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Shakespeare's Conspiracy Theorist: *Richard III* in the Context of Thomas Hobbes' State of Nature

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Abstract

Thomas Hobbes disagreed with the ideas of previous thinkers about the existence of the state in the history of political philosophy, which made progress in the 17th century and made its way to the Age of Reason. He argues that humanity exists in a '*state of nature*' when it is not a state and explains it in his work *Leviathan*. Most of the characters in Shakespeare's play *Richard III* have traces of Hobbes' concept of the *natural state*. As with many other characters created by Shakespeare for his plays prior to and following the publication of *Richard III*, the characters in this play seem to be either goal-oriented, with certain motives to carry out, or rather ignorant of the actions happening around them only to learn about them too late. The goals of the former characters and what they accomplish for these purposes are similar to those of Hobbes in terms of state and power. In particular, the conspiracies and theories that Richard's character has established reveal the *state of nature* and the impasse for a society that experiences an absence of power. In this study, *Richard III*, one of the earliest plays and the most controversial works of Shakespeare at the beginning of the Renaissance period, is analysed in the light of Hobbes' ideas. Within this context, a thorough examination of the play with regards to the actions and the statements made by the characters was conducted to prove the existence of Hobbes' ideas as integrated into the play. The conclusion drawn is that the study indicated strong inclusion of Hobbes' *state of nature* idea in the play as the tenets of the said idea is abundant throughout the work. Being a political playwright as well as a philosophy-driven writer, Shakespeare can be said to have employed Hobbes' ideas and moulded them into living and breathing characters to show the possible calamities an absence of power may entail.

Keywords: Literature, Shakespeare, Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, State of Nature, Power.

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1. Introduction

As the church belief and scholastic thought built on the sovereignty of the people, which is one of the returns of the Middle Ages, starting in the 5th century AD and making its impact until the 12th century throughout the UK and Europe, was traded by the individual-focused Renaissance thought in the 15th century, a major period of ascension was prevailing in the English theatre, led by writers such as Shakespeare and Marlowe. At the beginning of this new age, modern state designs in Europe first sprouted thanks to thinkers like Machiavelli and later in the 17th century, such as Jean Jack Rousseau and Thomas Hobbes. The most evident distinction that broke this process from the Renaissance to Enlightenment away from the political thoughts that prevailed in the Middle Ages and before was undoubtedly the change in the standpoint of the individual and the reorganization of society/state theories. Another reason that lies at the root of this radical change is that while political events involving long years such as the civil war in England instigated nation-state structuring, these events also triggered a profound shift in the sense of thought in Europe of said period. While many of the theories believed to exist in this fundamentalist system of thought were left to be sceptical with the enlightenments of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, Hobbes, who could not stay out of the bloody British Civil War and political actions in the state and had to endure the consequences of being away from his country, questioned the state structure in the light of the outcomes of this war. In this regard, "Hobbes introduced a new law of nature which was of obvious relevance to questions raised by the English Civil War" (Sommerville, 1992: 30). These laws designed by Hobbes are laws which are legitimate in the dearth of a state. While clarifying this situation in his most important work *Leviathan*, he also attracted the reactions of many intellectuals and statesmen during his time. He endeavours to explain, in *Leviathan*, his laws of politics and *state of nature* along with state of war "from the psychology of individuals through their wretched condition in the absence of a strong government" (Ryan, 2018: 642). This work, which defends the absolute existence of the state, demands obedience to the ruling person/state formation in return for ensuring the security of individuals, who are the cornerstone of society, and yet, as stated by Hobbes, this demand is based on consent. In response to this, "the absolute liberty of the individual has been renounced and transferred to a sovereign" (Moloney, 2011: 202).

2. Hobbes' *State of Nature* in Relation to the Origin of the State

The power, which has never lost its popularity since the pre-medieval times, tries to find answers to questions about the state and the reason for the existence of the state with Aristotle in the pre-medieval history scene. According to him, what is called the state is a community and this community is political (Aristotle, 1955: 159) and the state is a natural requirement for the continuity of human life. He also emphasizes the inseparable relationship between the state and the human while defending the idea that people are not equal. He expresses the separation of mind and body power, saying that a person who can realize the necessary things thanks to his intelligence is naturally a master, and a person who can do all this with his body power is a natural slave. (Aristotle, 1955: 161). According to Hobbes, there is no such hierarchical ranking. In his eyes, all individuals in the community are equal and have equal rights. Nevertheless, this idea of equality "was an equality of vulnerability rather than intellect or virtue or strength" (Ryan, 2018: 645). Hobbes, who argues that the contrast between strong and weak does not matter, claims that every individual in the community can attack another in case they feel threatened and that "the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest" (qtd. in Warburton, 1999: 156) in a moment of vulnerability. In the *state of nature*, a potential conflict between individuals is quite common and he suggests that the underlying factors of this conflict stems from the competition between individuals, self-confidence/fear and fame. Alan Ryan explains this situation in his article "Escaping the War of All Against All: Leviathan, Thomas Hobbes":

Hobbes presents three sources to pave the way for conflict among individuals: competition, fear, and glory along with pride. The natural condition of humankind forces human beings to live with limited sources of life, which signals that each human being's existence is seemingly a threat for others and expectedly, this creates mutual fear among them. At last, glory/pride impels them to ensure superiority over others (2018: 645).

