bring a wall on stage. Again he says that "some man or other must present Wall," and when they later perform their play the wall is duly personated by the tinker Snout.

The anxiety of Shakespeare's men to demonstrate their mastery of theatrical terminology is of course part of the comedy. But the passage reminds us that, in drawing up the same terminology in Levinian, Hobbes was merely "translating," as he puts it, a range of concepts familiar in the playhouse to encompass "any Representor of speech and action, as well in Tragedy, as in Theatres." The outcome, as he adds, is that in his theory "a Person is the same that an Actor is, both on the Stage and in common Conversation." As Hobbes's theory continually reminds us, "person is, in Latin, the ordinary word for a theatrical mask."

The term attributed was likewise a familiar piece of legal terminology, and was evidently chosen by Hobbes with some care. The Latin verb attribuere had always been used to convey the sense that something should be construed as belonging to someone. Furthermore, there was always the implication - as in the case of attributing an anonymous text to a rightful author - that the responsibility for a work may sometimes be hard to assign, and that appearances may often be deceptive. These considerations had already been highlighted by the ancient theorists of forensic eloquence. They had made it a principle that, whenever the wording of a text is in question in a court of law, you must seek to cast doubt on whatever attribution of meaning and authorship have been made by your adversaries. The parallel with attributed action is clear; while it may be evident who performed a given action, it may not be evident who should count as its true author, and hence as responsible for its consequences. These were exactly the parallels that Hobbes was concerned to bring out.

With the introduction of the key concept of an attributed action, Hobbes comes face to face with the principal problem he needs to address. What is its status as the valid representation of one person's words or actions by someone else, such that it will be proper to say of an action performed by a representative that it ought to be attributed to the person - or thing or collective - being represented? What, in a word, distinguishes representation from misrepresentation?

Hobbes grappled with this problem in every recursion of his civil science, but it was only in Levinian that he arrived at an answer that he seemed to find satisfactory. Once again his solution wears an air of remarkable simplicity, but it constitutes one of the most important theoretical advances he made between the publication of De Cae in 1642 and

Levinian nearly a decade later, and arguably embodies his most original contribution to the theory of the state. His suggestion is that an action can be validly attributed to one person on the basis of its performance by a representative if and only if the representative has in some way been duly authorised, and hence instructed and commissioned, to perform the action concerned. The crucial concept is accordingly that of an authorisation, and more specifically that of being an author and hence in a position to grant authority. These terms make no appearance in The Elements or De Cae. Although Hobbes gives some consideration in these texts to the question of where authority may be said to reside, he never considers how it comes to be authorised. In Levinian, by contrast, he deploys the concepts of authorisation and of "being an author" to furnish the entire theoretical grounding for his theory of the legitimate state.

This terminology is introduced at an early stage in chapter 16 of Levinian. Hobbes first employs these terms when considering the sense in which we can speak of actions, by analogy with possessions, as 'owned' by particular individuals:

Then the Person is the Actor; and he that owneth his words and actions, is the AUTHOR: In which case the Actor acts by Authority. For that in speaking of goods and possessions, is called an Owner, and in Latin Dominus, in Greek εκηνετας, speaking of Actions, is called an Author.14

Although Hobbes made several changes in the Latin version of Levinian to his theory about the person of the state, his theory about authorisation remained unchanged.

12.8 Hobbes 1651, p. 117.

14.8 Note that 'stated' need not mean 'explicitly': implicit authorisation is a possibility for Hobbes.

15.8 Hobbes does not say that the representative banner be authorized by the person being represented. As we shall see in section III, he needs to leave space for the fact that this will sometimes be impossible in principle.

16.8 Hobbes 1645, ch. 12, p. 240 and ch. 11, p. 157. These passages explicitly invoke this terminology. On Hobbes's concept of authorisations see Copp 1989, pp. 329-334, a discussion to which I am particularly indebted.

17.8 On 'authors' and 'authority' in this period see Elyot 1970.

18.8 My discussion is mainly confined to the basic case in which an unrelated person or body of persons directly or indirectly authorised by another to act on behalf of that other acts on behalf of the third party. Hobbes adds many possible refinements and qualifications (authorisations: Hobbes 1645, ch. 16, p. 125; authority by authority by consent: Hobbes 1645, ch. 18, p. 141). A full account of Hobbes's theory would need to take account of these refinements, but in the meantime these are enough to give an impression of the basic case. One of that Hobbes does know: Another is that he is not always successful in explaining how the refinements fit into the basic case. As we shall see, our conclusion is that sometimes there is insufficient textual basis for discussing these.

19.8 Hobbes 1645, ch. 16, p. 112.