CHAPTER 2

Leviathan *(1651–1654)*

CONTEXT

In several accounts Hobbes gives the impression that he had been composing the English version of his political theory from the middle of 1646, but the bulk of the evidence suggests that he was actually working on *De Corpore* between 1646 and 1649.[1] Hobbes appears to have started work on *Leviathan* in late 1649, putting aside the manuscript of *De Corpore*, which was nearly ready for publication. Hobbes's reasons for doing this are not entirely clear, but circumstantial evidence suggests that the reason might have been both political and controversial. Quentin Skinner's original thought that the new work was a contribution to the allegiance controversy fits chronologically with the debate over the engagement and theoretically with Hobbes's sharpened emphasis in *Leviathan* upon the conditional quality of obedience (specifically its relationship to protection). The problem comes in characterising Hobbes's relationship to this debate, particularly because the arguments speaking most directly to the question of allegiance are to be found in the short 'Review and Conclusion' that Hobbes added to the end of the work. Commentators have noted tensions between the argument in the body of the text and the political message contained in the 'Review', and this has generated considerable debate as to the extent to which *Leviathan* itself was genuinely a *pièce d'occasion*, and a contribution to the engagement controversy.[2] It is a testimony to the open quality of Hobbes's work that the textual evidence has been used to support almost diametrically opposed but nevertheless plausible interpretations.

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[1] K. Schuhmann and G. A. J. Rogers, *Introduction to Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan* (Bristol, 2003), pp. 10–11.

[2] For the most recent survey of the various positions, see K. Hoekstra, 'The *de facto* Turn in Hobbes's Political Philosophy', in L. Foisneau and T. Sorell (eds.), *Leviathan after 350 years* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 33–74; but see also G. Burgess, 'Contexts for the Writing and Publication of Hobbes's Leviathan', *History of Political Thought* 11: 4 (1990), pp. 675–702.

For some modern readers the bulk of the text appears to be written in a distinctively monarchic and therefore Royalist mood, and the 'Review', with its case for submission to the *de facto* power, represents a last-minute repackaging of the work as an engagement tract. At the other extreme, historians and philosophers have also suggested that Hobbes's case for submission is present in the body of the text (particularly chapter 21), and that in fact the 'Review' with its rejection of some engager arguments, actually seems to reel in some of the main text's radicalism.

The very fact that *Leviathan* seems to defy a straightforward reading is of some importance in approaching the problem: the interpretative static may well reflect Hobbes's intentions. Hobbes was very concerned about the public appearance of his work, and particularly keen to avoid its automatic association with the cause of Royalism in particular rather than sovereignty in general. This had been a feature of *De Cive*, which deliberately eschewed local politics in favour of lofty science; Hobbes's anxiety over Sorbière's intervention in the title page made his concern about the appearance of his work as a Royalist tract explicit. Hobbes had feared for his life after his political intervention in 1640, and clearly wanted to avoid being labelled when such labels could be extremely dangerous. His cause was increasingly the cause of peace and not necessarily any particular political grouping, and this may be an important reason why we should perhaps give up trying to pigeonhole Hobbes as essentially a supporter of specific factions, be they hardline Louvre group Royalists or potential sovereigns like Cromwell.[3] The fact that Hobbes's philosophical contribution *could* speak to the political agendas of all parties, as it might have to, may well be significant.

Hobbes had even more reason to ensure that this was the case in 1649, with the Royalist cause at a very low ebb and the elderly philosopher becoming increasingly isolated in Paris.[4] Hobbes had often talked of returning home in his correspondence and it was clearly on his mind in 1647. In May 1648 he had written to the Earl of Devonshire suggesting that it was still too dangerous for him to do so.[5] After the execution of Charles I the possibility looked more plausible and in September 1649 he wrote to Gassendi that he was looking after himself 'for my return to England, should it happen by any chance'.[6] Hobbes evidently felt that a return home might be on the cards, not only for him, but also for other exiles. This is surely one important reason why it might have seemed appropriate, in the autumn of 1649, to start work on an English version of his political theory designed to contribute to the pacification of the country, and showing into the bargain how it might be legitimate for former loyal supporters of the Royalist cause to subject themselves to a new political authority. Such a position was not inconsistent with Hobbes's ambiguous 'Royalism' to date and did not require any opportunistic theoretical deviation on Hobbes's part. As *De Cive* 7.18 made clear, once 'a commonwealth has fallen into the power of enemies and resistance is impossible, it is recognised that the previous holder of *sovereign authority* has already lost it'.[7] The same section made it clear that individuals could also be released from their obligation to their former sovereign, either by permission or command. It had always been a part of his political theory; as Bramhall and Hyde had noted with distaste, *De Cive* was a compounder's charter.

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[3] Although for a different view see J. Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford, 2005).

[4] N. Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 19–20.

[5] *CTH*, I, p. 170. [6] Ibid., p. 179.

So Hobbes had plenty of reasons to ensure that the body text of *Leviathan* was not univocally Royalist, but this leads us back to the puzzle offered by the 'Review and Conclusion', where Hobbes on some accounts rolls back his radicalism, and on others, offers a more striking legitimation of submission to the new regime. There can be no doubt that the 'Review' is intended as an intervention in the political debate over engagement. Hobbes himself refers to the fact that several books on the subject had crucially got their argument wrong, specifically over the point in time at which a subject becomes obliged to a conqueror. Although it is true that Hobbes offers an argument as to how individuals could submit to a new authority, his answer reiterated the fact that individuals only become obliged when they were no longer protected by the previous sovereign, as he had argued in chapter 21, and when they have, crucially, consented to be the subject of their conqueror. Hobbes's more stringent criteria for legitimate submission, together with his additional law of nature, requiring men to '*protect in Warre, the Authority, by which he himself is protected in time of Peace*', do seem to speak to a more cautious account of submission.

The reason for these clarifications may have something to do with both the changing political circumstances that developed during the writing of *Leviathan*, and the way that Hobbes's theory was being read in England during the period immediately before the book's publication. What changed politically was the revival of Royalist hopes in the forging of a deal with the Presbyterian Scots. In June 1650 Charles II had left for

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[7] Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, p. 101. See also Johan Sommerville's comments in 'Lofty Science and Local Politics', in T. Sorell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1996), at p. 263.

Scotland to renew the military campaign against the republic.[8] Hobbes was already a long way through *Leviathan*. In May Payne reported to Sheldon that he had completed thirty-seven chapters. With a Royalist army in the field, the political situation now included a scenario that Hobbes had not explicitly addressed. In addition Hobbes's public image had suddenly become very complicated as a result of the polemical use of his work. As we saw, Hobbes initially figured in the political debate as a slightly inconsistent Royalist, associated with a Diggesian theory of rights. We know that Hobbes had been worried about being taken for a Royalist, and this fact may well have played a part in his decision to offer a much less overtly Royalist argument in *Leviathan* from the outset. However, as Ascham, but particularly Nedham realised, the *de facto* strain in Hobbes's earlier work could be used to legitimate the new regime. With *De Corpore Politico* now put to service as an engagement tract and extracts from it adorning *Mercurius Politicus*, Hobbes found himself described not only as an apologist for the Commonwealth, but also associated with a crude form of 'might-makes-right' *de facto*ism based purely upon conquest alone. The consequences of this were problematic for Hobbes on political and conceptual levels. Politically it was being argued that his theory necessarily legitimated the revolution and supported the claims of the Rump at a time when Charles II was actively seeking to restore his authority. The dangers of being associated with the views of the engagers were made abundantly clear when Ascham was murdered in Spain (probably on the orders of Hyde) in June 1650. Conceptually Hobbes's work was being aligned with accounts that argued that the mere fact of conquest by itself created an obligation to obey (in Ascham's case) and even legitimacy (Nedham). The problem here had been posed in Bramhall and Hyde's responses to *De Cive*: at what point did conquest generate a new right, and what sort of right would it be? This is precisely the objection that Hobbes deals with in the 'Review', in which he distances himself from the various species of argument with which his work was now associated and clarified his position to speak to the new political circumstances.

Hobbes points out that conquest alone cannot create a right, which could only come from consent. But individuals could only consent to a conqueror when their previous obligation was at an end (i.e. that the sovereign was no longer protecting them) and when, as chapter 21 had stressed, 'the means of his life is in the Guards and Garrisons of the

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[8] Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*, pp. 322–3.

Enemy'.[9] Here the individual has no alternative but to consent, thus, on Hobbes's admittedly unusual understanding of consent, generating legitimate authority and a full obligation requiring the subject to obey. But Hobbes was keen to point out that this did not mean that Royalist soldiers, still benefiting from the protection of Charles II, could legitimately desert their sovereign until all of Hobbes's stipulations had been met: '. . . he hath no liberty to submit to a new Power, as long as the old one keeps the field, and giveth him means of subsistence, either in his Armies, or Garrisons.'[10] The extra law of nature made it clear that individuals were not at liberty to desert their sovereign at will, a construction that both Bramhall and Hyde had put on Hobbes's work. The only individuals who were free of their previous obligations were those who, in line with *De Cive*, had done all that they could to defend the sovereign, but who now found themselves at the enemy's mercy. Hobbes made it clear that this was in no way to legitimate the actions of those who had rebelled in the first place. As he explained in the 'Review', any legitimacy produced by conquest had nothing at all to do with the justness of the cause of the conquest. Hobbes's argument is a typically Janus-faced lesson for all parties involved in the debate; writers like Ascham and Nedham are mistaken to believe that they can build a legitimate and thus stable political community upon the fact of conquest alone; fact could only be converted to right by some account of consent. For the Royalists, Hobbes made it clear that his theory was a good deal stickier in terms of obligation than its current usage might suggest. It certainly did not warrant rebellion or desertion from the Royalist cause unless that cause was entirely defeated (as it had seemed to be in 1649).[11] Just as he had distanced his theory from an automatic association with the claims of Royalists in the main body of the text, so in the 'Review' he made it clear that his theory did not provide a simple endorsement of the Rump. Ironically, Hobbes's polemical intervention in the 'Review' may well have been designed to extricate himself and his theory from the mire of association with practical politics and the uses to which his work had been put.

Restoring the political indeterminacy of the text would, of course, come at a price, and the puzzlement over Hobbes's political identity that continues to this day was its immediate consequence. But at the same time it was a strategy that would allow the core ideas of Hobbes's theory to remain relevant to whichever group or faction eventually managed to consolidate its grip upon power.[12] It is certain that Hobbes did not see his position as being incompatible with Royalism, as his presentation of a manuscript of *Leviathan* to Charles II would show. But, as we shall see, when Hobbes was denied the protection of his sovereign, he had no qualms about submitting to the new government in England. He had done what he could, and now his own obligation was at an end.

