\*”[[29]](#footnote-29)

Hobbes maintains the trinity – the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit – but in starkly stating that God (implicitly the Father) can be personated by Moses, that Christ was earthly and personated the Son instead of being one and the same entity, and that the “Holy Ghost” was personated by the Apostles as teachers of the Word. That God can be personated and represented by humans domesticates the authority of heaven by it appearing in the form of a recognizable human figure. And yet, Hobbes also uses this formulation to reinforce that God is the ultimate sovereign.

One of Hobbes’s most subversive moves in this discussion of Moses and personation is how he rewrites the trinity by replacing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with Moses, Christ, and the Apostles each as a representation of God. In so doing, Hobbes suggests that divinity is consolidated, like sovereignty. It cannot be divided, only represented. This undercuts existing sources of monarchical authority, divine right of kings, by highlighting the example of Moses over Davidic kingship, and denying any divinity of the king himself.

Furthermore, the personation of God by Moses highlights an important connection between personation and sovereignty: that only with personation can one rule, because one governs on behalf of others as their representative. In personating God, Moses’s capacity to govern derives from God’s ultimate, divine sovereignty. Hobbes is walking a tenuous line between familiar, pious understandings of God’s might and omniscience and heresy by suggesting that humans could represent God.

The covenantors and the sovereign subsist in symbiosis because of their constitutive author-actor relationship: “But by this Institution of a Commonwealth, every particular man is Author of all the Soveraigne doth; and consequently he that complaineth of injury from his Soveraigne, complaineth of that whereof he himselfe is Author; and therefore ought not to accuse any man but himselfe.”[[30]](#footnote-30) As authors of the covenant, and thus the authorizers of the sovereign, the subjects are also the authors of everything that the sovereign does. Hobbes writes consent into the creation of an absolutist sovereign, showing how he draws from republican ideas to serve royalist claims. Hobbes’s consent, however, is one that deactivates the subjects and represses resistance. Non-resistance relies upon Hobbes’s conception of covenant: that at least one party promises to fulfill their side in the future, which creates obligations.[[31]](#footnote-31) When a public person (sovereign) represents the covenant, however, it creates a deeper bond of obedience to the sovereign, in that it makes it near to impossible for subjects to challenge the actions of the sovereign, although they retain some capacity to resist the will of the sovereign, like when their life is in danger.[[32]](#footnote-32) As authors of the sovereign, the subjects would be resisting a personation of themselves. Consent via covenantal language beckons toward republican ideas but does not give up any ground, because consent ultimately strengthens sovereignty authority by tying the people directly to their leader.

The moment of covenanting is also a moment of coronation. Covenant must always serve as a creation of the sovereign and state to fit the terms laid out in earlier chapters of *Leviathan*, so when Hobbes offers an answer to the question of what is the “Kingdome of God,” the covenant at Sinai is the circumstance in which the people choose God as their rightful king. The machinations of a dual monarchic-republican approach to rule are evident in this interpretation because Hobbes makes his own midrash and explains that God was chosen king “by the Votes of the People of Israel in peculiar manner; wherein they chose God for their King by Covenant made with him.”[[33]](#footnote-33) The Israelites famously respond to the covenant, נעשה ונשמה we will do and we will hear/understand (Exodus 24:7), but there is no account of voting, similar to the discussion above that there is no account of the people making a unity of themselves such that they could be personated according to the theory as argued in Ch. XVI. This recalls an explanation of the subject-sovereign relationship via covenant from Ch. XVIII when Hobbes argues that when a group of people covenant “*every one, with every one*” to give “the *Right* to *Present* the Person of them all, (that is to say, to be their *Representative*,) every one, as well he that *Voted for it*, as he that *Voted against it*, and shall *Authorise* all the Actions and Judgements.”[[34]](#footnote-34) Hobbes translates the decision to covenant into voting, giving the process that creates an all-powerful sovereign a democratic sheen. This is an instance of how close reading of the use of Moses in *Leviathan* contributes to the “subversive integration” reading of Hobbes. Furthermore, it is not only that Moses is an exemplar leviathan, but an exemplar of the underlying theory of *Leviathan*.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Hobbes turns to Moses to illustrate the “subversive integration” of royalist and republican ideas in the service of monarchic rule on a theoretical and scriptural level.[[36]](#footnote-36) Theoretically, Moses combines the qualities of the subversively integrated leviathan. Scripturally, choosing Moses over the Davidic kings usurps the biblical evidence and imagery used by republicans. And Moses does even more work for Hobbes. As McQueen shows, when Moses can represent both “a silent God and consenting people” the political authority he embodies “encompasses both civil and religious questions.”[[37]](#footnote-37) This is a crucial feature of the leviathan and how to ensure a civil war with religious and political fault lines does not occur again.

**Section 3: Personating the Covenant: Hobbes and Covenant Theology**

Though Hobbes drew from many disciplines and influences in writing *Leviathan*,[[38]](#footnote-38) of all the influences and of all the theoretical contributions of the book, the role of covenant theology in shaping this theory indicates the depth to which Hobbes translated covenant from theology into political thought and reshaped how those who succeeded him thought about the source of sovereignty and authority.[[39]](#footnote-39) Read in light of covenant theology, we see that the theory of personation relies on theological ideas of covenants represented by individuals, and that those individuals become a figure through which believers can engage with the principles of the covenant.

Skinner has argued that the theory of representation (what he calls “the theory of action”) has its roots in theatrical and legal language of the period, as discussed above. A. P. Martinich contends that the concepts core to covenant theology are also present in Hobbes. Martinich points to the commonalities between covenant theology’s central concept of biblical figures representing covenants, and Hobbes’s sovereign representing a covenant; England was also the main site of innovation of covenant theology in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The manner of representation and the relationship to authority further confirms the significance of covenant theology to Hobbes in a way that the theatrical language cannot account. Covenant theology’s model of representation goes far beyond the model of theater or attribution argued by Skinner, because covenant theology acknowledges that representation acts as a mediator between the subjects and the sovereign, a figure through which the covenantors can continue to connect to actions of the sovereign and the burgeoning state. This model, as a way for a community to engage with the substance or principles of the covenant, elucidates why the sovereign must be a personation. As a personation, the sovereign mediates the connection between the people who covenanted and the state.

That the sovereign is the singular representation of the covenants is so important for Hobbes’s argument illustrates the importance of the imagistic metaphor: the singularly-imaged sovereign and state (“the Generation of that great LEVIATHAN”) consolidates authority and is able to loom over the people (as in the frontispiece) and rule. Hobbes proliferates representations of the sovereign as much as he argues for a single personation of the sovereign. The image of leviathan after which the book is named and framed, also encapsulates two entities: the sovereign and the state, because the sovereign is the personation of the state.[[40]](#footnote-40) Furthermore, a natural person has to embody the artificial person of the sovereign for the sovereign to formally act or enact laws. That person also retains a duality: not the personal and political of *The* *King’s Two Bodies*,[[41]](#footnote-41) but the natural and artificial bodies they must inhabit, their “own person and that of the group.”[[42]](#footnote-42) This complicates interpretations of Hobbes that argue, for example, that “sovereignty… [is] a *normative[[43]](#footnote-43)* relation of obligation, brought about by covenanting.”[[44]](#footnote-44) Seen through the lens of the influence of covenant theology, it is clear how much Hobbes relies on imagistic metaphor to drive the personation necessary to establish the mighty sovereign for which *Leviathan* is famous.