In the light of these contradictions, Hobbes' sketch called "*state of nature*" regarding the formation of the state displays contrast with Aristotle's policy ideas. Norberto Bobbio, addressing Hobbes' *state of nature* associated with the absence of state apparatus, says as follows in Thomas Hobbes and The Natural Law Tradition: "the *state of nature*, which is a non-political and anti-political condition, is the starting point for the analysis of the origin and foundation of the state" (1993: 2). He draws attention to the flexible and fair formation of the *state of nature*, as opposed to the disciplined formation of the state by writing "the constitutive elements of the *state of nature* are free and equal" (1993: 2). Hobbes, who describes this formation as typical, interprets the *state of nature* as "Natural Condition of Mankind" (Hobbes, 1998: 96). "The reason why Hobbes adopts this thinking is the civil war considered as an inseparable part of the seventeenth century's historical development" (King, 1974: 58-59). The world surrounded by fear and insecurity reshaped the mindset. Hence, "Hobbes is all too often quoted to the effect that he and fear were born twins" (King, 1974: 54). This fear prompted him to question the nature of the state and its policies while thinking about the existence of a stateless society. "For it is true that Hobbes was not a timorous person, but it is equally true that his analysis reflects a fundamental fear of political disorder" (King, 1974: 56). Hobbes first describes this draft, the *state of nature*, which he associates with the concept of power and the psychology shaped by fear, in his *De Cive*, and further clarifies this situation in *Elements of Laws*, a continuation of former work. In his book titled *Leviathan*, he tries to explain this *state of nature* project with the natural conditions that humanity has. In *Leviathan*, which consists of four chapters, he tries to reveal the natural structure of the human and how this structure is shaped by the state. On the other hand, he explains, with the awareness of the lack of power he then experienced, the formation of the state/individual and the absence of the state, which he narrowed to the most specific part in his work, as "everyone against everyone" (Hobbes, 1998: 84). He points out the nature of war as follows, while suggesting that the war will break out in the absence of a state apparatus and that people will kill each other in this unsafe environment:

that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war, as is of every man, against every man. For WAR, consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of time, is to be considered in the nature of war; as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather, lieth not in a shower or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto of many days together: so the nature of war, consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE. (Hobbes, 1998: 84)

Individuals in the middle of the war, a "de facto condition of human nature" (Thivet, 2008: 702), cannot be detached from the *state of nature*. They struggle to do their best to keep their current position and even make it better. Suggesting that individuals have the urge to obey authority even in a civil war, Hobbes argues that the absence or little power of the state makes people unsafe and dissatisfied. Gregory S. Kavka (1983) interprets this situation: "the conflict of each person with every other thus goes on, perhaps in muted form, with trickery and deceit being more common forms of aggression than overt violence, but nevertheless leaving each person in a basically insecure, and thus unhappy, position." (297). James H. Read (1991) describes Hobbes' political perspective on the *state of nature*

and social structure, saying, "Hobbes' political philosophy: the nature of the transition from the *state of nature* to civil society; the interplay of force, self-interest, and sense of obligation in creating motives for obedience to sovereign authority; the dynamics of "chains of command" in Hobbes' commonwealth" (507). Accordingly, Hobbes claims that submissiveness will maintain order, make the existence of the individual/state permanent and bring peace to society. According to him, whatever may be the form of government or ruler in a society, social order must be provided and maintained by an absolute authoritarian power because "any form of government is legitimate if it provides protection in return for obedience; but whether it is monarchy, aristocracy or democracy, it must be absolute to be a real sovereign authority" (Ryan, 2018: 643). If rebellion and disobedience, which are the natural sources of a stateless social structure, are suppressed only by a sovereign power, a peaceful society in which everyone's rights are equal, and security is ensured will be built. However, if the sovereign power has difficulty in ensuring the safety of individuals, it will lose its strength and the obedience shown to it. Another important factor in the continuity of the state is the crimes committed by individuals in society. Although it is normal, in Hobbes' view, for them to attack each other to defend themselves by having equal rights, it is also dangerous for the absolute power. A government "is affected by crimes against the citizens it is supposed to protect" (Sadler, 2010: 17). Aware of this, the state has the right to spread fear within the society to keep individuals under control and in order not to lose its power. In this context:

The definition of dominant power, to Hobbes, is quite hard; One holding power in his/her hands is pictured as thrusting his sword at man's throat after he gives a chance to decide between submission to sovereign power and inevitable death. (Ryan, 2018: 648)

3. Shakespeare and the *State of Nature*

The misconception that Shakespeare was a playwright solely focusing on the traditional theatre-making may very well be disregarded as one takes a closer look at some of his plays arguably including such political hostilities as Antisemitism, as in his *The Merchant of Venice*, causing him to be labelled as "an enemy of the Jews" (Özmen, 2016: 3055). Apart from this notion of him being a political writer, he may also be regarded as a producer of works the main features of which mainly depended on philosophical ideas, an example of which can be said to be Hobbes' *state of nature*. 'Nature', which has always been important and a focus of interest for mankind throughout history, thanks to the numerous mysteries it contains, also gained an important and unique place in the works of Shakespeare in drama, which started to rise at the beginning of the Renaissance period and peaked during the Elizabeth era, seeing its golden age. The 'Chain of Being', which was a common belief in the Elizabethan era - that is, the importance of nature - can be explained as follows:

Every existing thing in the universe had its "place" in a divinely planned hierarchical order, which was pictured as a chain vertically extended. An object's "place" depended on the relative proportion of "spirit" and "matter" it contained--the less "spirit" and the more "matter," the lower down it stood. At the bottom, for example, stood various types of inanimate objects, such as metals, stones, and the four elements (earth, water, air, fire). Higher up were various members of the vegetative class, like trees and flowers. Then came animals; then humans; and then angels. At the very top was God. (Steppat: 1)

While the concept of nature expresses the *natural state* in the most well-known sense in the works of Shakespeare, it also contains examples of the *natural state* that Thomas Hobbes is trying to indicate in the relationship between the individual and the power. "Shakespeare depicts a breaking of hierarchical order by early modern rationalism and egalitarianism similar to that advertised by social contract theorists like Hobbes" (Schulman, 2014: 103). The connection with Hobbes in his works is not only an examination of the *state of nature* and the formation of the state; "the leviathan is cited a few times

in Shakespeare's dramas as a powerful, enormously strong, or quick sea monster, without any symbolism pointing toward the politico-mythical" (Schmitt, 1996: 24). The long-term lack of power (English Civil War, 1642-1651), which Shakespeare and Hobbes had witnessed and the effects of which they had to experience, and the impact that such civil wars had on the people, deeply shook the British society and disrupted the social order, causing many deaths. These authors, who were witnesses of their time, were not independent of internal confusion and wrote works that would make their mark on the present day. *Richard III*, one of the most striking works that existed in this period relating to this, shows the validity level of the principles emphasized by Thomas Hobbes to the audience acting with the *state of nature* present in it and through a series of intrigues for the sake of power.

4. *Richard III*

Richard III, whose source of inspiration and protagonist has had a bad reputation in the history of England in the time span from the past to the present, even standing out as the most vilified character, is among the early plays written by Shakespeare during his inexperience. The work, which can be considered as a reflection of the turbulent political events of the period, is basically depicted as a concrete portrait of the events taking place in the axis of seizing power and having power. Richard III, with his physically deformed body and his actions ranging from the murder he committed/had someone commit stands out as the figure that has been the subject of the most controversy and criticism in the history of England. Considered historically, *Richard III* is the sequel to Shakespeare's earlier plays, *Richard II* and *Henry VI*. In order to understand the play, one needs to know that the first work of the series *Richard II* presents "the death throes of feudal England and the birth of the modern nation-state ruled by a charismatic monarch" (Norton Anthology, 2012: 1168). The play revolves around Richard II's, Richard III's father, claim to the throne against Henry VI and how this action ignites the fuse for War of the Roses, which would last 30 years. On the basis of the play, Shakespeare shows us:

how to construct plays around the struggle for the soul of a protagonist, how to create theatrically compelling and subversive figures of wickedness, and how to focus attention on his characters' psychological, moral, and spiritual lives, as well as on their outward behaviour. (Norton Anthology, 2012: 1169)

Shakespeare's work is "generally based on accounts of English kings written by Raphael Holinshed and other sixteenth-century chroniclers" (Norton Anthology, 2012: 1166) and draws material from Thomas More's *Historie of King Richard the Third* (1513). In this work, Richard is defined as humpback, evil and bully with a funny and cynical attitude. However, this work of Shakespeare differs from other works in many ways. Richard III, who is good with words and depicted as "as a competent ruler by means of rhetoric" (Pudney, 2015: 165), reveals his persuasion ability over other characters. Considering the play superficially, Edward III is sick and is now experiencing the last bits of his life. The Duke of Gloucester (later Richard III) makes some intrigues and plans for the throne as Edward's death approaches because he is the last heir to the York dynasty and his older brother Clarence is in front of him. The first thing he needs to do is to eliminate him with cunning. In the first scene, it is impossible not to be astonished and amazed at Richard III, who screens his deformed body to marry Lady Anne, the wife of the son of the king who died from the Lancaster family and performs an impressive feat with his masterful speech. Richard executes his sons in the castle when the king dies and seizes the crown. When he seizes the throne and becomes king, a different Richard appears on the scene. He also causes the death of Lady Anne and then asks for Elizabeth's daughter's hand in marriage, but at that moment the war breaks out and Richard is defeated by Richmond.