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[9] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 484. [10] Ibid., p. 485.

[11] Just to reinforce the conservative qualities of his own position, Hobbes devotes some space in the Review to rejecting Ascham's radical thought (based upon a reading of the Jewish *Jus zealatorum*) that individuals were always able to exercise their natural rights. Hobbes argues that such an argument is based upon a misreading of scripture, which suggests that the use of this particular right was always circumscribed by law.

THE ARGUMENTS OF *LEVIATHAN*

On first inspection, *Leviathan* appears to be a radically different beast to Hobbes's previous political works, most notably in terms of presentation, but also in terms of the arguments developed, particularly the discussions of theology that characterise books three and four. Nevertheless, the differences conceal practical and conceptual continuities that should not be underestimated; Hobbes's unusually systematic thought does seem to exhibit a surprising amount of structural continuity, and what at first appear to be decisive theoretical departures often turn out to be elaborations, extensions or clarifications of initial principles.

The new English work decisively established its author's scientific credentials by combining material from the *Elements of Law* and what would become *De Corpore* in the first twelve chapters, offering a miniature prefatory version of his broader philosophical programme. The political and ethical theory was largely taken from *De Cive* with a few alterations. For example, Hobbes left out the material that originally constituted chapter 4 of *De Cive*, which explained exactly how natural law could be identified in scripture. This was significant inasmuch as Hobbes, having raised a doubt about the obligatory quality of natural law at the end of chapter 3, had quelled it by suggesting that we can know that it is in fact obligatory because it is contained in scripture. A similar formulation is left at the end of chapter 15, but the chapter that demonstrated the point had now been removed. The most significant technical alteration to the argument came with the addition of chapter 16 of *Leviathan*, in which Hobbes introduced his theory of representation and personation for the first time, to explain how many could, paradoxically, be one. This argument paved the way for the latest recension of his contract theory, in which Hobbes eliminated the thought that the contract was a two-stage process in which individuals came together as a society and then established a sovereign authority. The new version of the theory offered a one-stage process whereby individuals accept the sovereign as their representative, thus eliminating the thought that there could be a form of political community prior to the establishment of sovereignty. This was the theory so dramatically illustrated in the frontispiece of *Leviathan*, i.e. that the only sense in which the people can be considered to be a community is when the sovereign represents that community.[13] More controversially, Hobbes also saw the argument as a way of making sense of the doctrine of the Trinity, in that he argued that God could also be, and had been, represented three times, by Moses, by Christ and the Holy Spirit in the church. For many readers, making sense of the Trinity at the price of making Moses one of its persons would be one of the most astonishing and novel moves that Hobbes would make.

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[12] See J. Sommerville's argument in 'Lofty Science and Local Politics', p. 267.

The heterodoxy of chapter 16 set the tone for the most extraordinary features of the new text and that was its treatment of ecclesiology and theology in Parts 3 and 4. Much of these sections had their roots in what Hobbes had written in *De Cive*, but even here there are moments where Hobbes seems to go a lot further than the argument offered in the earlier work. In terms of ecclesiology, *De Cive* had at least appeared to leave *some* sort of role for the church in terms of questions such as the interpretation of scripture, ordination and the exercise of ecclesiastical duties. In *Leviathan* Hobbes simply didn't bother with the superficial nods to traditional Anglicanism and stated starkly that the sovereign authorised the interpretation of scripture, the ordination of clerics and could exercise ecclesiastical functions as supreme pastor. As some commentators have pointed out, such views had been latent in Hobbes's work ever since the *Elements of Law*, but it was only in *Leviathan* that Hobbes made explicit what had been hitherto implicit in his carefully framed arguments.[14] Although Hobbes couched his critique of clerical power as an assault upon Roman Catholicism and the thought of Cardinal Bellarmine in particular (another new feature of *Leviathan*), it was hard to avoid the thought that he was aiming for domestic targets, particularly Presbyterians and *iure divino* Episcopalians. Hobbes would later argue that his position in *Leviathan* was still consistent with Episcopacy, and while this is technically correct (taking an extremely Erastian view of Episcopacy) Hobbes's general assault upon clerical power and his apparent preference in chapter 47 for religious independency would make it virtually impossible for him to mend his relationship with his former Anglican friends. By the end of the 1640s Hobbes was clearly writing his ecclesiology for a political situation in which traditional forms of Anglicanism had no privileged place as a form of church government.

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[13] For the relationship between Hobbes's theory and the anamorphic image on the frontispiece, see N. Malcolm, 'The Title Page of Leviathan', in *Aspects*, pp. 222–8.

[14] See Johan Sommerville's argument in *Thomas Hobbes: Political Ideas in Historical Context* (Basingstoke, 1992), and most recently L. Nauta, 'Hobbes on Religion and the Church between the Elements of Law and Leviathan', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63: 4 (2002), pp. 577–98 and Karl Schuhmann's '*Leviathan* and *De Cive*', in T. Sorell and L. Foisneau (eds.), *Leviathan after 350 years* (2004), pp. 13–31.

But if Hobbes's Anglican and Presbyterian readers had reason to be distressed at his ecclesiology, almost all of his readers would be shocked by the extraordinary theology elaborated in Parts 3 and 4 of *Leviathan*. Here Hobbes offered nothing less than a completely revised account of Christianity, based upon his sometimes shockingly novel interpretations of scripture. It is still far from clear exactly what Hobbes was up to in systematically rewriting Christianity in such a radical, and occasionally downright bizarre fashion. The desire to render Christianity compatible with secular authority as a civic religion offers a compelling explanation for much of Hobbes's paradoxical reinterpretation. Hobbes's relentless attempts to control or bracket alternative sources of temporal authority, whether they be revelation, prophecy or even the authority of Christ himself seem to follow this logic. The sovereign is the authoritative interpreter of God's will, and Christ's reign is firmly deferred until after the Resurrection. The unstable world of unknowable religious mystery and even the very texts of scripture are coralled, defined and authorised by the sovereign, inverting the normal authoritative relationships between the secular and the sacred, between reason and religion.

A connected ambition was to render Christianty consistent with the thoroughgoing materialism that stood as the foundation of Hobbes's general philosophical project. This was a political priority inasmuch as a Christianity purged of the mistaken classical dualism between spirit and matter offered a more stable and transparent basis for the coexistence of political and religious authority. But this agenda also drove Hobbes far beyond nominally political concerns with a provocative zeal. Hobbes is at his most systematic when applying his materialist logic to mysteries of theology, and this feature of *Leviathan* produced some of his most unusual claims as he laboured to demonstrate that scripture could only make sense in materialist terms. The elimination of incorporeal substance as a category required dramatic re-readings of soteriology and eschatology; Hobbes argued that the soul was not incorporeal, and died with the body, to be restored physically by God at the Resurrection. Heaven and Hell were located upon earth, and the damned would be punished but not eternally, suffering a second and final corporeal death. Although one can find some precedents for Hobbes's religious positions in the views of the ancients and some early-modern radicals, what gives *Leviathan*'s arguments their characteristic Hobbesian quality is the modal priority given to materialism in offering a coherent account of scripture. Hobbes himself was prepared to acknowledge that the results were strange and unsettling, although crucially nothing that was inconsistent with sovereignty and the laws as they stood.[15]

These political and philosophical priorities help to explain why Hobbes engaged in the arguments that he did but there was another dimension to his work that would lead many of his contemporaries to view his exegetical labours with deep suspicion. As he goes about the reconstruction of Christianity, Hobbes deploys not the reverent tones of the scriptural scholar (affected in *De Cive*), but deals with the subject in a more obviously ludic manner.[16] For example, Hobbes defines religion as a fear of invisible power, points to inconsistencies in scripture which mean that Moses cannot have written the Pentateuch, notes that 'prophet' can mean one who is distracted, and that the best prophets are the best 'guessers'. The text is peppered with such comments and the satirical mood often raises the suspicion that Hobbes is not so much reorganising Christian theology as hinting at its ultimate absurdity. Wit and rhetorical sparkle had never been entirely absent from Hobbes's work, but Professor Skinner is right to draw our attention to its systematic use in *Leviathan*, particularly the latter sections where the full armoury of Renaissance rhetorical technique is deployed to brilliant effect, and not only upon Hobbes's opponents, but also upon Christian doctrine itself. The suspicion that Hobbes might actually be offering a burlesque or travesty of Christianity was one that would occur to many of Hobbes's early readers; the tension between that thought and the apparently serious purpose of Hobbes's theology was an issue that perplexed his readers then just as it does today.

Hobbes's deployment of rhetorical techniques ensures that the work is not only a great work of political theory, but also a Renaissance literary masterpiece. Hobbes's critics would notice the change in tone from the comparatively sober quasi-scientific style in the *Elements* and *De Cive*, and some, like Eachard and Clarendon, would regard it as a triumph of style over content.

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[15] In a post-Restoration apology for himself he acknowledged that his unusual divinity might be an object of suspicion, and in the Latin *Leviathan* (1668) he comments that he had 'slipped into unusual doctrines' (Hobbes, *Mr. Hobbes considered in his loyalty, religion, reputation, and manners, by way of a letter to Dr. Wallis* (1662), p. 29; *Leviathan*, ed. Curley, 539).

[16] For discussion of this feature of Hobbes's work see particularly Q. Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1996), ch. 10.

Skinner has offered a persuasive account of the reasons for this change, in particular Hobbes's awareness that the forces of reason and science were unlikely to have an impact upon an audience in the grip of irrational religious and seditious political ideas. Under these circumstances, it was necessary to deploy the arts of eloquence to insinuate his political and religious message. As we have seen, the poet's imaginative role in shaping political obedience had been a central theme in the dialogue between Hobbes and Davenant over *Gondibert*. The literary qualities of *Leviathan* may owe much to this crucial exchange. Again the magnificent frontispiece acts as an appropriate symbol of the new union between reason and rhetoric; the image of *Leviathan* made up of individual figures simultaneously offering a rationalist demystification of the idea of the state in a powerful metaphorical image.[17] Arguably this would be the most successful part of Hobbes's project. As we shall see, the haunting images and turns of phrase were often the most effective means by which Hobbes's philosophy lodged itself into the subconsciousness of his readers. Even Hobbes's critics could not resist reproducing his startling metaphors and formulae in their works, and Hobbes's ability to capture and organise the collective fears and anxieties of seventeenth-century men and women meant that they spread like a virus, even amongst Hobbes's opponents. Of course, it wasn't always the case that the virus delivered its political payload, and Hobbes's critics did their best to come up with suitable antidotes, but the extent to which the dangerously attractive language of *Leviathan* predisposed its users to accept his account of man's natural state and the necessary solutions it required should not be underestimated.