Covenant theology is most closely associated with English church reformers and Puritans, who, in their disgust over how the English government and church, used the concept of the covenant of grace to bring potential believers into the fold.[[45]](#footnote-45) Covenant theology was also a tool to criticize theological competitors and make the case for reform by presenting a coherent theology that could reconcile seemingly disparate aspects of the Bible.[[46]](#footnote-46) While it was not solely an English innovation, covenant theology took its firmest hold among the thinkers, politicians, and congregants of England in the late sixteenth, early seventeenth century compared to the rest of Reformation Europe.[[47]](#footnote-47) In this same period, across Western Europe there was “new emphasis on contract in political theory and with new attitudes toward contract among businessmen and lawyers.”[[48]](#footnote-48) The elevated role of in contract in politics and economics extended into religion to generate theology on “contracts” called covenants, which God made with certain important people in the Bible, showing how contemporary legal concepts inspired “the theological mind of the era.”[[49]](#footnote-49)

Covenant theology is the belief that God made two covenants, the covenant of works, represented by the “public person” of Adam, and the covenant of grace, represented by the “public person” of Jesus Christ.[[50]](#footnote-50) Initially, only the covenant of grace was known and theorized, referring only to Christ and embodying Christ’s love and redemption.[[51]](#footnote-51) By the 1590s, talk of another covenant emerged, the covenant of works, embodying moral law.[[52]](#footnote-52)

The covenant of works is fundamentally that Adam is made to work the land as his postlapsarian punishment.[[53]](#footnote-53) This covenant is earthly, not only by its opposition to the redemptive covenant, but its personation by Adam, whose name is “earth” and who toils on the earth. The covenant at Sinai is included into this covenant because it puts restrictions on man’s behaviors and in the interpretation of the covenant theologian, only demands obedience. The effectual contrast between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace that is that the covenant of works represents law and obedience, and the covenant of grace represents faith and the spirit of the gospel.

The covenant of grace is encapsulated by Christ’s sacrifice and liberates believers from obedience to the law (and Jewish legalism) into faith by belief and love. The covenant of grace was reserved for the elect, while the “new” covenant of works was used “to justify God’s way with the mass of humankind who were slated for spiritual execution for violations of the law” and were unlikely to receive grace.[[54]](#footnote-54) The covenant of grace changed the terms of the extant covenant for the elect. In this framework, the covenant of works, in the hands of the Jews, is deeply legalistic, focused on internal workings of the law and not on faith.[[55]](#footnote-55) Let alone that this covenant will always be lacking because it is pre-Christ. While the covenant of works is ostensibly a way of bringing in non-elect believers into covenantal relationship and offering a public person to represent them in their covenant with God, it also reinforces hierarchy and supersession of Christianity over Judaism. Martinich points out that Adam and Christ are also “representations” and “public figures” in these covenants, signifiers upon which believers see themselves represented in the covenant.[[56]](#footnote-56) No new covenants need to be made in every generation because these broadly construed representations are meant to encompass all. Identifying with the public figure brings new people into the embrace of the covenant. The resonance between the sovereign representing the covenants of the subjects and Adam or Christ representing the covenant of works or grace suggests Hobbes may not only have “subversively integrated” theology into his political theoretical argument to imitate the joining of civil and ecclesiastical power, but also the centrality of covenant in theorizing sovereignty and authority.

Covenant theology is a theology of authority: how the elect reason the non-elect to obey the strictures of biblical law and how all believers manage the unknowability of God by enforcing a familiar, contractual relationship between themselves and God via the personation (and mediation) of Christ. Calvinist believers bound to the covenant of works are similarly bound to its laws and held to obedience. Not only did these covenants bring people closer to God via the public person, it made God’s actions more “predictable,” since “God [limits] his arbitrary power by covenant” making those actions more “comprehensible to human reason.[[57]](#footnote-57) Thus, the “The elect could appeal to his promise if they kept their part of the bargain…The effect was to re-establish moral obligation on a clearer, more rational basis, to free men under normal circumstances from the incomprehensible decrees of an unknowable God…to a definable contractual relationship.”[[58]](#footnote-58)

Under covenant theology, the Mosaic covenant[[59]](#footnote-59) is further part of the covenant of works because verses of the covenant-making are interpreted as embedded in a framework of law and moral codes that determine right and wrong. Moses is a figure of the covenant of works because the Mosaic covenant at Sinai is coded as legal, entrenched in earthly existence. It is not only the association of Moses or legalism with the covenant of works that aligns it with Judaism, but the difference between Judaism and Calvinism relies on the later acceptance of some of the second covenant, the emancipatory covenant from the strictures of the law for the redemption and love of Christ. The hierarchy places Protestants (Calvinists) over Jews and Catholics,[[60]](#footnote-60) not only the elect over the non-elect.

As covenant theology drew from the rise of contract, its theological concepts began to filter into how members of Parliament in England referred to themselves, rising under Elizabeth but crystallized under a broader emphasis on representation under James I,[[61]](#footnote-61) with parliamentarians describing themselves as “public persons.”[[62]](#footnote-62) As a public person, the member of Parliament figures himself as the mediator between the constituents and the Parliament, and as Skinner argues, the state as well.[[63]](#footnote-63) The monarch was meant to be the sole representation of the state and the people of the kingdom, but assertions from members of Parliament that they are also public persons beckons toward the escalating conflict over whether the seat of power should be in the crown or the Parliament. Instead of representing a natural person with an artificial, Parliament “is ‘the representative body of the State.’” [[64]](#footnote-64) Competing claims over representation enhances the significance of Hobbes’s focus on Moses as personating from multiple directions, taking on qualities of the royalists and the parliamentarians and republicans.

The central metaphor of *Leviathan* is a multi-layered personation and representation. The “leviathan” is a representation of the sovereign, who is turn a personation of the people in covenant. The “leviathan” is personated by the frontispiece, a composite of many symbols. Covenant theology provides the framework for articulating how the imagistic metaphors in *Leviathan* open up the relationship between covenant and personation. In so doing, it helps us see how Hobbes employs Moses not as a singular “exemplary leviathan,” but as many incarnations.[[65]](#footnote-65) It does not counter Garsten’s theory that representation is a way to draw on the tactics of the clergy in service of the sovereign per se,[[66]](#footnote-66) but points to the theological roots of how Hobbes conceived of representation and that the central role of covenant already incorporates identifiably democratic ideas like consent into a royalist project.

**Section 4: A Proliferation of Moses’s**

After establishing and explaining commonwealth, Hobbes turns to the “Christian Commonwealth” in Part Three, in which he returns again and again to the example of Moses at Sinai to demonstrate, explain, and reinforce the concepts deemed foundational to the Christian commonwealth. Moses provides Hobbes with proof and authority no other biblical figure – not even Christ, but especially not the Davidic kings – has. However, Hobbes’s Moses proliferates incarnations. By tracing these Moses’s, we see why Hobbes found Moses to be so exemplary for his purposes, and how covenant by representation and mediation only returns to command-obedience authority, despite Hobbes’s strategy to incorporate more “consenting” elements. Command-obedience authority does not leave space for resistance. Consent implies the possibility of non-consent. By bringing consent under a command-obedience model of authority, Hobbes negates the potential of resistance in consent. Hobbes may use Moses to signify command-obedience authority, but the many incarnations resist the very authority that they are supposed to represent. In the verses that lead Hobbes to the many Moses’s, Hobbes chooses a path in a divergence in translation of a Hebrew verb, setting up a crucial contrast between a covenant based in obedience and a covenant of hearing.