5. *Richard III* in the Context of *State of Nature*

When the play is examined in detail, it is seen that the War of the Roses has ended, as can be seen from Richard's monologue on the first act of the play and Richard and His Brothers (York Dynasty) defeated the Lancaster dynasty. Edward became the new king. In this play, in which society is portrayed to be controlled by a sovereign power, it seems as though the formation of power which Hobbes' emphasized has occurred, but the concept of peace does not mean that any war that may occur during the reign of the current power will disappear completely because "*state of nature* is a state of war" (Merriam, 1906: 152). Hobbes explains this situation as follows:

And though sovereignty, in the intention of them that make it, be immortal; yet is it in its own nature, not only subject to violent death, by foreign war; but also through the ignorance, and passions of men, it hath in it, from the very institution, many seeds of a natural mortality, by intestine discord. (Hobbes, 1998: 147)

This thought is the strongest main element in the background of Richard III. Richard's monologue at the beginning of the work is of great importance in terms of providing support for the events that follow. As Hobbes emphasizes:

a man must take heed of words; which besides the signification of what we imagine of their nature, have a signification also of the nature, disposition, and interest of the speaker; such as are the names of virtues, and vices; for one man calleth wisdom, what another called fear; and one cruelty, what another justice; one prodigality, what another magnanimity; and one gravity, what another stupidity. (Hobbes, 1998: 27)

In the monologue part, the stern words that Richard utters about himself are an implication for the future and the echoes of the conspiracy designs that he will organise against the state are first felt here:

I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up
(And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them (Shakespeare, 1998: 703).

It would be appropriate to state the following statement of Hobbes on this ambitious complaint of Richard:

Sometimes the extraordinary and extravagant passion, proceedeth from the evil constitution of the organs of the body, or harm done them; and sometimes the hurt, and indisposition of the organs, is caused by the vehemence, or long continuance of the passion. (Hobbes, 1998: 49)

Here, Richard not only forms a basis for the conspiracy theories he designs in his mind by being backed by his physical condition, but also takes anarchist attitudes towards both God and the peaceful power. This situation awakens in mind Hobbes' concept of equality in relation to humanity's *natural state*. Rather than his argument in *Leviathan* that everyone is equal, the emphasis that human nature's existing shortcomings or plus aspects keep each other in balance. As Schulman points "location in a hierarchical chain of power and obligation no longer predetermines worth" (2014: 108). Thus, equate the differences with the *natural state* becomes almost concrete in Richard's character. Although

Richard's appearance of being humped and ugly (deformed) is displayed in almost all parts of the work, the fact that no one can outsmart

his intelligence shows parallelism to the idea of creating equality by taking it from the image of nature and giving it to his mind. Richard, who tries to break his older brother's superiority by using his intelligence, takes firm steps on this path. According to Hobbes: "the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he" (Hobbes, 1998: 82). As Hobbes argues, human nature tends to show cunning attitudes even in peace. And especially "they may attack to remove one as a potential future threat to themselves" (Kavka, 1983: 294). On the other hand, the laws created under the state of peace constitute an obstacle to the individual's wishes. "Although one may disapprove of a law privately, to translate that disapproval into a publicly opposed stance presumably invites, according to Hobbesian logic, the disruption of the political order" (King, 1974: 62). One of the biggest obstacles to Richard, who wants to be the king, is these laws. While laws are the biggest restrictive obstacle to doing what anyone wants, as soon as Richard's anarchy / civil war situation that he plans to create against this situation takes effect, all laws will become invalid and the state of war, or rather, humanity's *state of nature*, will be returned to. This is the situation where everyone at the core of humanity is at war against everyone. "By the right of nature Hobbes means the liberty each man has to do whatever is necessary to preserve himself from death or injury, and in the *state of nature* for an individual man this liberty is entirely without limit" (Bull, 1981: 723). Thus, the first plan of Richard, who ignores his bodily deformation by using his own head for the current lack of power which he will form as a basis for what he will do in the future, is to destroy the people who are likely to ascend the throne before him because he is the last heir to the throne. It is possible to see the first seeds of the projects Richard will make in this first monologue:

Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,
To set my brother Clarence and the King
In deadly hate the one against the other.

...