PUBLISHING *LEVIATHAN*

Hobbes's work on the book proceeded very rapidly. In May 1650 Payne reported to Sheldon that Hobbes had completed thirty-seven out of a planned fifty chapters. By August he had completed two more. The work, presumably near completion, was placed on the Stationers' Register on 20 January 1651 by Hobbes's London publisher Andrew Crooke. There was a government licensing system in place and all of Hobbes's works produced in England during the early 1650s were at some level officially sanctioned.[18] The Stationers' Register shows that *Leviathan* was licensed by the Stationer Philemon Stephens and John Downham, the Puritan minister who had served as the official licenser since 1643.[19] In his 70s by 1651 (he would die the following year), Downham had also licensed *De Corpore Politico*, so the politics of *Leviathan* would not have come as a surprise to him.[20] He was no stranger to controversy either, having got into some trouble for licensing Alexander Ross's edition of the Koran in 1649.[21] This might suggest that Downham was prepared to entertain unusual ideas, but it is impossible to be certain how carefully or even how much of *Leviathan* Downham read in order to authorise the work. The controversy over the Koran also indicates that the fact that Downham licensed *Leviathan* does not tell us much about the republic's attitude to the new work.

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[17] See particularly Malcolm, 'The Title Page of *Leviathan*', in *Aspects*, at pp. 227–8.

[18] J. Peacey, 'Nibbling at *Leviathan*: Politics and Theory in England in the 1650s', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 61: 2 (1998), at p. 252.

The dedication of the work to Sidney Godolphin was dated 15/25 April, and the final stages of the printing process took place that month, as Hyde discovered when Hobbes visited him in Paris.[22] Hobbes told him that 'his Book (which he would call *Leviathan*) was then Printing in England, and that he receiv'd every week a Sheet to correct, of which he shewed me one or two Sheets, and thought it would be finished within little more then a Moneth'.[23] Hobbes read Hyde the dedicatory epistle to Godolphin, but commented to him 'that he [Hobbes] knew when I read his Book I would not like it'.[24] Hobbes mentioned some of its conclusions, and Hyde asked him why he would publish such doctrine. After 'a discourse between jest and earnest upon the Subject' Hobbes replied '*The truth is, I have a mind to go home.*'[25] It was certainly the case that the argument of the book would allow him to do so.

Hobbes's famous comment that *Leviathan* had 'framed the minds of a thousand gentleman'[26] provides indirect evidence of the size of the print run and the intended audience for the book. A run of a thousand copies was not unusual for a book like *Leviathan* at the time.[27] It was presented in folio

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[19] *A Transcript of the Registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers from 1640–1708*, ed. G. E. Eyre, C. R. Rivington and H. R. Plomer, 3 vols. (1913–14, 1950), I, p. 358 [p. 205 of the original register].

[20] For the entry on *De Corpore Politico*, see *A Transcript of the Stationers Register*, I, p. 340 [p. 184 of the original register].

[21] Calendar of State Papers, domestic series (hereafter CSPD), 1649–50, pp. 45–6.

[22] The printing process probably began soon after the book was registered. The first gathering, which included the epistle dedicatory and the preface, was usually printed last. I would like to thank the anonymous reader of the typescript for these comments.

[23] Clarendon, *Brief view and survey* (Oxford, 1676), p. 7.

[24] Ibid. [25] Ibid., p. 8. [26] Hobbes, *EW*, VII, p. 336.

[27] Karl Schuhmann has argued recently that Crooke may have elected to split the print run between London and Amsterdam for fear of losing his investment if the authorities reacted badly to the book. He suggests that the corrected sheets referred to by Clarendon were sent on to an Amsterdam publisher where the corrections were embodied in the second edition, known as the 'Bear' (after its distinctive title-page ornanment), an edition bearing the same publication information as the 'Head' (with the exception of a misspelling of Crooke's name), but which clearly derives from a Dutch printer. See Schuhmann, *Introduction to Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan* (2003), esp. III.2 and III.4. For

(bound or unbound in quires), a large-sized volume with a very striking and handsomely engraved title page. One paid for the quality; at eight shillings and sixpence, *Leviathan* was an expensive purchase, in contrast to the smaller, cheaper editions of Hobbes's works already available. Deluxe large paper copies were also available, presumably for more money. It was a book aimed at the well-heeled English gentleman.

The new book was certainly a curiosity in more ways than one, but did it sell? We tend to assume that *Leviathan* would have flown off the shelves like *De Cive*, but in fact the evidence points to exactly the opposite conclusion. Ironically the relative glut of Hobbes products over the period immediately preceding *Leviathan*'s appearance may have undermined the market for what we now know to be Hobbes's masterpiece. The Newcastle bookseller William London still appears to have been offering copies of *Leviathan* for sale in 1658.[28] As far as we can tell at the moment, there was no attempt to produce a second edition until the late 1660s, and even after the Fire of London had destroyed many book stocks Samuel Pepys was being offered a new copy in 1668 (he chose the cheaper second-hand option). Assuming that the new copy that he was offered wasn't one of the false imprints, the inescapable conclusion is that *Leviathan* did not sell out, at least not for a long time. Although this seems like a strange conclusion today it isn't really all that surprising; *Leviathan* was an expensive book, and if someone already owned a copy of *De Cive* or *De Corpore Politico*, or particularly *The Philosophical Rudiments* they might think twice before laying out a considerable sum of money on a book containing more or less the same political and religious theory.

There were also reasons why buyers might actually avoid *Leviathan*. Some readers argued that the version of the argument in *De Cive* was technically tighter and therefore better, a case with some truth to it.[29] There seems to have been no sense amongst Hobbes's existing readers that it was necessary to refer to the latest statement of Hobbes's argument, which, aside from the odd theology, came as little surprise.[30] Most of Hobbes's

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decisive arguments against this implausible thesis see Noel Malcolm's comments in *Times Literary Supplement* 5305 (3 December 2004), pp. 3–4. A much better explanation of the genesis of the 'Bear' can be found in Malcolm's *Aspects*, pp. 336–82, see below pp. 287–8.

[28] W. London, *A catalogue of the most vendible books in England* (1658).

[29] Walter Pope commented of *De Cive* that it was 'a good Book in the main, and much better than his *Leviathan*; for in the first, there is Verbum Sapienti, enouf said, to let the intelligent Reader know what he would be at; but in his *Leviathan* he spreads his butter so thin, that the courseness of his Bread is plainly perceived under it.' W. Pope, *Life of Seth, Lord Bishop of Salisbury* (1697), p. 125.

[30] See Thomas Hill to Richard Baxter, Trinity College, 13 February 1651/2, in N. H. Keeble and G. F. Nuttall (eds.), *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1991), I, pp. 74–5.

critics and commentators who refer to *De Cive*, *De Corpore Politico* and *Leviathan* saw them as interchangeable versions of the same basic arguments. As a result of the unauthorised printings of Hobbes's theory between 1649 and 1651, many readers had already a formed a sense of what Hobbes's theory was about. Slow sales may also explain the slightly delayed public response to the book. As we shall see, there was no immediate public outcry.

'. . . A FARRAGO OF ALL THE MADDEST DIVINITY THAT EVER WAS READ'. EARLY RESPONSES TO *LEVIATHAN* 1651–1653

On 6 May 1651, Robert Payne gave Gilbert Sheldon the first reports of *Leviathan*:

> I am advertised from Oxf[ord] that Mr Hobbes' book is printed and come thither: he calls it *Leviathan*. Much of his *De Cive* is translated into it: he seems to favour the present Government, and commends his book to be read in the Universities, despises all censures that may pass upon it. It is in folio at 8s. 6d. price, but I have not yet seen it.[31]

The observations of the unnamed informant as filtered by Payne foreshadow much of the critical response to come. The odd title draws attention. The continuity with *De Cive* is noted, possibly with a view to affirming that Hobbes's ideas had not altered. Hobbes's political allegiance, rendered suspect by the ambivalence of his views in *De Cive* and the use made of *De Corpore Politico*, is tentatively identified: he 'seems' to favour the present government, probably a conclusion drawn from Hobbes's exposition of the relationship between protection and obedience in the 'Review and Conclusion'. Perhaps more ominously for his reception in Oxford and Cambridge, Payne's correspondent picked up on Hobbes's desire that *Leviathan* should be required reading in the universities, coupling the remark with Hobbes's arrogant dismissal of all censure that may pass upon it. It would be Hobbes's hostility towards traditional university learning that would eventually bring him into conflict with Oxford's natural philosophers, and which in time would destroy his scientific reputation. In 1651, however, Hobbes believed that he had allies there and he sent two copies of *Leviathan* to Ralph Bathurst at Trinity College Oxford, probably one for Bathurst himself (for his verses in *Humane*

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[31] 'Illustrations', p. 223.

Nature) and the other for Seth Ward, who had written the preface. Bathurst replied in a letter towards the end of May, the surviving portion of which omits what was probably a complimentary discussion of Hobbes's gift,[32] and encourages the philosopher to publish more of his eagerly awaited natural philosophy.[33] But for all of his enthusiasm, Bathurst may well have been concerned that Hobbes's non-scientific notoriety was getting in the way of his reputation as a natural philosopher:

> And thus much I am rather bold to suggest to you, because if by your other workes already published, you have gained so high an esteem, even when almost a whole order of men thought it concern'd them to cry downe your opinions, how much more shall those be received with honour, in whose argument no man's Diana will be brought into question.[34]

Bathurst is flatteringly generous with his praise and estimation of Hobbes's reputation here, but this is tempered by the acknowledgement that Hobbes's reputation isn't as high as it could be, probably because of the controversial character of his religious opinions in *De Cive*.[35] The Oxford don encourages Hobbes to seek the greater honour to be had in publishing those of his scientific arguments that did not call religious views into question. Although he was clearly very impressed with Hobbes as a scientist, Bathurst was also aware that their connection to Hobbes's political and especially his religious ideas compromised the prospects for the new science; it is possible that his suggestion that Hobbes get on and publish his scientific work was perhaps a recognition that such a move might be necessary to rescue his reputation and his science from the damage being done by his political and religious ideas.