Parts One and Two of *Leviathan* construct an image and theory of a sovereign whose sole source of authority and legitimacy is its subject and that unites civil and religious authority by capturing the church under the state, and that dispels with dissension by the very nature of authorization because the sovereign’s actions are the people’s actions and vice versa. Moses is meant to exemplify all the characteristics and experiences that prove the validity of *Leviathan*, and on the surface, it might. Working closely with Hobbes’s biblical citations illuminates that there are many different incarnations of Moses and Moses-as-personations in Part Three, even if Hobbes argues that these are all one and the same Moses. Taking Hobbes at his word on the biblical sources or treating Parts Three and Four as the “religious” or “theological” sections and thus dismissible, underestimates how Hobbes manipulates Bible to support his own theory and leaves out much of the argument for how *Leviathan* wholly responds to the challenges of the English Civil War.

In Ch. XVI and Part Two, Hobbes insists that sovereignty is indivisible and that there cannot be two leaders, which is why the sovereign must unite civil and ecclesiastical authority. And yet, when demonstrating how well his theory of sovereignty functions, Hobbes’s evidence requires him to multiply the images of sovereignty: Moses personating the Israelites, Moses personating God, Moses as God the king’s lieutenant, Moses as legitimate ruler by consent of the people. Hobbes may rely on an ordered and tightly built regime of words, but his regime of images is much more untamed. Not only do the biblical sources simultaneously clarify what Hobbes is doing in Part Three and where the argument slips, they show how Moses is the lynchpin for Hobbes’s manipulation of Bible for his own purposes. While seeming to argue for a unified sovereign, Hobbes’s Moses is an ever-changing avatar for whichever part of the theory Hobbes reinforces in a particular chapter or passage.

Hobbes’s close reading of three biblical verses leads to the proliferations of Moses’s and points to how Hobbes’s interpretations elevate a particular interpretation of covenant, covenant based on obedience, as opposed to hearing.[[67]](#footnote-67) Translation was a political project for Hobbes, and it is apparent in his work on Hebrew Bible, even if he does not read Hebrew and relies on Greek and Latin translations.[[68]](#footnote-68) While Hobbes’s work on translation and philology in Hebrew Bible raises numerous incidents of slippage or disconnect, the most relevant here is when the Hebrew, because of the root, could mean a few different words. Therefore, how Hobbes reads a verse might be different from how it might be read in a Jewish context in which the Hebrew and its multiple meanings gives rise to a different overall understanding of the verse because of the ambiguity of a word. This is especially important for the Hebrew root שמע, a crucial verb across the covenanting scenes in Exodus 19-24. The disparities in the translation of שמע set up how Hobbes explains Moses’s role, and where the proliferations begin.

The root שמע most typically means hear/hearing, especially in modern Hebrew. According to the Jastrow dictionary, however, it can also mean listening, obeying, or understanding when presented in its simplest verb-form.[[69]](#footnote-69) Thus, when one comes across “שמע” it can be read as holding all the meanings at once, although it will most often be translated as “hear.” For example, perhaps the most famous phrase in all of Judaism:

*שמע ישראל הי אלוהינו הי אחד*

*Hear Israel, [the name of God] is our God, [the name of God] is One.*

It is not translated as “obey,” but “hear” – a calling to attention, but not a call to act according to another’s will, even the Divine will, even if the “Sh’ma” (שמע) when it these letters mean a verb and not the ro is a declaration of a core Jewish belief. Depending on where שמע appears in a verse, it could be translated differently, both in a translation of Hebrew Bible (a “Jewish” translation) or a “Christian” translation (Christian Bible). For example, the verse below, when God invites the Israelites into the covenanting process, before they purify themselves and gather at Mount Sinai to hear the Ten Commandments:

*וְעַתָּה אִם־****שָׁמוֹעַ******תִּשְׁמְעוּ*** *בְּקֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וִהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ׃*

*Now then, if you will* ***obey*** *Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, (Exodus 19:5)*

NJPS translates וְעַתָּה אִם־**שָׁמוֹעַ** **תִּשְׁמְעוּ** בְּקֹלִיas “Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully”, but the Hebrew permits multiple other translations, such as, “and if you listen, you will hear My voice.” NSRV agrees somewhat with the NJPS and translates this verse as, “Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine.” The difference between hear and obey is significant. Hearing as a way of accepting the covenant results in obligations, not obedience. If the response, by contrast, is that the Israelites will obey the covenant, then the covenant at Sinai places God as sovereign over the Israelites who cannot contest and whose experience of authority is strictly command-obedience.

Obedience is an important quality that Hobbes identifies with Moses. In fact, the prooftext for Hobbes that cements Moses as the legitimate leader of the Israelites is when the people give Moses their obedience, in Hobbes’s interpretation. It is in Hebrew Bible as Exodus 20:16:

*וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר־אַתָּה עִמָּנוּ* ***וְנִשְׁמָעָה*** *וְאַל־יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים פֶּן־נָמֽוּת׃*

*“You speak to us,” they said to Moses, “and we will obey; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.”*

Similar to Exodus 19:5, the Hebrew lends itself to iterative translations: “They said to Moses, you speak to us, and we will listen, but do not have God speak to us, we will die.” Interestingly, the NSRV translates what it numbers Exodus 20:19 as “and said to Moses, ‘You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die.’” The primary translation Hobbes cites also uses “heare” not obey, although Hobbes interprets it as obey: “To *Moses*, the children of *Israel* say thus. \**Speak thou to us, and we will heare thee; but let not God speak to us, lest we dye.*\* This is absolute obedience to *Moses.*”[[70]](#footnote-70) Hobbes is not entirely incorrect in associating hearing with obedience in a literal reading of the Hebrew, but he asserts a permanence to the obedience that is not obvious.

This is Moses as personation of the Israelites, the first of the four incarnations. When the Israelites – seemingly together – ask Moses to speak for them and he accedes, they are enacting the personation-covenant-sovereign relationship that Hobbes outlines in Ch. XVI-XVII. From a Hobbesian lens, the Israelites, forming a unity from the multitude, authorize Moses to act on their behalf, and as such he personates the unified Israelites. In so doing, Moses enacts Hobbes’s theorization of how the sovereign emerges as a personation of covenant. While the biblical text does not describe any agreements among the Israelites, Hobbes interprets that they speak in one voice to be the unity that must form from “covenant between every man and every man.” This crucial, but missing component of the theory from Part 1 is somewhat mitigated by the larger covenanting context in which this scene occurs – Moses is authorized by the Israelites as God is communicating the stipulations of the covenant. In this case, it is *as if* Moses is the Israelites when speaking to God.

Hobbes also figures Moses as the legitimate sovereign, to whom obedience is owed, due to his reading of Exodus 20:16/19, the second incarnation. Moses, however, not only represents the Israelites, but also represents God. Moses the biblical figure is simultaneously a dual representative and this in fact reinforces his authority and the unification of civil and religious power.