This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up,

About a prophecy which says that "G"

Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be. (Shakespeare, 1998: 703)

Hobbes' view for the prophecies that Richard uttered here would be a proper move: "Hobbes stresses neurological fallibility to counter religious threats to order: 'false Prophecies . . . by which crafty ambitious persons abuse the simple people', and without which 'men would be much more fitted . . . for civil Obedience'" (qtd. in Schulman, 2014: 105). Richard brings his conspiracy theories to life through prophecies that Clarence, who is the most likely person to succeed in the case of the king's death, will take the throne away from his brother King Edward, and things go exactly the way Richard wants. Richard, who wants to gain more strength and power, continues his fight, as if on the make. Michael Lessnoff refers to the search for power in his *Social Contract*:

Men are intrinsically power-seekers hints at their political predicament, for one form of power is power over other men. Human life is thus apt to be a struggle for power. But the predicament is enormously intensified by another aspect of human equality, that of body and mind. (Lessnoff, 1986: 50)

Richard's conspiracy theories relate to each other. The illness of King Edward is a foreshadowing to the current peaceful environment being a short-term one and to the possible war that might start in the case of the disappearance of the dominant power, as seen in Act 1 Scene 1 and its continuation since "it is a sovereign force that is essential to ensure a permanent environment. In the absence of a dominant power, the laws of nature fail to provide the necessary peace environment" (Kulak, 2014: 225-28) and thus "we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory" (Hobbes, 1998: 83). In the light of these concepts, Hobbes tries to explain the natural impulses / inherent impulses that lead people to war. Richard's instinct to compete, which started before his older brother died, can be interpreted in this way: In an individual who believes that he/she has an equal right with others on any subject, the instinct to compete to get this right takes over because "every man has a right to what he can get, and for just so long as he can keep it" (Merriam, 1906: 151). Hobbes bases this on the principle of equality. In his opinion:

From this equality of ability, ariseth equality of hope in the attaining of our ends. And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their end, (which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their delectation only,) endeavour to destroy, or subdue one another. (Hobbes, 1998: 83)

With the awareness that he has his share in the throne, Richard begins to realize his plans to create a state of mistrust among the brothers he previously designed in the monologue section because this distrust is one of the most obvious factors that drag people to war, according to Hobbes' principles. "Man, as a desiring but also a reasoning creature, must be of necessity preoccupied with the means of achieving his desires" (Lessnoff, 1986: 50). Richard, who knows this situation very well, continues his conspiracy theories about reaching power without slowing down. While the three basic concepts (competition, insecurity and honour) that exist in the human nature as mentioned by Hobbes are shaped like a mirror reflection in Richard, he manages to elude the very situation he created to compete with his brothers as well as to improve his status like a hot knife through butter. In connection with this, his reputation increases throughout the work in part to his cunning. Richard's intelligence that allows him to easily get rid of external dangers and abnormal physical appearance are strong enough to cover up his actions. "The passions that most of all cause the difference of wit, are principally, the more or less desire of power, of riches, of knowledge, and of honour" (Hobbes, 1998: 48). The concept of 'Fame' as emphasized by Hobbes also causes others to try to prove themselves in their attitudes, such as humiliation and exclusion, towards the individual, while at the same time it creates a distinct instinct for acts of violence. The idea that the person who wishes to overcome his / her deficiency is often inherently prone to violence to get rid of this situation or tends to hide it in some way is also seen in the character of Richard in Act 1 Scene 2 in the most striking way. Lady Anne, wife of Prince Edward (not the sick Edward in the first scene), the son of King Henry IV, who were defeated and massacred in the War of the Roses by Richard and his brothers, is Richard's first step in gaining fame:

Blush, blush, thou lump of foul deformity,

For 'tis thy presence that exhales this blood

From cold and empty veins, where no blood dwells.

Thy deeds, inhuman and unnatural,

Provokes this deluge most unnatural.

O God, which this blood mad'st, revenge his death! (Shakespeare, 1998: 705)

This scene is, in a sense, the starting point for the heaviest criticism due to the deterioration in Richard's appearance. How fame leads the individual towards violence can be understood by looking at the situations to which the characters who have made severe accusations against Richard have fallen.

According to Hobbes, because of their ability to reason, people are separated from other beings; so, the "natural relation of men, therefore; is competitive, and their competition has no natural limit" (Lessnoff, 1986: 50). Here, Shakespeare covers up his plans so much because of his *power of language* that the characters often fail to discern their situation. Lady Anne is one example of this. Although she bristles with rage against Richard at first, by accepting the offer to marry at the end, she not only makes her loyalty questioned but also puts herself in a ridiculous situation by wearing Richard's ring at her husband's funeral. Via Richard, Shakespeare shows that "his immense vocabulary bears witness to an uncanny ability to absorb terms from a wide range of pursuits and to transform them into intimate registers of thought and feeling" (Norton Anthology, 2012: 1169). Using this ability, Shakespeare portrays Richard as a confident and playful person, activating his plot through Lady Anne:

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?

