

Leviathan in the Classroom. State and University in Thomas Hobbes

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*The expression *Libertas philosophandi* does not appear in the *Leviathan*. Yet, Hobbes deals with the topic of the confrontation of ideas between men when he debates both on the “state of nature” and on civil society. After an analysis of the concepts elaborated in the first part of the *Leviathan*, in order to clarify the link between intellectual dialogue and human passions, this essay investigates the relationships that must be established between Civil State and Universities, which is the topic of chapter XLVI entitled “Of Darknesse from vain Philosophy, and Fabulous Traditions”.*

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1. *Virtue, Wit and Science*

Which notion of *libertas philosophandi* can we trace in the *Leviathan*, given that this expression does not appear in the text? This is the question I will try to answer in this paper. First of all, I propose some considerations regarding the way Hobbes presents the discussion of opinions in the “state of nature”, the condition preceding the institution of political order. The premise for a better understanding of the different roles the “state power” is called for, both in the field of scientific research and in academic teaching, is to consider the features assumed by the exchange of ideas before the contract, within a relational dynamics where only “the right of nature” (“*jus in omnia*”) is effective. I will concentrate on these issues, and, in particular, on the analysis of chapter XLVI, whose title is “Of Darknesse from vain Philosophy, and Fabulous Traditions”.

In order to verify the characteristics of the exchange of ideas in the “state of nature”, I start from chapter VIII, where Hobbes provides the definition of virtue. Virtue is the Other’s recognition of a quality we own. As Hobbes writes: “vertue generally, in all sorts of subjects, is somewhat that is valued for eminence; and consisteth in comparison. For if all things were equally in all men, nothing would