Hobbes argues that God is personated by Moses, the third incarnation, because in the covenanting at Sinai, the Jews chose God as their king, as God chose Moses to speak with, and Moses had to relay the messages back to the people.[[71]](#footnote-71) Hobbes’s claim rests on unstable grounds. There is nothing explicit in this section of biblical text,[[72]](#footnote-72) Hebrew or English, that describes God in monarchic, kingly, or ruling terms – these are all possible meanings of the Hebrew root מלך. One word with this root does appear in 19:6:

*וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי* ***מַמְלֶכֶת*** *כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תְּדַבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל׃*

*but you shall be to Me a* ***kingdom*** *of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel.*

This verse provides some evidence for Hobbes’s claim that the priests (*kohanim* כֹּהֲנִים) are the rightful inheritors of the leadership of the Israelites after Moses’s death,[[73]](#footnote-73) but it does not state that God is king.[[74]](#footnote-74) In this instance, the NJPS is a functionally literal translation of the Hebrew: “and you will be to Me a kingdom of priests.” Contrary to Hobbes’s interpretation, at least another is possible: the entire nation of Israel will be like a kingdom of priests to God, not that the priests will be the kings. There is no clear language in the verses connecting God to kingship, but the selection of Moses and the uniqueness of the relationship between Moses and God[[75]](#footnote-75) would not need to undermine Moses’s authority among the Israelites, unless Moses must conform to the strictures of Hobbes’s theories about commonwealth. Hobbes repeatedly insists that the priests (the *kohanim*)[[76]](#footnote-76) are the legitimate successors to Moses, due to his reading of מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים, priestly kingdom.[[77]](#footnote-77) In Ch. XX, in which the specific capacities of the sovereign are delimited, Hobbes explains that the sovereign can delegate authority to those working under him without breaking apart the sovereignty upon which his rule rests. For Moses to continue to be the archetype of *Leviathan* as a biblical figure, he cannot assume sovereignty without attention to God, so Hobbes calls God king and explains in many places how God delegated or shared authority with Moses as his “Viceregent” or “Lieutenant.” This is the fourth incarnation. The “Viceregent” or “Lieutenant” is a mediating role, whereas when Moses personates God, it is *as if* he is God. As a mediator, the source of Moses’s authority is what is delegated from God. It is contingent, conditional, and also requires legitimation.

Whereas God may be king by election, Moses is the legitimate sovereign by consent. There are two distinct but related components to consent in how Moses is figured in *Leviathan*. In the first, Moses has to acquire consent because he otherwise does not have a legitimate claim to rule. And the second: one of the incarnations of Moses is Moses as leader by consent.

According to Hobbes’s understanding of “מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים” priestly kingdom, only the priests should be the rightful sovereigns of God’s kingdom. And, “… seeing Moses had no authority to govern the Israelites, as a successor to the right of Abraham, because he could not claim it by inheritance,” [[78]](#footnote-78) Moses could not become the sovereign by tradition means by which a monarch might ascend—lineage:

*And therefore his authority (notwithstanding the Covenant they made with God) depended yet merely upon the opinion they had of his Sanctity, and of the reality of his Conferences with God, and the verity of his Miracles; which opinion coming to change, they were no more obliged to take any thing for the law of God, which he expounded to them in Gods name… His authority therefore, as the authority of all other Princes, must be grounded on the Consent of the People, and their Promise to obey him.* And so it was: For the people (Exod. 20.18) when they saw the Thunderings, and the Lightnings, and the noyse of the Trumpet, and the mountaine smoking, removed, and stood a far off. And they said unto Moses, speak thou with us, and we will hear, But let not God speak with us lest we die. *Here was their promise of obedience, and by this it was they obliged themselves to obey whatsoever he should deliver unto them for the Commandement of God.[[79]](#footnote-79)*

Moses’s authority over the Israelites depended on their belief in his unique connection to God, through which Moses could prophecy and perform miracles. Earlier in *Leviathan*, Hobbes warns that such beliefs are fickle and prove nothing about the divinity of the person or the entity they call god.[[80]](#footnote-80)

Moses needs more than the people’s belief to be truly legitimate, he needs their consent. In Hobbes’s interpretation of Exodus 20:16/19, when the Israelites ask Moses to speak to God on their behalf, the promise they make in exchange “וְנִשְׁמָעָה” means “we will obey.” The pledge of obedience is how Moses is able to personate them, because the people enact a covenant and authorize Moses to act for them. Hobbes goes even further than what he theorizes in Ch. XVI and argues that this is tantamount to “the Consent of the People” upon which the authority of all princes is grounded. Hobbes has not yet explained the authority of princes in such a manner. In previous arguments about the sovereign, consent has not been part of the conceptual constellation, although this passage suggests that it has been lurking behind covenant all along.

In contrast to the incarnations of Moses as personating God and being God’s lieutenant, Moses as a personation of the people becomes theoretically indistinct from Moses as leader by consent, even if there is a conceptual difference. The theory of personation relies on the authorization of the actor to represent the authors. By relying on the same verse from Exodus for both incarnations here, Moses personating the people and Moses leading them by consent is one and the same representation. Hobbes shows the reader that the “authority of princes” is based in personation and consent to constitute the one sovereign. As such, according to Hobbes, only God can have multiple personations, which we see in the other incarnations of Moses.

Moses as leading by consent of the people is an incarnation in which Hobbes’s attempts to have both a monarchist and a republican theory of sovereignty and authority both crystallize and start to come apart. Here Hobbes is trying to fit together defining features of conflicting theories of the source of rule. Through Moses, Hobbes makes the argument that the source of authority is in heaven, is in inheritance, is in obedience, and is in the consent of the people; the ruler is God, the ruler is a king, the ruler is the people, and the ruler is a representation of the people. While each of these incarnations provide insight into the workings of “subversive integration,” they also directly counter Hobbes’s insistence on unitary representation of the sovereign. If Moses is meant to be “the scriptural exemplar of a Leviathan sovereign,”[[81]](#footnote-81) then he ought only to be represented in one manner.

Only through analyzing the biblical verses used to describe Moses do the many incarnations of Moses appear. As much as Moses is a strategic choice, the biblical figure cannot be contained by the sources Hobbes uses, nor by Hobbes’s interpretations. Even the choice to translate וְנִשְׁמָעָה as “we will obey” instead of “we will hear” does not anchor or reduce the incarnations of Moses. It does, however, indicate that there is an alternative to a covenant built on obedience. A covenant of hearing fosters an authority that is circulating and agonistic. In reading the same sources for Hobbes’s Moses, in the next section I will show how reading Moses in Jewish tradition opens up the reading of covenant of hearing and the alternative account of authority.

**Section 5: Covenantal Moses, an Alternative**

While Hobbes may treat the many Moses’s as all one and the same, the strategy behind these many figures is to demonstrate the strength and legitimacy of the theory of personation and the sovereign. A constant across Hobbes’s Moses figures is that they all act as mediators between the Israelites and God; according to Hobbes, the Israelites do not directly “hear” God, they only “hear” Moses. Rereading the same biblical texts Hobbes employs within a Jewish interpretive tradition illuminates not merely that Hobbes’s interpretations do not bear out in the Hebrew, but with a different understanding of Moses and his role in covenanting, an alternative, Jewish model of authority surfaces. This other model of authority is closely tied to covenant, but unlike Hobbes’s, it rejects personation and imagistic metaphors. What I call “covenantal authority” binds its community in obligation to “hear,” not to “obey,” as I argued Hobbes interprets covenant.