Those religious ideas also attracted the attention of Brian Duppa, who wrote to Justinian Isham in July that '. . . there is another production of the press, that Affrick hath not seen a greater monster, and that is Mr Hobbes his *Leviathan*'.[36] The gnomic title of the work was an object of curiosity for many of its readers, and Duppa was quick to get to work on its allusive critical possibilities:

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[32] The letter is printed in Warton's *Life of Bathurst*, where Warton reports Bathurst's acknowledgement of the two copies of *Leviathan* and then quotes a portion of the letter (see *CTH* I, pp. 180–1).

[33] *CTH*, I, p. 180: 'I hope your learned booke of Optickes, and that other de corpore, if it be yet finished, may no longer lie concealed'.

[34] *CTH* i. 180, adapting the manuscript version noted at 180, n4.

[35] '. . . almost a whole order of men' – the whole order is likely to be the clergy, with individuals like Bathurst and Payne being the exceptions.

[36] G. Isham (ed.), *The Correspondence of Bishop Brian Duppa and Sir Justinian Isham 1650–1660* (Northampton Record Society 17 (1951)), p. 41.

> a title that I wond'red at at first, but when I found out how like he was to the *Leviathan* that Job speakes of, who plai'd, and sported himself in the Deep, I liked his judgement better in the title then in the book, for certainly (Lucian excepted) none ever was more gamesome in religion then he is.

The identification of Hobbes as the *Leviathan* begins a trend which would eventually see the title become a nickname for Hobbes himself, part of the process of reducing Hobbes's own identity to that of his monster. But whereas later attempts to connect the author and his title tend to connect Hobbes's title with the tyrannical figure of the sovereign or the terrifying beast from the book of Job, Duppa focuses upon the ludic quality of the scriptural *Leviathan* from Psalm 104:26, a creature made by God to play in the oceans, revealing the book to be a satirical, burlesquing treatment of religion. But decoding the title in this form doesn't allow Duppa to jump to easy conclusions about the force of the argument, which is strangely indeterminate:

> And yet as in the man, so there ar strange mixtures in the book; many things said so well that I could embrace him for it, and many things so wildly and unchristianly, that I can scarce have so much charity for him, as to think he was ever Christian.

Duppa doesn't specify what is said well, but we have already seen that aspects of Hobbes's politics and his understanding of religion could appeal to Laudian clergymen like Cosin and writers like Hammond, but whereas the dominant reaction to Hobbes's earlier discussions of religion had been one of suspicion, the wild and unchristianly character of the new theology in *Leviathan* was hard to ignore and the interpretative dilemma over its orthodoxy unquestionably more acute. All of the traditional Christian pieces were on the board, but the rules and the game itself had been completely transformed. Unsure in turn of the character of Isham's response, Duppa defers a conclusive judgement until he hears from his younger friend.[37]

A rather more positive response can be found from William Rand, an English republican Independent then living in Amsterdam. Rand wrote to Samuel Hartlib in July, discussing some rather radical ideas for educational reform. These involved the reduction of religious instruction to core principles of Christian morality and uncontroversial texts of scripture with a view to avoiding sectarianism and conflict. Rand's anti-sectarian *sola sciptura* approach, and his critical attitude towards the scholastic educational curriculum predisposed him to Hobbes's own reformist agenda in these areas. This led him to take a sympathetic view of the odd mixture of material in *Leviathan*. Rand found the book to contain 'a world of fine cleare notions, though some things too paradoxicall & savouring of a man passionately addicted to the royall interest'. Nevertheless, Rand felt that Hobbes might make 'an excellent Councellour in the matter of education' both for his ingenuity and his critique of scholastic teaching.[38] For all Hobbes's apparent Royalism, Rand was also surprised 'to find him so sound in many other points, that looke with a hostile aspect upon royalty'. Picking up on the implications of *Leviathan*'s political ambiguity Rand, like Payne's correspondent, conceived that Hobbes 'is comeing over to the parliament side & would be easily engaged upon honourable termes to be serviceable to the publik'.[39] But it wasn't just Hobbes's views on education that Rand found interesting. In August he wrote to Benjamin Worsley, drawing his attention to Hobbes's 'smart interpretation of the trinity' in chapter 42.[40] Rand was clearly impressed with Hobbes's unusual application of his theory of representation. Hobbes's reinterpretation had the advantage that it did not require one to believe that God had appeared in three different forms (potentially a form of tritheism for anti-Trinitarians), but only that God had been represented three times (by Moses, Christ and the Apostles and their successors). Although this would be anathema to many of Hobbes's contemporaries, Rand was one reader who appeared to find the approach congenial, evidence that there might be some readers at least for whom Hobbes's strange divinity might strike a chord without raising a suspicion of atheism. But if Rand could find Hobbes's educational ideas and his theology agreeable, Hobbes's political views nevertheless left a lot to be desired. Again, the title of the book offered the starting point for Rand's anti-absolutist critique:

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[37] We never discover Isham's views on the book, although it is likely that he was more sympathetic than Duppa to Hobbes's position.

> by the way let it not seem impertinent to tell yow, that I conceive Mr Hobbs was very unhappy in giveing his booke a name, which he gave by some such destiny as Pilate entitled the Cross of our Lord. For that Empire the Whale holds in the Sea is a fit resemblance of the Monarchy he would establish, submitting all to the will of a man who many times measures right by this power, & by potency of Lusts, has little more reason then a Whale, & under whose government the Law of Liviathan is established vz: That it be right & fit that the great fishes eat up the little, as it is in France at this day & elsewhere.[41]

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[38] S. Hartlib, *The Hartlib Papers* (Sheffield, 2002), at 62/30/3b–4a. [39] Ibid., 62/30/4a.
[40] Ibid., 62/21/1a (11 August). [41] Ibid., 62/21/1a.

Rand's republican sympathies put him completely at odds with Hobbes's absolutism and he could see little else in *Leviathan*'s portrait of sovereignty than the classical definition of a tyrant.

Hobbes's unusual combination of ideas presented in such a politically ambivalent manner could thus simultaneously delight and appal audiences on all sides of the political and religious spectrum. *De Cive* had raised doubts in the minds of its readers as to Hobbes's Royalist or Anglican identity. For its early readers, *Leviathan* deepened the mystery opening up a range of possible political and religious identities that went far beyond the conventional understandings of Hobbes's nominal affiliations. It is striking that just as Duppa found it difficult to write Hobbes off immediately as an unacceptable atheist, a reader like Rand found it possible to see beyond Hobbes's political theory to find ideas serviceable to the Commonwealth. Instead of seeing *Leviathan* as a text that worked to fix Hobbes's identity, it might be better to see it as a text that worked to confound a whole range of prejudices about the character of his project. A work whose very title seemed calculated to defy straightforward interpretation, that was absolutist but not Royalist, Christian but not sectarian, authoritarian in religious matters, and yet fiercely anti-clerical, *Leviathan* managed to escape easy categorisation and attribution to any particular interpretative tradition, even if it might be associated with several.

The indeterminacy of Hobbes's text made it perfect material for opportunistic adaptation, and the first attempt to deploy *Leviathan*'s arguments in print demonstrate its flexibility for what might seem to be very unpromising causes. John Austin was a Cambridge-educated lawyer who had converted to Catholicism in 1640 and who in the early 1650s was attempting to argue the case for the toleration for Catholics in England. Austin was a Blackloist, a faction within English Catholicism which sought to deny the pope's deposing power, and a faction which was prepared to deal with the Commonwealth in order to secure toleration. In August 1651, Austin, masquerading as an English Independent, published *The Christian Moderator* with this end in view, seeking to demonstrate that Catholics were neither idolatrous nor seditious. To demonstrate the former, Austin quoted the 'learned Mr Hobs in his Leviathan' to the effect that worship of an image is not idolatry so long as the worship is merely an acknowledgement of the holy designation of the place or image, and not the worship of the place or image as if it *were* God, or if such places or images are established by private authority.[42] Austin's suggestion that Hobbes's formula did 'absolutely clear the Papist of idolatry' creatively misconstrues the explicitly *anti*-Catholic thrust of the original discussion, which implies that *only* the civil magistrate could authorise such worship. Austin's borrowing comes from paying close attention to a rabidly anti-Catholic position, and recovering from it an argument which could be used to support his own position. Where a recusant like Philip Scot had simply sought to condemn *De Cive* outright, Austin saw the potential to turn Hobbes's ambiguous and provocative statements into resources for religious toleration; for Austin's trick to work, the Protestant reader was to be persuaded that this was what Hobbes had actually said. *Leviathan*'s interpretative complexity may have persuaded him that this was worth doing.[43]

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[42] W. Birchley, *The Christian Moderator* (1651), p. 12; cf. *Leviathan*, p. 450 [p. 360 O.P.].

In September, Payne wrote his last surviving letter to Gilbert Sheldon: 'By this time, I presume, you have read *Leviathan*, and can judge out of your own experience what effect it may work on the better wits.'[44] Payne's concern, as it had been all along, was that Hobbes's fame as a natural philosopher would make him a powerful and influential voice against the church, a situation that he felt had arisen because Hobbes had been treated badly by the clergy. His comments about Sheldon's own experience suggests that the latter had already encountered Hobbes's influence amongst the 'better wits'.[45] Within a month Payne was dead, but his concern about the danger of Hobbes's influence survived. In a letter from Hammond to Matthew Wren, the former Bishop of Ely, having described *Leviathan* to Wren as 'a farrago of Christian Atheism', Hammond gave an account of its genesis that he probably got from Payne and Sheldon:

> having in France been angered by some Divines, and having now a mind to return hither, [Hobbes] hath chosen to make his way by this book, which some tell me takes infinitely among the looser sons of the Church, and the king's party, being indeed a farrago of all the maddest divinity that ever was read, and having destroyed Trinity, Heaven, Hell, may be allowed to compare ecclesiastical authority to the kingdom of fairies.[46]

The inside story of Hobbes's treatment at the hands of the exiled clergy, combined with the knowledge that Hobbes wanted to come home, provided a narrative in which Hammond and his colleagues could see

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[43] Interestingly, Austin does not quote those passages of *Leviathan* normally associated with a tolerationist view, particularly from chapter 47.

[44] 'Illustrations', p. 224.

[45] For example, Sheldon knew Charles Cotton, who might be a plausible candidate for such a Hobbesian conversion.

[46] 'Illustrations', 9 (1850) pp. 294–5.

