I am grateful for the time and attention my commentators have taken in providing their comments on my book. I shall first provide a summary of what are the main arguments of my book before I attempt to respond to my critics. This summary will also hopefully set the terms of the debate with my critics in a way that will allow those who have not yet read my book yet to see how the book connects, or does not, to the criticisms. But I am grateful that these critics either agree with me or choose to direct their strongest criticisms at what is, by their own admission, not central to my main arguments of the book.

My book, *Limiting Leviathan: Hobbes on Law and International Affairs*, attempts to provide a comprehensive view of Hobbes's legal philosophy and then to extrapolate to what Hobbes might have said about disputes in international law today. Hobbes's legal philosophy is often dismissed today in one of two ways. First this dismissal focuses on Hobbes's claim that “before the names of Just and Unjust can have place, there must be some coercive Power to compel men equally to the performance of their Covenants.” (Leviathan, Ch. 15, para. 3.) And since the sovereign has made no covenant, his or her actions can be neither just nor unjust. It is thus often concluded that Hobbes espoused a very naïve legal positivism, where there was no overlap between law and morality. Or second those who dismiss Hobbes's legal philosophy look to his main work on this topic, his *Dialogue Between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England*, and claim that this work was written at the end of Hobbes's life when he was probably infirm and the work is not worth serious study. I give reasons to reject both of these views and argue that Hobbes had quite a subtle legal philosophy that was indeed best articulated in some of the things he argued for in his *Dialogue*.

In response to the first of the dismissals, I argue that justice is not the main moral concept that overlaps with legality for Hobbes, or at least not in the restrictive way Hobbes understood justice. Instead, I argue that equity is the main legal concept that supplies what conceptions of justice are normally thought to provide, namely, a moral basis for criticizing and limiting the
sovereign law-making power. In his *Dialogue*, Hobbes shows that he understands equity as it was employed in the court system of England at the time he wrote. The courts of equity, especially the Chancery Court were a place to which claimants could come when they were frustrated by the rulings of the King’s Bench or common law courts. These latter courts were bound to rule on the basis of narrow justice, understood in terms of the existing statute and common law. But the Chancery Court could rule on the basis of wider concerns of fairness, especially procedural fairness.

On the basis of his understanding of the courts of equity, Hobbes argued that while it was true that the sovereign could not commit injustice, the sovereign could commit iniquity. In both *Leviathan* and the *Dialogue*, Hobbes spends time setting out what specifically the sovereign is prohibited from doing by the constraints of equity. The sovereign is to make good laws, laws that are needed by the people, not laws that are superfluous, contradictory, retroactive, secret, or overly limiting of the liberty of subjects. These moral and structural limits on sovereign law-making are, I argue, similar to the rule of law constraints that Lon Fuller developed fifty years ago.

Fuller argued that the most significant aspects of the rule of law come from what he called procedural natural law. Natural law constraints on sovereignty are structural in the sense that if laws are promulgated that violate certain rule of law, or procedural requirements the law is both a bad law and potentially not law at all. These procedural limits on sovereign law making have a moral character to them insofar as the principle of equity is itself one of the natural laws for Hobbes, and natural laws are the sum total of what morality encompasses for Hobbes. As he says in *Leviathan*, “the true doctrine of the laws of nature, is the true moral philosophy.” (*Leviathan*, Ch. 15, penultimate para.)

As many scholars have argued, the laws of nature for Hobbes are both central to his projects and also very difficult to figure out. The laws of nature are both moral and prudential. The laws of nature are in one sense grounded in Hobbes’s views of human nature, but the laws of nature also have normative content. Arguments that begin from nature and end with something normative are of course very tricky, but not unusual. We can recall Aristotle’s practical syllogism that has premises about human nature and end in a conclusion that is “an action.” Hobbes, on my interpretation, thinks that nature, and especially human nature, is important to study so we can figure out how fellow humans are likely to act or react. Part of what it is reasonable for us to do has to do with what we can expect others to do. Studying human nature is one important part of this enterprise. But in addition, we need a conception of what it is good to strive for, and this is not merely biological, or psychological. The chief good for