Was ever woman in this humour won?

I'll have her, but I will not keep her long. (Shakespeare, 1998: 707)

In this context, it is likely that Lady Anne acted, in a way, with the self-prevention instinct emphasized by Hobbes, guessing, with a certain awareness, the things that could befall her in the case of losing her queenship. Namely, "the desire for self-preservation is being explained as a function of our fundamental nature as pleasure pursuers and pain avoiders" (Hampton, 1987: 17). Knowing that she will remain a widow with the death of the king, the queenship (power) she will lose pushes her to think. Hobbes calls it a desire for might and glory. How this desire for power and glory/fame shapes the characters is especially revealed in Act 1, Scene 3. Richard, who does not overlook a worried Elizabeth, sneakily attracts all the attention to her. As Hobbes put it, "when the sovereign power ceaseth, crime also ceaseth: for where there is no such power, there is no protection to be had from the law" (Hobbes, 1998: 45). While other characters have not yet realized the dialogue between Elizabeth and Richard, Margaret, who quietly listens to them, appears on the stage with her lost fame and dignity. Since Margaret has experienced all these situations beforehand, her predictions with her sharp tongue about the things to come are witnessed on the stage. In parallel, Hobbes states "by how much one man has more experience of things past, than another; by so much also he is more prudent, and his expectations the seldomer fail him" (Hobbes, 1998: 18). Margaret has a deep feeling of hatred and grudge towards what she lost due to the feeling of being a queen and her willingness to compete, and she expresses this explicitly in her sentences. Being aware of the ambitions Richard is chasing, she warns others, but her having lost her dignity causes her warnings to be ignored. As Kavka states:

For a universal state of war to exist, it is not enough that anticipation be the most reasonable strategy, it must also be believed so by all who do not wish to fight for other reasons, and most must be aware that others so believe it" (1983: 5).

Other characters may not notice Margaret's predictions. So, she finds the cure she is looking for in cursing all the characters that harm her.

In his review of the content of speech, Hobbes expresses the abuse of it by saying "when by words they declare that to be their will, which is not" (Hobbes, 1998, 21). Many times throughout the work, Richard manages to conceal himself in his speeches with his ability to hide metaphors and bury his thoughts. Just like stressed in Norton Anthology, Shakespeare, by means of Richard, "had a seemingly boundless capacity to generate metaphors, and he was virtually addicted to word play" (Norton

Anthology, 2012: 1169). The fact that the characters realize the situation after the ship has sailed speeds up Richard's plans. One of the most obvious examples of this is revealed for the first time in Act 1 Scene 4, where his statements about his brother Clarence, as if he were supporting him, were in fact the opposite. Two murderers hired to speed up Clarence's death are warned by Richard not to believe Clarence's fancy sentences before they arrive at the Tower. This scene shows situations involving the spiritual states of several people related to conscience, past and future events. Although Clarence's dreams convey some messages about past or future events, this means, according to Hobbes' theory:

Sometimes a man seeks what he hath lost; and from that place, and time, wherein he misses it, his mind runs back, from place to place, and time to time, to find where, and when he had it; that is to say, to find some certain, and limited time and place, in which to begin a method of seeking. (Hobbes, 1998: 17)