The obey/hear distinction reflects the contrast the between command-obedience authority and the alternative account of authority as circulating and agonistic. Laden’s authority of command[[82]](#footnote-82) is meant to contrast “authority of connection,” in which people sharing the same normative environment can only “call forth some response” from another person in reciprocity, not hierarchy.[[83]](#footnote-83) In requiring a response, even a dissenting response, authority of connection does not permit all forms of resistance. It also requires a person to engage without their consent. With foundations of obedience and requirement, authority of command and connection are both command-obedience authority. Out of Hebrew Bible and Jewish sources and tradition, a covenant of hearing is a manifestation of different kind of authority, in which dissent is constitutive. In a covenant of hearing, the obligation to hear is one that maintains the community and its boundaries. If there was no obligation to hear one another, the covenant would be only between God and each individual covenantor – I will show below how this is not the case. A covenant of hearing only asks the participants in the covenant to hear each other. To respond, how to respond, when to respond, to dissent, to resist, are all up to each participant.

The Jewish covenantal tradition is also built on two covenants, the covenant God makes with Abraham in Genesis 17, and the covenant God makes with the Israelites at Mount Sinai in Exodus 20-24. While “Abrahamic” or “Mosaic” are convenient shorthand, the reference to these biblical figures does not have the same “public person” significance as in covenant theology. The moment of the Mosaic covenant at Mount Sinai is quite long in biblical terms – four chapters. It begins with the first declaration of the Ten Commandments and ends with the Israelites agreeing to the covenant by cryptically responding, “נעשה ונשמע” “we will do and we will hear/understand/obey”[[84]](#footnote-84) (Exodus 24:7). Hebrew does not provide clear translations as presented in Hobbes’s covenanting language in Part Two, of first-person singular statements and the present tense. And, despite coming after the verse that Hobbes interprets as giving Moses their obedience, the Israelites (20:16/19), in the *p’shat*, they do not speak with a mediator.

From a grammatical perspective, that each word in the phrase begins with a נ [[85]](#footnote-85) indicates that the verb is in first-person plural and in the future tense. “We will do and we will hear/understand” acknowledges that the Israelites will act according to the tenets of the covenant – implying obligation – not obedience. In contrast to Hobbes, the Israelites do not promise to obey, and covenanting is not an inauguration of a leader, and many say that by placing “do” before “understand,” the Israelites understand the covenant through enacting it. נעשה ונשמע (We will do and we will hear/understand) is said not to Moses, not to Aaron the High Priest, but directly to God—directly with the other covenantor. God offers the covenant to the Israelites, who accept it, but they do not authorize it nor set its terms. This is not a silent God to the Israelites, nor a God displaced by a mediator or personator.[[86]](#footnote-86) While the Israelites accept the covenant together, the terms of the covenant are given in second-person singular,[[87]](#footnote-87) binding them as a group and as individuals to the terms of the covenant. When Moses speaks for the Israelites in Exodus 20, he mediates the initial stages of the covenant. Without the underlying theory of personation, there is no evidence that asking Moses to mediate in that instance is a pledge of long-term obedience to Moses. Moses has been acting as a mediator between the Israelites and God since he returned to Egypt to lead them out. Without a mediator in covenanting, there is a dialogue and proximity between the parties absent in the Hobbesian model. If שמע is translated as “hear” not “obey,” the Israelites do not agree to obey God, but rather accept the obligations of the covenant and retain much latitude to dissent.

Neither Abraham nor Moses are mediators for the covenants associated with them. The covenant is made directly with Abraham, binding all his descendants. The covenant at Sinai is not made with Moses on behalf of the Israelites. While God communicates with Moses to prepare the Israelites to receive the covenant, God speaks the Ten Commandments and subsequent laws (Exodus 21-23) directly to the Israelites.[[88]](#footnote-88) Moses might fill out the paperwork of the covenant, but he is not sole holder of the promises, that is for all the Israelites to fulfill. Hobbes insists on mediation and personation of the covenant because with Moses, he is able to bring together features of royal rule and popular rule and continue with his argument that the sovereign represents a unity and unifies disparate parts, such as the conflicting civil and ecclesiastical authorities. In Hobbes’s interpretation, without a mediator, the Israelites are not a unity. The covenant constructs the outer bounds of their community – the Sinai covenant makes those bounds clearer and stricter – but individuality is sustained as each person takes on the covenant on their own and lives under the covenant as an individual. In a community that holds space for individuals, each member has their own understanding of the covenant, they *hear* the words in a different way, and can act accordingly. Without a definitive pledge of obedience, there is potential for contestation and agonism. This plurality of heard voices in the covenant is manifest in modern-day printing of Talmud, in which the central texts are surrounded by centuries of commentaries, all in conversation with each other.[[89]](#footnote-89)

Where Hobbes and covenant theology represent covenants with a public person, there is no public person, representation, or imagistic metaphor for any of the Judaic covenants. The Abrahamic covenant binds all Jews because of the theological belief in descent from Abraham. The Mosaic covenant binds all Jews not just because of the communal-individual commitment, but also because *midrash* explains that at the moment, all Jews, past, present, and future, were at Mount Sinai to accept the covenant (Sh’mot Rabba 28:6). Covenant theologians contend that the covenant of words was made with Adam, and so Adam has to represent that covenant so that others can see themselves as party to that covenant; the same is true of the covenant of grace with Christ, whose public person is a mediation for others to become participants in the covenant. The sovereign represents the unity manifested by the covenants and holds the authority that the subjects renounced and transferred in their covenant. Furthermore, as the frontispiece depicts, the subjects constitute the body of the sovereign (the body politic), suggesting that to be an author requires accepting the leviathan as sovereign.[[90]](#footnote-90)

One reason for the lack of public person is the strict Jewish interpretation of the formal prohibition on idolatry, which comes in the second, nation-building covenant. God declares in the first proclamation of the Ten Commandments, “You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them” (Exodus 20:4-5). A person, natural or artificial, representing the covenant violates this injunction.

While the transition to monotheism is clear in the Abrahamic covenant, there is no explicit prohibition on sculptured images. It is implied in God’s requirements of Abraham to “follow in [God’s] ways and be blameless.” When there is a unified symbol that the Israelites can gather around, the golden calf (Exodus 32), it violates a commandment and indicates how far they have strayed from their covenant with God and is a test of the difference between disobedience and contestation. To Hobbes, this is a sign of misplaced representation of God (not Moses) and disobedience, as the creation of the calf was done “without Authority from God.”[[91]](#footnote-91) This incident summarizes the consequences for disobedience and acting without authority, even if the concession to the “Consent of the People” in legitimizing Moses as leader places some authority in the Israelites.[[92]](#footnote-92)

The punishment for the failure of the Israelites is indicative of how this covenant not only has a different relationship to representative images, but also how different the relationship of authority is between the covenantors. When Moses is on Mount Sinai with God, God remarks in anger on the behavior of the Israelites with the golden calf, saying they will be destroyed, and a new nation will come from Moses. Moses responds,

*Let not Your anger, O Lord, blaze forth against Your people, whom You delivered from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand. Let not the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that He delivered them, only to kill them off in the mountains and annihilate them from the face of the earth.’ Turn from Your blazing anger, and renounce the plan to punish Your people. Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, how You swore to them by Your Self and said to them: I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and I will give to your offspring this whole land of which I spoke, to possess forever* (Exodus 31:11-13). [[93]](#footnote-93)