Leviathan as nothing other than an assault upon the sort of ecclesiastical authority that the Anglican Episcopalians wished to claim and an attempt to undermine doctrines central to traditional accounts of the Christian religion. At a time when the fortunes of the Episcopalians were at an extremely low ebb, Sheldon's account of *Leviathan*'s growing influence in court circles was a matter of great concern. In November Sheldon wrote to Hammond with advice about what was to be done. Unfortunately we only have Hammond's reply where he comments that 'Your advice concerning Mr Ho[bbes] being perfectly my own sense, I shall adhere to.' We can only speculate about Sheldon's advice, but it may well have been a caution not to go into print against Hobbes. Sheldon often had to bridle his friend's fondness for public polemic, and in this case there were a number of reasons why it might be best to do nothing, not least to avoid drawing unnecessary attention to Hobbes's work. In this case Hammond agreed, which may explain why he didn't attack *Leviathan* until the autumn of 1652.

Hammond's letter to Sheldon also includes a brief passage where he describes Charles II's reaction to Hobbes. Hammond had met Charles during his escape after the battle of Worcester, and had the chance to question him about his former tutor. Hammond comments to Sheldon that Charles thought 'that he [Hobbes] was the oddest fellow he ever met with'.[47] The questions may not have been idle ones; Sheldon may have wanted to know the king's attitude because he was aware that there were other plans in hand to neutralise Hobbes's influence at court.

DISCOUNTENANCING MR HOBBES

Charles II returned to Paris after his disastrous military campaign at the end of October 1651, the Royalist strategy of dealing with the Presbyterian Scots in ruins. The defeat signalled a change in strategy, and a crucial change in personnel among his political advisers. On 8 November Edward Hyde learned in Antwerp that Charles had sent for him and Sir Edward Nicholas. Earles and Cosin were again ministering to the king. The revival in the fortunes of the Old Royalists and the Episcopalian clergymen would prove disastrous for Hobbes.

Hyde's response to *Leviathan* had been much as Hobbes had expected: after reading the book he told Sir Charles Cavendish that he 'could not enough wonder' that a man who 'had so great a reverence for Civil

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[47] Ibid., II, p. 92.

Government, that he resolv'd all Wisdom and Religion it self into a simple obedience and submission to it, should publish a Book, for which, by the constitution of any Government now establish'd in Europe . . . the Author must be punish'd in the highest degree, and with the most severe penalties.'[48] Hyde was convinced that Hobbes's theory was ultimately subversive of all political obligation. He was certainly less worried about the Erastianism, and possibly not as worried about the strange theology, as he was about this basic political weakness, which undermined the whole basis of the Royalist cause. This was probably the reason that even before he had returned to Paris, Hyde and his clerical allies in Paris had set in motion a move to cleanse the Augean stables and have Hobbes excluded from the king's presence.

Some time after Charles's return to Paris Hobbes had presented a manuscript copy of *Leviathan* to his former pupil, according to Clarendon 'engrossed in Vellam in a marvellous fair hand'.[49] Hobbes clearly felt that *Leviathan*'s view of sovereignty was sufficiently compatible with Royalism for such a move to be acceptable, although his awareness of its controversial content and his own desire to return home may have led him to present the book as a gift rather than as a dedicated patronage artefact.[50] The gift may well have been his undoing, allowing those Anglicans in attendance (and a prime candidate is Hyde's friend John Earles) to draw Charles's attention to Hobbes's heterodoxy and make the case for his banishment.[51] When Hobbes attempted to attend the king at the Louvre at some point in December, James Butler, Marquess of Ormonde informed him that the king would not see him. As Hobbes would later recall in his prose autobiography, this put him in an extremely dangerous situation. Hobbes had not been reticent about his opposition to Catholicism in *De Cive* and large parts of *Leviathan* were devoted to the detailed criticism of the Roman church. Now stripped of the king's protection, Hobbes was left exposed to possible legal action by the

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[48] Clarendon, *Brief view and survey*, p. 8. Hobbes had asked Cavendish to solicit Hyde's opinion.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Sarasohn argues that presenting the work as a gift would clarify Hobbes's status as a former employee rather than a royal servant, and thus avoid any problematic statement of allegiance should he have to return to England. L. T. Sarasohn, 'Was *Leviathan* a Patronage Artifact?' *History of Political Thought* 21: 4 (2000), pp. 606–31.

[51] The manuscript, now in the British Library (BL Egerton MS 1910), bears a number (143) of marginal annotations which Schuhmann (I.51–2) suggests may be the work of a court clergyman. They are mostly connected to matters of religion and occur in chapters 12–13 and 31–5. Given that it is impossible to know when these marks were made or who made them, it is difficult to draw any concrete conclusions about them. There are a few other marks, on pp. 247, 251, 255 and 273 which take the form of an 'x' or cross.

French clergy.[52] In addition, now that he had been disavowed as an acceptable writer, there was also the possibility that he might share the fate of that other *de facto* theorist Anthony Ascham, assassinated by Royalist agents in Spain.[53] On Hyde's account, it was an attempt by the French religious authorities to have him arrested that caused Hobbes to flee from Paris, a few days before Hyde himself arrived there on Christmas Day.[54]

Hobbes's own account is perhaps the best testimony of a homecoming bitter in more ways than one:

> I returned to my homeland, not quite sure of my safety. But in no other place could I have been safer. It was cold; there was deep snow; I was an old man; and the wind was bitter. My bucking horse and the rough road gave me trouble.

Concerned that he might be taken for a spy, Hobbes headed for London to make his submission to the Council of State. The philosopher's expulsion from court was soon being exploited by *Mercurius Politicus*, which published an account of the events in Paris in the second week of January:

> They write also from *Paris*, that M. *Hobbs* (he that wrote the Book of *Commonwealth*) sent one of his Books as a Present to the King of *Scots*, which he accepted, in regard he had formerly been his Tutor in the *Mathematicks*; but being afterward informed by some of his *Priests*, that the Book did not only contain many Principles of Atheism and grosse Impiety, (for so they call every thing that squares not with their corrupt *Clergy-Interest*) but also such as are prejudicial to the Church, and reflected dangerously upon the Majesty of *Soveraign Princes*, therefore when M. *Hobbs* came to make a tender of his service to him in person, he was rejected, and word brought to him by the Marquis of *Ormond*, that the King would not admit him, and withal told him the reason, by which means M. *Hobbs* declines in credit with his friends there of the *Royal stamp*, as men shall, that run not to the same height and excess of madnesse with themselves.[55]

Nedham had already appropriated Hobbes's political ideas for the Commonwealth and here we find a careful attempt to co-opt the philosopher and his latest work. The editorial launders the reputation of *Leviathan* when it attributes the accusations of atheism and impiety to the priestcraft of the Episcopalians in Paris. Hobbes the great philosopher had inevitably parted company with the increasingly deranged Royalist cause, thus setting the stage for the symbolic representation of his defection. The rebranding of Hobbes did not escape the attention of Hyde's colleague Sir Edward Nicholas, who commented to Lord Hatton in February that 'Mr Hobbes is at London much caressed, as one that hath by his writings justified the reasonableness and righteousness of their arms and actions.'[56]

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[52] Hobbes, 'Prose Life', in Gaskin (ed.), *Human Nature and De Corpore Politico* (Oxford, 1994), p. 249; see also Hobbes, *Considerations*, p. 8.

[53] See Hobbes's comments in his 'Verse Life', Gaskin, *Human Nature*, p. 260.

[54] Clarendon, *Brief view and survey*, pp. 8–9; R. Ollard, *Clarendon and His Friends* (London, 1987), p. 148.

[55] *Mercurius Politicus* 84 (8–15 January 1652).

On the Royalist side, however, the response to Hobbes's expulsion was mixed. For Nicholas, the removal of 'that father of Atheists' was a triumph, ending a malign ideological influence that had corrupted the entourages of the queen and the Duke of York, and which was threatening the king's court.[57] But not everyone was pleased. Nicholas wrote to Hyde in January commenting that Lord Percy, an admirer of Hobbes and member of the Louvre faction that included Hobbes's closest friends at court (Newcastle, Jermyn, Davenant, Waller and Cowley), was 'much concerned' that Hobbes had been forbidden to come to court.[58] Nicholas had even heard reports that Ormonde had been slow to tell Hobbes that the king would not see him.[59] There was also confusion as to who had been responsible for the deed. Percy apparently blamed Hyde and the Episcopalians, but Nicholas had heard a rumour that the queen's Roman Catholic chaplain Walter Montague had been responsible. It is possible that both rumours could be true (Montague could have initiated an attempt to have Hobbes arrested), but Hyde was quick to take credit for Hobbes's removal and to reassure Nicholas that Ormonde had behaved appropriately:

> I had indeed some hand in the discountenancing my old friend Mr. Hobbes, nor was my Lord Lieutenant [Ormonde] at all slow in signifying the King's pleasure; what the Catholicks wished I know not, but sure they contributed nothing to that Justice.[60]

Hobbes's former friends had taken their revenge, effectively determining the official Royalist response to *Leviathan*. Although they had had their doubts about Hobbes for some time, his association with the court, his philosophical eminence, and perhaps even the hope that he might be talked around, had led the old Royalists to make their criticism in private.

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[56] *The Nicholas Papers: The Correspondence of Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State*, ed. G. F. Warner (1920), pp. 286–7 12/22 February 1651/2.

[57] *Calendar of Clarendon State Papers*, III, p. 45.

[58] *Nicholas Papers* p. 285, 8–18 January 1651/2 to Hyde.

[59] This may have some basis in fact, as Butler does not appear to have been particularly hostile towards Hobbes. As Noel Malcolm notes, in the inventory of his goods there is even a portrait of the philosopher. *CTH*, II, pp. 800–1.

[60] Clarendon State Papers, quoted in G. C. Robertson, *Hobbes* (London, 1886), pp. 72–3, n.1.

Leviathan changed all this, and regardless of whether it might be read as a Royalist work, Hobbes's forced defection allowed his readers to fix his ambiguous political identity decisively. It is thus no surprise that the first substantial critique of Hobbes's political theory was published by Richard Royston in February 1652, and that it was by the Royalist writer Sir Robert Filmer, the first of a stream of Royalist anti-Hobbesian works that would establish the tone for one of the most influential interpretative traditions for Hobbes's work.