Clarence's dream, which arouses his fear, offers him some traces of both the past and the future, but he cannot recognize it as "the source of human misery is pride" (Martinich, 1992: 74). Despite being in a victim position, Clarence is still very much proud, regardless of his situation; the murderers answer "Nor you, as we are, loyal" to Clarence's line "But not, as I am, royal" (Shakespeare, 1998: 712). In Act 2 Scene 1, Richard begins to spread his theories with the seeds of evil in his soul to large areas, collectively affecting the royal family. The sick King Edward, with the awareness of the hatred within his family, gathers the notables of the family to maintain lasting peace in case something happens to him. As Hobbes points out, "the passions that incline men to peace, are fear of death" (Hobbes, 1998: 86). On the other hand, "each man seeks, and seeks only, to preserve and to strengthen himself. A concern for continued well-being is both the necessary and the sufficient ground of human action" (Gauthier, 2000: 7). In this context, Richard's cunning and anarchist structure comes into play in preventing the peace situation that will occur. As Hobbes emphasizes, "a kingdom divided in itself cannot stand" (1998: 121). This idea of division, which starts with the possibility of the death of the king, lasts until Richard comes with bogus peace statements. Richard pretends that the person who caused Clarence's death is King Edward, eliminating the current atmosphere of peace and this causes the end for the regretful King Edward (our last peak at Edward on stage). An example of Hobbes' idea of "homo homini lupus" that he emphasizes the selfish nature of humanity can be seen in Act 2 Scene 2. Children crying at Clarence's death, Elizabeth's announcement of the death of King Edward and the dialogues that follow show that the characters are, in general, focused on what they lose after death rather than this specific event of death. Even though the Duchess of York, who first appeared on this scene, was deeply saddened by the death of her two children and realized that Richard was behind it, this does not change much. Now the situation that Hobbes emphasizes begins when Richard enters the stage: "after his decease may elect anew, or else the commonwealth dieth, and dissolveth with him (king), and returneth to the condition of war" (1998: 128). With the ongoing conspiracy scenarios, Buckingham is seen as a supporter of Richard. This time, in the duo's plan, Prince Edward, who will take the throne upon the death of King Edward, is the one to be eliminated. What the public thinks about this issue finds an answer in the continuation of the scene. Having heard the news that the king is dead, citizens become aware of the chain of disaster that will be experienced. Citizens are in a state of fear and anxiety, as individual security, which is the sole purpose of the people, cannot be provided by natural law in the event of war. On Act 2, Scene 4, Richard goes so far that he tries to remove every single obstacle in front of him one by one. Targeted in this conflict are not criminals "but the harm done to innocents in war, not so" (Hobbes, 1998: 210). On Act 3, Scene 1, Richard, who meets Prince Edward upon his arrival, realizes, after sending him to the castle, as he had previously planned, how strong the intelligence of the young prince is from the dialogues between the two, and discusses with Buckingham on whether or not they can take Hasting and his companion Derby Stanley to their side to further speed up the operation of their plans. In a sense, promises are a tactic used by Richard to

accelerate his campaign, such as the one he makes to Buckingham about Hereford. On Act 3 Scene 2, a messenger knocking on Hasting's door brings him a message from Derby Stanley. Seeing that a wild boar has broken his helmet in his dream, Stanley conveys to him that he feels that there will be things against Hasting in the board meeting the next day. While this warning ends with Hasting's sending off the messenger with his comfortable attitudes, when Catsby, who comes immediately after the messenger, presents his implications to Hasting about Richard's ascension to the throne, the final countdown starts.

The realisation of Margaret's curse is literally seen on Act 3 Scene 3, and in the following scenes, when Queen Elizabeth's relatives Rivers, Gray and Vaughan are taken to the gallows. Later in Act 3 Scene 5, we see the last of Lord Hastings. Murder schemes and conspiracy theories that are not interrupted are seen in the dialogue between Richard and Buckingham on Act 3 Scene 5.

Buckingham: Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian,

Speak, and look back, and pry on every side,

Tremble and start at wagging of a straw,

Intending deep suspicion. Ghastly looks (Shakespeare, 1998, 723).

While this duo is shaped as a reflection of each other, with the cunning that Hobbes defines as "distorted wisdom" In order to prevent Prince Edward from taking the throne, they make up the lie that King Edward was actually an illegal person and that his mother had him illegitimately. The words of the Scrivener, who prepares a report on the death of Hasting, are evidence of how things work in a *state of nature* without power:

Scrivener: Here's a good world the while! Who is so gross

That seeth not this palpable device?

Yet who so bold but says he sees it not?

Bad is the world, and all will come to naught,

When such ill-dealing must be seen in thought (Shakespeare, 1998,724).

Sommerville approaches Hobbes' view, who suggests that individuals can resort to violence to ensure their safety, saying, "since peace is unattainable as long as people exercise the right of nature - the right to do absolutely anything that they think conduces to their preservation" (1992: 31). All women realise the seriousness of the situation on Act 4 Scene 1 and seem to have experienced their upcoming endings with an immense bellow. The later dialogues in the play prove that this fear is not unfounded. This time, Richard asks Buckingham to kill Prince Edward to fully secure himself, but there are so many people who have been murdered so far that even Buckingham hesitates for a moment. As Hobbes says:

Because the constitution of a man's body is in continual mutation; it is impossible that all the same things should always cause in him the same appetites, and aversions: much less can all men consent, in the desire of almost any one and the same object. (1998: 35)

An instant pause of Buckingham causes Richard to come up with a death plan for him, too. Although he tries to continue his conspiracy theories, a new Richard, one that is constantly hesitating and can no longer make reasonable decisions, emerges after this scene. Now he must execute his plans on his own. In addition to plans to kill Lady Anne, he finds a killer and ends Prince Edward's life. Now advancing his plans at a rattling pace, Richard attempts to speed things up as if he knew the situations about himself and the things to come. For this, he wants to marry Elizabeth's daughter and guarantee

his place on the throne and convinces Elizabeth through a long talk about it. Now the rot set in for him as well. After every man he hears that he has lost, even though he tries not to reflect it, we see a Richard whose level of tension and fear is fast increasing. This is easily seen from his long conversation with Elizabeth because he gradually loses his ability to persuade. He takes on a character who loses his power and no longer frightens the people around him. With the logic of *only the strong survive* in the society, it is seen that even the men who are now with Richard are on Richmond's side in Act 4 Scene 5 because "the greatest 'Power' is "feare" (Ward, 1993: 105).