That Moses negotiates with God on behalf of the “stiff-necked” Israelites upends expectations of a covenantal relationship as demonstrated Hobbes’s interpretation of Moses’s incarnation as mediator between God and the people. Even as God’s “Viceregent” or “Lieutenant,” Moses’s exalted role is to convey the sovereignty of heaven over the Israelites and execute God’s authority. Moses may command the obedience of the people, but he does not have authority on his own to act against the sovereign. In the biblical text, which Hobbes heavily quotes and cites, Moses argues with God about how to respond to a disobedient people – in making the calf, the Israelites violated a commandment, which is a higher level of dissent than disagreeing over the proper way to fulfill a commandment, for example. Moses not only argues, Moses succeeds, demonstrating how even in what could be a covenantal crisis, contesting God’s declared intent is part of being in this covenantal relationship. Representation per Hobbes creates a relationship between subject and sovereign that makes contestation rare, because the actions of the sovereign are the actions of the subjects, and vice versa.[[94]](#footnote-94) Personation eviscerates contestation by fixing the author-actor relationship in the sovereign and state. Hobbes’s two most significant discussions of the golden calf incident focus on the Israelites’ disobedience in the absence of their leader and that the command to kill (some of) the disobedients comes from God via Moses, not the dispute between Moses and God.[[95]](#footnote-95) The sovereign-subject relationship that Hobbes sets up in Ch. XVII does not have a mediator, but this example introduces Moses as a representative of the authorizing people, intervening on their behalf to God, who appears as an abstraction of the sovereign and state. This slippage in Hobbes’s argument reinforces how personation and its reliance on imagistic metaphor escapes the purposes for which it is intended.

By contrast, read without the Hobbesian framework, Moses argues with God, reminding God of the preexisting covenant with the patriarchs, and succeeds (although many people are still killed).[[96]](#footnote-96) Moses is not an external representation of the covenant that between God and the covenantors. The way the covenant is given to the Israelites, as a community and as individuals, gives each person their own way of relating to and understanding the covenant. This does not mean that everyone has the access to God like Moses or other prophets. Without a representative, the Israelites are direct participants in their covenant. A covenant in which they pledge to “hear” not to obey opens up space for dissent among and between the covenantors. Even though there is an underlying, shared agreement, each person is individually party to the covenant, without proxy. In a covenant of hearing, authority cannot be tethered to command-obedience relationships, but rather it circulates among the covenantors, changing with who dissents and why.

**Section 6: Conclusion**

Existing scholarship on the theological arguments in *Leviathan* discusses the role of Moses as exemplifying the Hobbesian sovereign and subverting democratic means for absolutist ends,[[97]](#footnote-97) mitigating a vacuum of authority without mediation,[[98]](#footnote-98) as well as the possible role of covenant theology in shaping the core theory of personation.[[99]](#footnote-99) In bringing these works in closer conversation in this chapter, I have aimed to show that focusing on the role and manner of covenanting unlocks the relationship between personation, mediation, sovereignty, and authority in *Leviathan*, and why Moses, in Hobbes’s wily biblical interpretations, is a figure upon which multiple arguments and metaphors can hang.

Reading Hobbes on Moses closely, through the biblical sources and the mire of translations, unveils where Hobbes creatively departs from or embellishes Hebrew Bible *p’shat*, and where there are slippages between different restatements of similar ideas. This is another reason why there are so many Moses’s: how he appears according to the text Hobbes cited and how it is interpreted proposes a different type of leader, or a leader whose authority derives from a different source. In sharpest contradistinction, it poses Hobbes’s Moses’s against a Moses commonly found in Jewish interpretations.

The theory of personation and sovereignty introduced in early chapters of *Leviathan* insist upon a unitary, singularly represented sovereign. The “Moses” that appears in Parts Three and Four, as evidence and explanation of the aforementioned theory is not unitary, but at least quaternary. The four incarnations of Moses are, personation of God; God’s lieutenant; personation of the people; and leader by consent of the people.[[100]](#footnote-100) Each of these assists in explaining features of the leviathan sovereign, but in so doing, exceed the metaphor and its purpose: to consolidate authority under the sovereign and eliminate dissent.

Rereading the same sources but without the framework of the theory of personation or other parameters of *Leviathan*, Moses is not a mediator of the covenant such that he commands the obedience of the Israelites and the Israelites never covenant with God directly. Moses may mediate in some cases, but he does not personate either God or the Israelites. The resulting covenant does not vest authority in a sovereign, but it circulates among all the covenantors, opening up the possibility for contestation and dissent.

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**Appendix**

Frontispiece to *Leviathan*

A picture containing text

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Babylonian Talmud, *Maseḥet B’raḥot*, 2a.

A picture containing text, newspaper

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1. Throughout this paper, I refer to Hebrew Bible wherever I discuss the books from Genesis to II Chronicles, and from Matthew to Revelation, Christian Bible. The former could be called the “Old Testament,” but in fact, the books of the Old Testament are not ordered in the same way as Hebrew Bible. Also, “Old Testament” cedes to Christian hegemony that there is an Old and New Testament, which for Jews is not the case. If I ever use Old or New Testament, it is in quoting another or to underscore a specific point about how these sacred texts are interpreted. Clarification on Hebrew Bible, called *Tanaḥ*: the Hebrew Bible contains the Five Books of Moses (*Torah*), the books of the Prophets (*Nevi’im*), and a collection called the Writings (*Ketuvim*). Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Naḥum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Ḥaggai, Zeḥariah, Malaḥi; Writings: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah, Chronicles. In Hebrew, the acronym is more apparent: TaNaḤ (**תנך**) = **כ**תובים+ **נ**ויאים + **ת**ורה. *The letter “כ” in Hebrew can be pronounced with a “k” sound or a “ḥ” sound.* All translations of the Hebrew Bible that I use are the New Jewish Publication Society (NJPS) translation, unless I am directly quoting Hobbes, another author, or offering another translation myself. For Christian Bible, I use the New Revised Standard Version (NSRV). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This does not include Moses’s two 40-day sojourns on Mount Sinai nor the sin of the golden calf, which all come later (Exodus 30). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The specific language Hobbes uses is “personating,” but I will come back to the relationship between representing and personating later in this paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Alison McQueen, “Mosaic Leviathan: Religion and Rhetoric in Hobbes’s Political Thought” in *Hobbes on Politics and Religion*, ed. Laurens van Apeldoorn and Robin Douglass (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 119-120. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. McQueen, “Mosaic Leviathan,” 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. McQueen, 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Anthony Simon Laden, “The Authority of Civic Citizens” in *On Global Citizenship: James Tully in Dialogue* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. It is hard to say whether Hobbes is only interpreting or also manipulating. Eric Nelson writes that Hobbes was not literate in Hebrew, so although he could turn to the Vulgate or Greek translations of the Bible, he could not read the Hebrew Bible in its original language. Thus, he relied on the translations of others and infrequently in the text explains the decisions about translation and how that shapes the rest of the interpretation. Whether this is intentional manipulation of the text to serve Hobbes’s purposes and leave little room for other interpretations is not the point, although knowing how concerned Hobbes was with a plurality of interpretations out of one text, we could venture that there is some intent. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Contemporaneous to the tumult of the civil war, the theological innovation, religious conflict, this was also a period of Jewish “revival” in England: having been formally expelled by Edward I in 1290, Jews only started to be allowed back in England in the mid-1650s after negotiations with the Sephardi community in Amsterdam.

   Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic,* 122-124. See also, Geraldine Heng, *England and the Jews: How Religion and Violence Created the First Racial State in the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) for more on the early history of Jews in England. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Although Hobbes was engaged in the Hebraic Revival, he did not know Hebrew. His limited engagement with language will have consequences for how he interprets Hebrew Bible in Part Three of *Leviathan*, Eric Nelson, “Introduction” in *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish sources and the transformation of European political thought* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 21-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Nelson, “Introduction” in *The Hebrew Republic,* 1-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Bryan Garsten, “Religion and Representation in Hobbes,” in *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill,* ed. Ian Shapiro (Yale University Press, 2010), 522. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Garsten, “Religion and Representation in Hobbes,” 540. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *Ibid*., 524-525, 527-528. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Hobbes, *Leviathan,* 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. *Ibid*., “NATURE (the Art whereby God hath made and governes the World) is by the *Art* of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an Artificial Animal” (9). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Also, Hanna Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press: 1967): 24-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Skinner, “Hobbes and the purely artificial person of the state,” 181, “…a general theory of action will need to include an account of how it is possible for one person to act in the name of another.” [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *Ibid*., 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Skinner, “Hobbes and the purely artificial person of the state,” 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. *Ibid*., 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. *Ibid*., 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *Ibid*., 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. *Ibid*., 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. *Ibid*., 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. *Ibid*., 208. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 280. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. *Ibid*., 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. McQueen, “Mosaic Leviathan,” 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. *Ibid*., 129. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. *Ibid*., 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. See Quentin Skinner, “Hobbes and the purely artificial person of the state” in *Visions of Politics: Volume 3, Hobbes and Civil Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Alicia Steinmetz, “Hobbes and the Politics of Translation,” *Political Theory* 49, no. 1 (February 2021): 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. See appendix for reproduction of the frontispiece to *Leviathan*. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Philp Pettit, *Made with words: Hobbes on language, mind, and politics* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008) 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Per Murphy, Hobbes’s understanding of normative is as follows: “law is not just command but command of one party to another *who is obligated to obey one’s commands*” (sovereign and subject), Mark C. Murphy, “Hobbes (and Austin, and Aquinas) on Law as Command of the Sovereign” in *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 343. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. As McGiffert writes, “Therefore if you scratch a puritan, you may or may not find a man with covenant on his mind. But scratch a man who had something to say about covenant, and you are quite likely to find a puritan” (“Grace and Works,” 465). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. *Ibid*. See also, Michael Horton, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. There is no consensus on the precise beginning of covenant theology, but many scholars trace it to infamous English Reformer William Tyndale. Similar ideas were also developed by John Calvin, and also a few decades later by Ursinus, Christopher Hill, “Covenant Theology and the Concept of 'A Public Person'” in *Powers, possessions, and freedom: essays in honour of C. B. Macpherson* (Toronto; Buffalo: Toronto University Press, 1979), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Hill, “Covenant Theology,” 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. McGiffert, “Grace and Works,” 464. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Michael McGiffert, “From Moses to Adam: The Making of the Covenant of Works” in *Sixteenth Century Journal* (Summer 1988) 19, no. 2: 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. McGiffert, “Grace and Works,” 464. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. It is no coincidence, I think, that John Winthrop begins by drawing the same distinction in his sermon, “Modell of Christian Charitie” (1630): “There is likewise a double Lawe by which wee are regulated in our conversacion one towardes another: in both the former respects, the lawe of nature and the lawe of grace, or the morrall lawe or the lawe of the gospell” (283). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. In Hebrew, the word for land is ״אדם״ or “Adam.”

    וּלְאָדָם אָמַר כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתֶּךָ וַתֹּאכַל מִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה בַּעֲבוּרֶךָ בְּעִצָּבוֹן תֹּאכֲלֶנָּה כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ

    “To Adam He [God] said, “Because you did as your wife said and ate of the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ Cursed be the ground because of you; By toil shall you eat of it All the days of your life” (Genesis 3:17) [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. McGiffert, “Grace and Works,” 464. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. McGiffert, “From Moses to Adam,” 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Martinich, “Two Gods,” 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Hill, “Covenant Theology,” 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Exodus 19-24, when God first proclaims the Ten Commandments, to when Moses descends Mount Sinai with the tablets. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Catholics were considered misguided in their interpretation of Scripture, and covenant theology was even theorized to criticize Catholicism and delegitimize their religious practices and beliefs. The layering of these relationships introduces one very curious conceptual pairing – Sarah and Hagar. Typically, Sarah and Hagar are known as the matriarchal progenitors of Judaism and Islam via Isaac and Ishmael, respectively (Genesis 16, 21). In this case, Hagar surprisingly represents the covenant of works, although Sarah is the first Jewish woman thus, theologically, the woman from which all Jews are descended, but according to Christian tradition, as Sarah is the Jewish matriarch, by extension she is also a Christian matriarch. Sarah and Hagar, somewhat ironically, become respectively symbols of the New and Old Testaments in large part due to Galatians 4:30-31:“But what does the scripture say? ‘Drive out the slave and her child; for the child of the slave will not share the inheritance with the child of the free woman.’ So then, friends, we are children, not of the slave but of the free woman.” Paul is interpreted as referencing Sarah and Hagar, emphasizing the entrapment, the strictures, and the oppression (slavery) of the Old Testament, the covenant of works, the covenant entrenched in law and its logic, not the freedom of Christ’s redemption. Although “There was nothing novel at that time in seeing Sarah and Hagar as emblems of gospel and law or of the New and Old Testaments, … it was inventive to give their tale an expressly covenantal twist, and quite ingenious to tie it to the covenant of works: an example of a tenet seeking—and finding—a text” (McGiffert, “From Adam to Moses,” 140). Galatians 4:30-31 makes space to lift Sarah and Hagar’s story from its context and reconfigure what each woman represents. Not only did Sarah get mapped onto Protestantism, Hagar got mapped onto Catholicism, as the false church (141). As more traditionally identified with Islam, that Hagar is connected to the “false church” of Catholicism is also a commentary on what the covenant theologians thought of Islam. The desire to identify with Sarah over Hagar, in light of Galatians 4, reveals a racial politics that drives the insistence on dividing in two that results in hierarchy and supersession. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Hill, “Covenant Theology,” 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. *Ibid*., 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Quentin Skinner, “A Genealogy of the Modern State,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 162 (2009): 330. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. *Ibid*., 331, citing: King James VI and I 1994, pp. 147, 149. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. McQueen, “Mosaic Leviathan,” 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Garsten, “Religion and Representation in Hobbes,” 522. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. When it comes it comes to Hebrew Bible, translation becomes trickier, as does deciding on the “veracity,” “fitness,” “quality,” or “correctness.” In the Hebrew, we can see where some of the variation emerges in the translations, and this is due entirely to how Hebrew works as a language. Hebrew is a language built on two-, three-, and four-letter roots. Letters in different combinations and orders make different roots, and each root generally signifies a concept or a set of concepts. For example, the root, אכל, which is associated with food, eating, consuming: to eat – לאכול, food –אוכל, he eats – הוא אוכל, she feeds – היא מאכילה. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Steinmetz, “Hobbes and the Politics of Translation,” 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. That is, pa’al (פעל). Jastrow cites numerous passages in Talmud and one in Tanaḥ to illustrate the myriad meanings contained in one root (1599). [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 143. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Moses may also speak for God to the Israelites (another act of authorization and personation), but any suggestion that Moses speaks on his own disregards an earlier passage in Exodus 4:1-10. In this section of the exodus story, Moses is having his first interaction with God, at the burning bush, and is being called upon to lead the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt. As Moses begins to accept this responsibility, he demurs once again and says that with his speech impediment, he will be unable to complete the work God asked of him. God promises that Aaron, Moses’s brother, will by his side and will speak for him. The text explains that this is how Moses communicates to Pharaoh, expressing God’s words to Aaron, who vocalizes them to Pharaoh. The Ramban (Rabbi Moses ben Naḥman) comments that Moses does not ask for his speech impediment to be fixed, but for help. Since there is no accounting later in the text that Moses overcomes the impediment or that Moses and Aaron stop this partnership, we could imagine that every time the text recounts that Moses speaks to the Israelites, it is Aaron’s voice the people hear. Even in readings of Moses as a personation of God, authorized to relay God’s words, Moses relies on his brother to complete the communication. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. If this has not been evident, I am focusing biblical interpretations solely on what is called in Jewish interpretation, *p’shat* (פשט), meaning the “simple” understanding, or only interpreting from the words on the page, not bringing in midrashic or other rabbinic texts to explain or embellish the stories in any way. This is to clarify and highlight when midrash and rabbinic sources are included in the analysis and will be cited explicitly. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 309. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. It is not until the Book of Samuel that the theology of “God is the king” emerges, Moshe Halbertal and Stephen Holmes, *The Beginning of Politics: Power in the Biblical Book of Samuel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 5-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Moses is recognized in Jewish thought as the most important of all the Jewish prophets (Rambam on Mishna Sanhedrin 10), “The prophecy of Moshe, our teacher - peace be upon him - and that is that we believe that he was the father of all the prophets that were before him and that arose after him, [meaning] that all are below him in [loftiness] and that he is the chosen one from the entire human species.”