FILMER'S *OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE ORIGINALL OF GOVERNMENT*

A Kentish gentleman with a legal training, Sir Robert Filmer was an almost exact contemporary of Hobbes. He had come to pamphleteering late in life but in the later 1640s had gone into print to defend the Royalist cause, assaulting Philip Hunton's *Treatise on monarchy* in his *Anarchy of a limited or mixed monarchy* (1648). In the same year Filmer published *The necessity of the absolute power of all kings*, both works revealing him to be a radical absolutist, although an absolutist poles apart from Hobbes. Filmer's patriarchal approach to political authority had been forged as a response to the use of contract theory by the crown's opponents in the 1620s. This was when he probably wrote the manuscript of his most famous work, *Patriarcha* (only published posthumously in 1680). Whereas Hobbes had taken the route of appropriating contract theory in order to rewrite it in the cause of absolute sovereignty, Filmer had rejected any theory built upon the idea of the natural liberty or equality of mankind as a ridiculous fiction. Filmer's response was to point to the fact that mankind had always been born into familial subjection, identifying the authority of the father as the 'only fountain of all regal authority, by the ordination of God himself'.[61]

Filmer's deep and abiding prejudice against contract theory motivated his anonymous *Observations* of 1652, which targeted in turn Hobbes, Milton and Grotius as theorists afflicted by theoretical misunderstandings of the source of political authority. Filmer had evidently read *De Cive* but had delayed his assault upon the same political theory in *Leviathan* until after Hobbes had returned home, strongly suggesting that, in grouping Hobbes in the company that he did, he was making a statement about Hobbes's new position on the political map. Indeed, Filmer's short preface seems to single out those aspects of Hobbes's theory which had already been pressed into service by republican propagandists, with the intention of showing that he was less of a friend than they might think.

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[61] Filmer, *Patriarcha and other writings*, ed. J. P. Sommerville (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 3, 7.

Filmer's preface begins with praise of Hobbes's absolutism immediately and crushingly qualified:

> With no small content I read Mr Hobbes' book *De Cive*, and his *Leviathan*, about the rights of sovereignty, which no man, that I know, hath so amply and judiciously handled. I consent with him about the rights of exercising government, but I cannot agree to his means of acquiring it. It may seem strange I should praise his building and yet mislike his foundation, but so it is. His *jus naturae* and his *regnum institutivum* will not down with me, they appear full of contradiction and impossibilities.[62]

Filmer exploits Hobbes's occasional comments upon the absolute authority of fathers before the establishment of states to offer the philosopher a better foundation for his sovereignty in the principles of *regnum patrimoniale*. That Hobbes's theory might work better if its patriarchal dimension were taken seriously had been an implicit thought in Ascham's adaptation of Hobbes, and would continue to fascinate writers for whom the state of nature was an abstraction too far, but here Filmer's suggestion is mischievous: 'If, according to the order of nature, he had handled paternal government before that by institution, there would have been little liberty left in the subjects of the family to consent to institution of government.'[63]

The rest of Filmer's preface appears to have been designed to disable the thought that *Leviathan* could offer any coherent legitimation to either popular sovereignty or rights based upon conquest, both elements of Hobbes's theory that had been directly exploited in Commonwealth propaganda. Filmer's message is that Hobbes's position is much less congenial than his new supporters might think, and in revealing this Filmer deconstructs those passages that seemed to lend most support to the idea of a republican Hobbes. In particular Filmer focuses upon Hobbes's complicated theory of representation to argue that any Hobbesian account of democracy or even aristocracy was simply incoherent.[64] The same goes for Filmer's attack upon Hobbes's theory of conquest, again apparently calibrated to deflate Hobbes's possible use by republican writers. Filmer points out that a commonwealth by conquest involves the vanquished covenanting for the life and liberty of his body, giving to the conqueror in return a right to the use of the same at his pleasure. Hobbes's thought that this slavery amounted to a form of liberty violated the conventional republican account of the concept in which liberty and slavery were antonyms.[65] Filmer also exploits the thought that in buying into Hobbes's theory one is forced to acknowledge that the obedience of one's subjects could be forfeited in turn, and he pushes home the extreme implications of Hobbes's *de facto*ism by questioning Hobbes's suggestion that any right involving conquest comes from the people's submission: Surely the conqueror simply possesses the right of sovereignty by virtue of his victory? Lastly, and with a calculated assault upon the legitimacy of the authority of the Commonwealth, Filmer asks whether conquerors who are still technically subjects can ever have a right of sovereignty?[66] The question is nicely judged to reveal to the reader that Hobbes's theory of conquest was not a good fit for those who had recently conquered the kingdom. If Commonwealth writers thought that *Leviathan* offered support for their position, they had made a mistake.

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[62] Ibid., pp. 184–5. [63] Ibid., p. 185.

[64] A Hobbesian democracy, Filmer argues, simply creates a sovereign representative comprising all the people, effectively leaving them back in the state of nature. Similarly a sovereign aristocracy remained at liberty to kill each other and their subjects. What Filmer ignores is Hobbes's point that in both cases the sovereignty created is unitary and only the sovereign represented plural; so only the people or an aristocracy *as a body* could act in this way, not as private individuals.

The preface gives the appearance of having been composed with Hobbes's defection in mind. The rest of Filmer's observations make a series of points related to the general implausibility of Hobbes's natural jurisprudence, especially when his own statements appear to lend support to a patriarchal case. Filmer is particularly scathing about the very existence of a right or state of nature and the existence of *De Cive*'s 'mushroom men' within it. God had granted original dominion to Adam and rights could therefore only derive from him. Filmer exploited Hobbes's own admission in *Leviathan* that the state of nature never generally existed in that form,[67] and the annotation in *De Cive* where he admitted that no son (i.e. an individual born into the authority of its parents) could be understood to be in the state of nature.[68] Hobbes's occasional discussions of the historical existence of mankind, as opposed to the hypothetical limit-case represented by his pure state of nature, opened a window for his critics to accuse him of inconsistency, and Filmer was more than happy to point out the tensions between history and theory.

Nevertheless, Filmer doesn't rely upon this critique, and takes the reader through Hobbes's argument as stated, undermining it at each turn. Granting Hobbes's hypothesis ('which is yet most false'), Filmer argues that there is absolutely no need for a state of nature to be a state of war, given that God had provided enough sustenance and land for all men. Given that the right of nature is about self-preservation, war simply does not make sense and would not occur: 'If every man tend the right of preserving life, which may be done in peace, there is no cause of war.'[69] Even allowing a state of war, Filmer observes that because Hobbes defines the right of nature to be a liberty to do what preserves his life, this effectively rules out war as an effective means of self-preservation 'and thus the right of nature and the law of nature will be all one. For I think Mr Hobbes will not say the right of nature is a liberty for a man to destroy his own life.'[70] Filmer exploits Hobbes's concessions to a more traditional natural law theory; the conventional Royalist account of rights as liberties (endorsed in the *Elements of Law*) made rights simply permissions to do as one willed. In *De Cive* Hobbes had amended his discussion to suggest that one only had a natural right to do what one genuinely believed would lead to self-preservation, a concession which Sir Charles Cavendish had also noted as moving Hobbes's notion of right closer to the traditional account of law. Indeed Lambert van Velthuysen, a Dutch admirer of *De Cive*, had defended the work by using precisely the same point to argue that the state of nature would not be a state of war at all.[71] For less sympathetic critics like Filmer, the point simply demonstrated the incoherence of Hobbes's claim that subjective judgements about self-preservation necessarily lead to a state of war. As we shall see, the point recurs in many of the refutations of Hobbes's theory.

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[65] See also Filmer's discussion on p. 191.
[66] Ibid., p. 186.
[67] Ibid., p. 187.
[68] Ibid., p. 188.

As part of his assault upon Hobbes's contractual mechanism, Filmer also attacks his discussion of rights transfer with some success. Filmer's observations range from issues of practicality (how can covenants actually take place between every man?) to questions of procedure (how can one establish a sovereign body with one will without appealing only to the majority will?). The seditious consequences of placing individual self-preservation at the heart of a political theory inevitably form a major part of Filmer's critique; if men have the liberty to refuse any order which undermines their own security, 'then a sovereign may be denied the benefit of war, and be rendered unable to defend his people – and so the end of government frustrated'.[72] Such a move would leave the judgement of security in the hands of the people.

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[69] Ibid. [70] Ibid., p. 189.

[71] Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*, p. 307; Velthuysen, *Dissertatio* (1651), for a translation see Anon., *A dissertation wherein the fundamentals of natural and moral justice and decorum are laid down and clearly stated according to the principles of Mr Hobbs* (1706).

[72] Filmer, *Patriarcha and other political writings*, p. 194.

Filmer then fastens upon a passage in chapter 21 that would quickly become notorious. Here Hobbes, adapting an argument from chapter 8 in *De Cive* about escaped slaves, argued that if a group of men had committed an injustice punishable by death, any further collective efforts to defend their lives would in fact be just: 'Their bearing of arms subsequent to it, though it be to maintain what they have done, is no new unjust act, and if it be only to defend their persons it is not unjust at all.'[73] The example was problematic because it appeared to provide a form of legitimacy for the actions of rebels. For Filmer the idea was absurd and dangerous, 'as if the beginning only of a rebellion were an unjust act, and the continuance of it none at all'. Filmer points to other passages where Hobbes makes it clear that individuals never lose their right of resistance when faced with death, wounds, chains or imprisonment,[74] commenting that ultimately the apparent maintenance of such rights entirely removes the point of contracting in the first place:

> These last doctrines are destructive of all governments whatsoever, and even to the *Leviathan* itself. Hereby any rogue or villain may murder his sovereign, if the sovereign but offer by force to whip or lay him in the stocks, since whipping may be said to be a wounding and putting him in the stocks an imprisonment . . . Thus we are at least in as miserable a condition of war as Mr Hobbes at first by nature found us.[75]

Reading Hobbes via Parker, Bramhall and Hyde had found the same conceptual problem lurking beneath the surface in *De Cive*; in *Leviathan* the problem was much more visible, especially given Hobbes's provocatively resonant examples. The passages on a natural right of resistance and the example of the rebels from chapter 21 would become essential ingredients for an account of Hobbes as a resistance theorist.

Filmer's short critique presented in a nutshell the core of Royalist political objections to *Leviathan* and *De Cive*, at the same time demonstrating to the parliamentary propagandists like Nedham that the book could offer little support for their cause. In several ways Filmer's *Observations* represented an important turning point in the early reception of *Leviathan*; ranked with those apologists and theorists linked with the new regime, both of Hobbes's political works had been publicly assaulted by a Royalist. Combined with what appeared to be Hobbes's political apostasy, the Royalist faithful had been left in no doubt about the subversive character of Hobbes's work.