The Richard's downfall scenes are clearly seen on Act 5. Of course, Scene 3 is undoubtedly one of the most striking scenes on this act. This time Richard, whose sentences begin to lose meaning gradually, is on the battlefield, and the ghosts of the people he murdered put him through the wringer. Hobbes refers to this situation as follows; "For the impression made by such things as we desire, or fear, is strong, and permanent, or, (if it cease for a time,) of quick return: so strong it is sometimes, as to hinder and break our sleep" (Hobbes, 1998: 16-17). Although the character constantly strives to sleep, "for he that taketh pains, and industriously lays himself to sleep, in case any uncouth and exorbitant fancy come unto him, cannot easily think it other than a dream" (Hobbes, 1998,13-14). Having trouble understanding what is real and what is not, Richard is left alone with the ghosts of the people he killed. While the ghosts tell Richard that he will lose the war, they also tell Richmond that he will win. Richard admits for the first time that he is afraid. Enraged by a dream, he is now completely losing his mental capacity. When he comes to the battlefield, nature smiles at Richmond with all its brightness and warmth, while Richard has a sullen face. Their speech to their soldiers amid the battlefield shows how scared Richard is, though he strives to cover it, and how self-assured Richmond feels, speaking with such confidence. Losing his horse, Richard, as if the fears he repressed have now come to light, feels the need to utter a desperate cry in the face of such a situation.

Richard: I think there be six Richmonds in the field,

Five have I slain today instead of him.

A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse! (Shakespeare, 1998: 741).

As Richard surrenders to fear, Richmond's situation can be explained as follows; "fear of destruction by rivals and enemies, leading to what Hobbes calls 'anticipation' - that is, attack as the best form of self-defence" (Lessnoff, 1986: 51-52). Because the characters we are accustomed to hearing from the very beginning of the work are on the side of Richmond after Richard starts seeing red and they start to make every effort to create a safe state. "On Hobbes's account, fear is a major motive impelling people in the *state of nature* to make the covenant by which a sovereign is set up" (Norberto, 1993: 31). What is witnessed in the last scene is Richard's defeat and Richmond's victory. "Now civil wounds are stopped, peace lives again" (Shakespeare, 1998: 741).

Hobbes argues that the *natural state* of man is a state of war and that he must surrender himself to an absolute power to get out of this situation. According to him, "human beings [...] are creatures who can live in peace only if we subject ourselves to an absolute sovereign" (Hampton, 1987: 5). The play reveals how frightening the *state of nature* is through many characters who experience it. Perhaps the most distinctive comment regarding the play, Hobbes states:

For of them that are the first movers in the disturbance of commonwealth, (which can never happen without a civil war) very few are left alive long enough, to see their new designs established: so that the benefit of their crimes, redoundeth to posterity, and such as would least have wished it: which argues they were not so wise, as they thought they were. And those that deceive upon hope of not being observed, do commonly deceive themselves, (the

darkness in which they believe they lie hidden, being nothing else but their own blindness;) and are no wiser than children, that think all hid, by hiding their own eyes.” (1998: 197)

At the end of the work, everyone stands next to Richmond to get rid of this *state of nature*. This is a proof of the validity level of the principles mentioned by Hobbes.

6. Conclusion

The civil wars that have been going on throughout history have not only weakened the public but also allowed an external force to eliminate the countries where the civil war broke out. In addition to the fact that examples of this are seen in the history scene, this situation, which has an important place in literature and philosophy, is a subject that has been highly discussed by important writers and thinkers as a condition to be learned in terms of both cause and effect. According to him, the *state of nature* is one of the worst situations in humanity because “the natural condition of mankind is thus one of mutual enmity” (Ryan, 2018: 645). For this reason, he explained many developments that could be experienced within the contractual ruling structure, which he claims to exist, in his work titled *Leviathan*. In this context, Shakespeare reveals in *Richard III* how the state can be made defenceless and lost by people's ambitions and passions, both internally and externally and even if it is a state established with strong difficulties, and that human nature is always prone to cunning. In the framework of the *state of nature* proposed by Thomas Hobbes, this work, based on Richard's natural structure and feelings, shows how Richard prepared a series of murder chains and dragged his country into civil war with his cunning knowledge under the name of crooked wisdom. As a result, that the state has become open to external dangers and collapse is witnessed. In this case, intelligence is also an emotion in the essence of human nature that pushes it to destruction, just like Richard, who uses it to hide the disfigurement in his body. Thinking that he had an equal right to the throne, this destruction, which he continued until he left not a single person to defend himself, ultimately resulted in his own downfall.

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