    נבואת משה רבינו ע"ה והוא שנאמין כי הוא אביהם של כל הנביאים אשר היו מלפניו ואשר קמו מאחריו כלם הם תחתיו במעלה והוא היה הנבחר מכל מין האדם [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. The *kohanim* כֹּהֲנִים are the priests of the Israelites. Traditionally, only men can fulfill the duties of a *kohein* or a *levi*. All *kohanim* are descended from Aaron, the first priest. It is important to distinguish *kohanim* from *levi’im*, who are members of the tribe of Levi, but are not descended from Aaron (Exodus 2:1 explains that Moses, Aaron, and Miriam were born to a man, Amram, and a woman, Yoḥeved, from the tribe of Levi). *Levi’im* also serve in rituals (the Tabernacle, the Temple), carry the Ark and the Tabernacle when the Israelites travel, and help prepare the *kohanim*, but they do not have the same restrictions as do the *kohanim* (prohibitions on 1) entering a cemetery or place with corpses unless it is the funeral for a very close family member; 2) marrying a woman not born to a Jewish mother or who was divorced), nor the same rights to lead in ritual and worship, dress in priestly garb, or fulfill any other *kohein* duties. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Hobbes’s analysis of this phrase and his insistence on the leadership of the priests does not bear out in the rest of Tanaḥ. After Aaron dies, his son Elazar becomes the next High Priest. After Moses dies, Joshua becomes the military leader of the Israelites; the first book of the Prophets is titled for Joshua and follows how Joshua leads the people into the land and conquers it. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. *Ibid*., 324. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. *Ibid*., 324-325. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. *Ibid*., 83-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. McQueen, “Mosaic Leviathan,” 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. A relationship in which one person can singularly decide an aspect of the “normative environment of those [they] command” (Laden, “The Authority of Civic Citizens” in *On Global Citizenship*, 113). [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. *Ibid*., 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. This is a frequently quoted phrase and is most often translated as “we will do and we will understand,” and it is remarked upon that the Israelites commit to enacting the covenant before they understand it. By “doing” the covenant, they will understand what it means. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. The “ו” means “and” and doesn’t change the conjugation or tense of the verb. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. McQueen, “Mosaic Leviathan,” 129, citing Bryan Garsten, ‘Religion and Representation in Hobbes’, in *Leviathan*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 536. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Below are the first three commandments (Exodus 20:2-4) with the pronoun ending or short word that indicates second-person singular bolded:

    אָנֹכִי יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶי**ךָ** אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי**ךָ** מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדֽים׃

    I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage:

    לֹא יִהְיֶה־**לְךָ** אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל־פָּנָי

    You shall have no other gods besides Me.

    לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה־**לְךָ** פֶסֶל וְכָל־תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל ואֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת ואֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם ׀ מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ

    You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. What happens right after this is Exodus 24:1-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. See appendix for a reproduction of a page of Talmud. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. See appendix. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 450-451. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. One explanation for why the Israelites called on Aaron to make the golden calf when Moses went up Mount Sinai is that they were afraid without their leader and returned to the kind of worship that was familiar to them – the kind of religious worship they saw in Egypt, idol worship. Idol worship then also becomes a symbol of the past, of enslavement and monotheistic non-imagistic religious belief is tied to emancipation and burgeoning nationhood. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. (Hebrew can be found on the next page)

    לָמָה יְהוָה יֶחֱרֶה אַפְּךָ בְּעַמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּכֹחַ גָּדוֹל וּבְיָד חֲזָקָה לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר בְּרָעָה הוֹצִיאָם לַהֲר֤ג אֹתָם בֶּהָרִים וּלְכַלֹּתָם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה שׁוּב מֵחֲרוֹן אַפֶּךָ וְהִנָּחֵם עַל־הָרָעָה לְעַמֶּךָ זְכֹר לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לָהֶם בָּךְ וַתְּדַבֵּר אֲלֵהֶם אַרְבֶּה אֶת־זַרְעֲכֶם כְּכוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמָיִם וְכָל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי אֶתֵּן לְזַרְעֲכֶם וְנָחֲלוּ לְעֹלָם׃ [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. The only exception is if the sovereign does not fulfill the terms of securing peace and defense of the commonwealth, *Leviathan*, 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. *Leviathan*, 85 and 487, respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. When Moses comes down the mountain, he is so angry with the scene that he smashes the Tablets that were said to have been carved “with the finger of God” בְּאֶצְבַּע אֱלֹהִים (Exodus 31:18). Moses carries out the punishment for the sin of the Golden Calf, and then later goes back up the mountain, and this time, he carves the Tablets himself. The Israelites no longer merit an object that is made by God, the work of creating and maintaining the words of the covenant fall to the leaders, after the incident of the Golden Calf, the creation of the Tablets further reinforces how they are *not* items of worship. If God kills so many people for creating an idol, then another one would not be created in its place, especially if the first commandments prohibit graven images and polytheism. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. McQueen, “Mosaic Leviathan.” [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Garsten, “Religion and Representation in Hobbes” (535-536). [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Most notably, Martinich, *Two Gods*. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Surprisingly, Moses’s most famous incarnation, lawgiver, is noticeably absent from any significant discussion of this figure or the covenanting. This is, perhaps, to reinforce that laws come from God, the ultimate sovereign, and not from Moses. Even when Moses is acting as a personation of God. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)