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[73] Ibid. [74] Ibid., p. 195.

[75] Filmer, *Patriarcha and other political writings*, p. 195. For a modern version of the same argument see J. Hampton's *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge, 1986).

For republican propagandists, on the other hand, Hobbes presented a rather different problem. Although *Mercurius Politicus* had attempted to put a positive political spin upon Hobbes's disgrace, *Leviathan* was not a text that could be easily put to work for the republican cause. Rand's comments about Hobbes's addiction to monarchy and Filmer's exposé of Hobbes's superficially democratic and *de facto* claims show that it was difficult to exploit in a positive sense.[76] Of course, it wasn't only Hobbes's politics that made *Leviathan* problematic. Hobbes's religious views were about to open up a whole new front against his works as Presbyterian writers began to react to Hobbes's reappearance in England. It is perhaps surprising that a substantial Presbyterian critique of *De Cive*'s Erastianism had not already appeared, but in the later 1640s Hobbes's open-ended religious identity and his Royalism may well have meant that refuting his work was a low priority for leading Presbyterian divines. *Leviathan*, however, was a different proposition, not least because it explicitly undermined the kind of authority Presbyterians still sought to exercise in the face of what they saw as an increasingly lax religious environment.[77] Taking the lead in stirring up opposition to Hobbes was the Presbyterian divine and minister of Kidderminster Richard Baxter, who would become a leading opponent of Hobbes's work. In February 1652, soon after Hobbes's reappearance in the country, Baxter had written to Thomas Hill, the intruded Master of Trinity College Cambridge, expressing his revulsion at *Leviathan*'s teachings. Hill replied that:

> Your deepe detestation of Hobbs his *Leviathan* hath awakened some of us to consider what is fitt to be done therein. I was satisfyed concerning his sp*irit* in religion before I minded this late rapsodie by a passage in his booke *De Cive*, wherein the Holy Spirits infusion of grace is [made] seditious doctrine.[78]

Leviathan had come as no surprise to Hill after reading *De Cive*, but Baxter now wanted more direct action, possibly because of Hobbes's high-profile return to England and the sympathetic official treatment that he had received.

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[76] This may be one explanation why another edition of the more republican-friendly *De Corpore Politico* was produced in 1652. Thomas Roycroft printed the book under two different imprints for former business partners John Martin and John Ridley who had published the first edition together.

[77] For explicit attacks upon Presbyterian doctrine, see *Leviathan*, pp. 427, 475.

[78] *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, ed. N. H. Keeble and G. F. Nuttall. Thomas Hill to Baxter Trinity College 13 February 1651/2, pp. 74–5.

The context to Baxter's concern about *Leviathan* lay in his revulsion at the antinomianism he had encountered amongst army Independents and later amongst the sectaries tolerated by the new regime. For Baxter, the crucial theological argument that had made such radicalism possible had been the idea that predestined election removed the necessity for much by way of faith or works, thus releasing those who believed themselves to be the elect from any rules or obligations. Baxter's *Aphorisms of justification* (1649) attempted to argue that although God's election was unconditional, there was a still a role for the Arminian notion that election was theoretically available to all through Christ's sacrifice. The latter form of what Baxter termed *sufficient* grace, *enabled* the possibility of salvation even if it still took God's *efficient* grace to ensure the salvation of the truly elect.[79] This position allowed Baxter to stress the importance of the exercise of individual free will in choosing a path that would enable election, and retained a substantial role for the godly pastor in guiding individuals to that end.

By contrast, Hobbes's radical rewriting of Christianity attempted to neutralise the thought that salvation could be enabled by particular acts of faith over and above a simple profession of belief in Christ's future rule. This was designed to disable the attempts of priests like Baxter to have any purchase upon the process of salvation by denying that Christ's law has any authority independent of the magistrate. For Baxter, this attempt to downgrade the importance of Christ's doctrinal injunctions linked Hobbes with the antinomian radicals. Writing to Thomas Hill in early March 1652, he explained:

> Had I time I cud show, that the denying of Redemption to the Non-Elect in Davenant sense hath a Multitude of Intollerable Inconveniences. I speake of the evill of Denying Christ's Doctrine to be a Law, in that most of the Horrid consequences in Hobbs Booke arises from that Principle: viz. ergo Xt Doth but teach and Princes command . . . ergo Scripture is no further a Law (saith Hobbs) than sovereigns so make it: Nor Ministers have any power of Governing, or Commanding, Nor Christ any kingdome now on Earth; but only in preparing men by Doctrin for one hereafter, and 100 the like Hobbs abounds with.[80]

Hobbes's diminution of Christ's role in *De Cive* had already offended Anglicans like Bramhall and Hyde, and Baxter in turn found the argument as elaborated in chapter 41 of *Leviathan* nothing less than evil. Hobbes had argued that Christ's earthly jurisdiction would only start at the Resurrection with the consequence that Christ's authority was limited to teaching, thereby subordinating Christians to the civil sovereign and eliminating the mediating role of the clergy in achieving salvation. *Leviathan* thus represented a new strain of the antinomian disease that needed to be countered by official action.

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[79] W. Lamont, *Baxter and the Millenium: Protestant Imperialism and the English Revolution* (1979), pp. 135–40.

[80] Dr Williams' Library MS 59, Baxter Correspondence, 6 vols., III, ff. 272v–273. Partially cited in the *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, I, p. 76.

Baxter's instinct when dealing with Hobbes's heretical ideas would be to call for his book to be banned or burned,[81] and this was an approach that he shared with other Presbyterians, who singled out *Leviathan* in the autumn of 1652 in an appeal to Parliament to tighten up the censorship laws.[82] In September a group of Presbyterian booksellers led by Luke Fawn published *A beacon set on fire*, a pamphlet giving details of 'Popish and Blasphemous Books' in the hope that they might be suppressed.[83] The booksellers' main concern was popery, and the thought that the unsettled religious situation might allow Catholicism to re-establish itself, but after listing several Catholic works including Philip Scot's anti-Hobbesian *Treatise of the schism*,[84] the booksellers turned to the 'Names and Blasphemies of some Books not Popish'. Top of this list was 'HOBS his *LEVIATHAN*' and the booksellers then presented nine examples of Hobbes's most offensive blasphemies. The extracts are taken from chapters 33, 35, 36, 38 and 42 and reveal the same concerns that Baxter had shared with Hill about the way that Hobbes had rewritten core Christian beliefs to make them compatible with civil authority, inverting the traditional relationship between divine and human obligation.[85]

The first extract was taken from chapter 33 where Hobbes argued that the only authority that could oblige individuals to obey scripture was the sovereign, thus removing the idea that scripture carried with it any independent obligation, a position that would become one of the most controversial in the whole text for critics of all denominations. The booksellers also extracted a section from chapter 35 where Hobbes's civic reinterpretion of the Lord's Prayer meant that the line 'Thy Kingdom come' referred to the restoration of God's earthly kingdom after the day of judgement, rather than the traditional spiritual interpretation. Hobbes's promotion of the sovereign also attracted attention in an extract from chapter 36 where Hobbes suggested that the sovereign was a prophet by whose rules any doctrine was to be accepted or rejected.

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[81] He would call for this in 1655, see R. Baxter, *Humble advice* (1655), p. 7.

[82] It is not impossible that the booksellers' action was one consequence of the correspondence between Baxter and Hill. One of the booksellers, Thomas Underhill, was responsible for publishing most of Baxter's works during the period. See also J. Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*, pp. 209–10 and notes.

[83] Luke Fawne, *A beacon set on fire* (1652), A2r. Thomason received his copy on 21 September 1652.

[84] Ibid., p. 13. [85] Ibid., pp. 14–15.

If the booksellers were unhappy about the central role Hobbes granted to civil sovereignty, they were also critical of Hobbes's unusual soteriology and his account of the afterlife, both of which were designed to rewrite Christian beliefs in line with his rigorous materialism and mortalism. The booksellers' concerns focus around Hobbes's ruthlessly materialist elimination of a spiritual realm. They single out his argument in chapter 38 that the soul's immortality does not begin until the Resurrection. This doctrine stemmed from Hobbes's mortalist rejection of the idea that soul might have an independent incorporeal existence, for Hobbes a philosophically corrupt reading of scripture. The booksellers also found Hobbes's highly unusual reinterpretation of Hell objectionable, citing Hobbes's arguments in chapter 38 that the terms for the devil signified not persons but the office of earthly enemies of the church. Here Hobbes's reinterpretation attempted to eliminate superstitious belief in evil spirits in favour of an understanding of Satan as the mortal enemies of God's followers. Equally, Hobbes's argument in the same chapter that the torments of the damned actually take place on earth, but only for a finite period, overturned traditional understandings of Hell and eternal punishment in favour of a mortalist and materialist reading of scripture. Hobbes himself acknowledged that his readings were unusual. His hostility to the very idea of a spiritual realm virtually guaranteed that doctrines such as these would face criticism from most Christians, but when Presbyterians like Baxter were concerned to make God's eternal punishment an essential incentive to godly living, Hobbes's odd mortalist alternative appeared at best to diminish its impact.

The last set of objections focuses upon chapter 42, a chapter that would become the most controversial in *Leviathan*. The booksellers single out Hobbes's statement that if the sovereign commands an individual to say that they do not believe in Christ, then 'we must obey the Prince'. Hobbes's provocative formulation of this argument would attract perhaps more odium than any other passage in the book. His position was that external profession of any doctrine simply involves following the law and doesn't compromise one's internal beliefs. The denial is not an individual act, but the act of the sovereign. A similar statement is picked out of Hobbes's argument that 'actions of men can never be unlawful or sinful, but when they are against the Law of the Commonwealth'. This section comes from Hobbes's discussion of excommunication, and his transformation of it into a purely civil sanction. As part of Hobbes's campaign to eliminate all forms of external authority other than the civil laws, he repeatedly stressed that no other source of authority, even scripture (as the booksellers note), could be allowed to define what constitutes illegality or sinfulness. To allow scripture authority independent of civil law would allow it to become an excuse for rebellion. For the booksellers such a move inverted the proper relationship between God and man. It also undermined the basis for the actions of Christian martyrs; the pamphlet paraphrases Hobbes's comment that those that have allowed themselves to be martyred since the time of the Apostles have simply misunderstood the nature of the obligation to God with the uncomfortable consequence that 'many have needlessly cast away their lives'.

As a critique the booksellers' list of propositions is simple and effective, isolating some of the most shocking moments from the text to uncover the heretodoxy of Hobbes's position. When so much of the text contained principles and arguments that were attractive and apparently acceptable, this method of extracting and paraphrasing unacceptable statements would become a common feature of Hobbes criticism. If there was any uncertainty as to what Hobbes actually meant, leading paraphrase, such as the addition of the suggestion that Christian martyrs had 'died needlessly', allowed Hobbes's intentions to be made clear and his text to be decided in favour of a particular reading. In this case, Hobbes's representation allowed him to be paraded alongside other blasphemers and their books such as the Independent Joshua Sprigge and the Socinian John Bidle, thus casting him, as Baxter had, as a religious radical.

Far from striking a universally popular chord, however, the booksellers were themselves assaulted in turn by pro-toleration army officers in early December, in a pamphlet titled *The beacons quenched*, which raised, but did not examine, the thought that Hobbes and Sprigge might have been quoted out of context.[86] The dispute rumbled on but by this stage the books involved were a secondary feature of a debate about Presbyterian designs on political power.

The Presbyterian campaign may not have got *Leviathan* banned, but it had revealed for the first time in print the radical character of Hobbes's theological position. Public discussion of *Leviathan*'s religious heterodoxy may also have encouraged Henry Hammond to break his silence on *Leviathan*. In early November, Royston published Hammond's *A letter of resolution to six quaeres*, where Hammond covered a variety of issues connected to the new church settlement including, inevitably, Episcopal authority and the issue of ordination. At the end of his formal discussion Hammond inserts an assault on *Leviathan*, the theology of which he describes as 'a *Rapsody* of as strange Divinity, as since the dayes of the *Gnosticks*, and their several *Progenies*, the Sun ever saw'.[87] But instead of attacking Hobbes for this, Hammond's critique settles into a rather technical discussion of *Leviathan*'s account of clerical ordination.

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[86] *The beacons quenched* (1652), p. 13.

The issue went to the heart of the Episcopalians' problem with Hobbes: his ruthless exclusion of any form of independent spiritual authority. Hobbes had argued in chapter 42 of *Leviathan* that the process of appointing clerics in the early Christian church was a matter reserved to the church as a whole with no special role for clergymen exercising spiritual powers derived from the apostolic succession. The payoff for this argument was that in a Christian commonwealth the church and state are one body, and the election and ordination of clerics was a matter for the sovereign. In a painstaking scholarly exegesis of Hobbes's scriptural claims, Hammond sought to defend the thought that election and ordination were separate processes and that the latter could only be performed by the Apostles and their successors.[88] Hammond's treatment of Hobbes is surprisingly restrained; even though it is evident that he thinks little of Hobbes's unusual scriptural readings, the care taken in unpicking *Leviathan*'s claims perhaps betrays Episcopalian concerns that there were readers who might be persuaded by Hobbes's apparently scholarly approach to scripture.

The public discussion of Hobbes's theological heterodoxy may also have encouraged others who had been silent about *Leviathan* to speak out, not least because silence might indicate continuing support for Hobbes's more wayward ideas. This issue was particularly acute for those Oxford scientists who had been so enthusiastic about Hobbes's scientific promise, and early works like *Humane Nature*. Hobbes's reappearance in England had provided an opportunity for them to meet the philosopher in person, and Hobbes himself recalled that soon after he arrived back in the country 'divers persons that professed to love philosophy and mathematics, came to see me; and some of them to let me see them, and hear and applaud what they applauded in themselves.'[89] The meeting or meetings were probably held at the London residence of the Royalist physician Sir Charles

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[87] Henry Hammond, *A letter of resolution to six quaeres* (1653 [amended to 1652 on Thomason's copy]) p. 384. Hammond singles out Hobbes's reinterpretations of the Trinity, Heaven and Hell.

[88] Ibid., pp. 385, 397–8, 398–9.

[89] Hobbes, *EW* 7: 337–8. See also Probst's account of the meeting, 'Infinity and creation: the origin of the controversy between Thomas Hobbes and the Savilian professors Seth Ward and John Wallis', in *The British Journal of the History of Science* 26: 90–3 (1993), p. 276.

Scarborough[90] and, as Hobbes's gloss suggests, they don't seem to have gone very well. It isn't clear exactly what happened, and later accounts are coloured with prejudice, but Hobbes apparently defended the novelty of his claim that all sense is nothing but a perception of motion, in contrast to what he suggested was the dominant Aristotelian doctrine of the Schools, that sensation is performed by species. The university scientists, possibly already anxious about the implications of *Leviathan* and perhaps irritated by Hobbes's suggestions that the universities were slavishly devoted to Aristotle, turned on him. John Wallis recorded later that Seth Ward, the author of the preface to *Humane Nature*, put it to Hobbes that that his scientific claims had already been made by Descartes, Gassendi and Kenelm Digby.[91] The charge of course preserved the value of the science, but undermined Hobbes's compromised authority. Hobbes was furious; he was always extremely proud of his scientific achievements and the accusation that his work was unoriginal made him very angry, especially when it came from individuals with an agenda.[92] This first-hand experience of apparent unreasonableness and arrogance, however it was provoked, seems to have provided the original example of the magisterial behaviour that became such a major feature of later critiques of the philosopher. It was, of course, appropriate that Hobbes behaved like a *Leviathan*, and the anecdote helped to merge the philosopher's image with that of his book.

As Hobbes came under fire for his theological views in the autumn of 1652 Ward went further and publicly dissociated himself from the philosopher. He did this by issuing a *A philosophicall essay towards an eviction of the being and attributes of God*, published in Oxford shortly after the booksellers had named and shamed Hobbes's theological views.[93] The treatise itself dealt with the being and attributes of God, the soul's immortality and the truth and authority of scripture, and Ward claimed that he had composed it several years previously. Towards the end of his prefatory remarks, Ward suddenly digresses into a topical attack upon Hobbes, drawing attention to the philosopher's denial of the existence of incorporeal substances, a position at odds with Ward's orthodox defence of the soul's immortality.[94] What follows is a carefully structured rejection of Hobbes's authority. Ward comments that he 'hath a very great respect and a very high esteem for that worthy Gentleman', but he must acknowledge that

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[90] Pope's *Life of Seth* (1961 Luttrell ed. J. B. Bamborough), pp. 124–5.

[91] Wallis, *Elenchus geometriae Hobbianae* (Oxford, 1655), p. 116; Hobbes gives his view of the matter in *EW* 7: 337–341.

[92] Walter Pope's account in his *Life of Seth* [Ward] ([1961] Luttrell ed. J. B. Bamborough), p. 125, seems to recall the same (or a similar) occasion. Although Hobbes could enjoy the process of verbally baffling unprepared opponents like Bramhall, it was a different matter when he uncovered more organised opposition. When he sensed that he was being lectured at, or that the objections were coming from pre-prepared positions, the dialogue would tend to be abandoned.

[93] S. Ward, *A philosophicall essay towards an eviction of the being and attributes of God* (Oxford, 1652).

> a great proportion of it is founded upon a belief & expectation concerning him, a belief of much knowledge in him, and an expectation of those Philosophicall and Mathematicall works, which he hath undertaken; and not so much upon what he hath yet published to the world, and that he doth not see reason from thence to recede from anything upon his Authority, although he shall avouch his discourse to proceed Mathematically.

The praise gets fainter and gives way to condemnation, a verbal representation of Ward's *volte face* in the face of Hobbes's heterodoxy; focusing now upon Hobbes's more recent works on religious matters, Ward suggests that Hobbes 'hath much injured the name of Demonstration, by bestowing it upon some of his discourses, which are exceedingly short of that evidence and truth which is required to make a discourse able to bear that reputation'.

At the heart of the dispute was Hobbes's materialist rejection of the idea that there could be such a thing as an incorporeal substance. Hobbes had come close to saying as much in the *Elements of Law*, but it was only in *Leviathan* that this was spelled out.[95] For Ward, Hobbes's denial of incorporeal substance simply meant that Hobbes was unable to think beyond the idea of matter, not that incorporeal substances didn't actually exist. Hobbes's delusions in this respect betrayed his arrogance, 'that he conceives himself in the highest and utmost bound of human apprehension, and that his reason is the measure of truth'. In an effective simile Ward likens Hobbes to a man who denies the existence of the moons of Jupiter because he looks at the planet with his naked eyes instead of with a telescope: 'the reason why M. H denies those beings whilest other men apprehend them, is for that he lookes at them with his Fancy, they with their minde.'

Ward's pamphlet, or at least the part dealing with the immortality of the soul, was thus turned into an anti-Hobbesian treatise. As Noel Malcolm has pointed out, one of the more unusual features of Hobbes's reception was the way that those who had been prepared to associate themselves with Hobbes's natural philosophy were to become some of his most vicious critics.[96] The reason was that the scientists were in danger of guilt by association, and in the context of the philosopher's increasingly compromised reputation, it was important for them to establish where they stood with respect to his ideas. Ironically it was their close intellectual proximity to Hobbes that required them to reject his authority and criticise his work.

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[94] Ibid., Sig. A3r.

[95] In *Elements*, I.11.5, Hobbes states that incorporeal bodies as such were simply an 'absurdity of speech', although as Douglas Jesseph, *Squaring the Circle: The War between Hobbes and Wallis* (Chicago, 1999), pp. 51–2, rightly states, he falls short of explicitly denying the existence of immaterial substances. Cf. *Leviathan*, ch. 34, pp. 269–70.

ALEXANDER ROSS

Almost all of the critical commentary attracted by *Leviathan* in the autumn of 1652 had concentrated upon the book's radical theology rather than its political theory, and this trend would be continued into the spring of 1653, when another dedicated critique of *Leviathan* appeared, this time by the redoubtable Scottish schoolmaster Alexander Ross. Born in 1591 and educated at King's College in Aberdeen, Ross imbibed early the conservative Aristotelian scholasticism that he would champion in later life against the new upstart philosophies. After completing his doctorate in Scotland, Ross had moved to England in 1616, accepting the Mastership of the Free School at Southampton. Some time in the early 1640s he moved to London, where he ran a private school in Covent Garden.[97] Ross's campaign against the new philosophy had begun in 1634 with his *Commentum de terrae motu circulari* (1634), which rejected the Copernican hypothesis that the earth rotated around the sun. His attack on heliocentricism continued in the 1640s when he targeted the Oxford scientist John Wilkins in his *The new planet no planet: or The earth no wandering star; Except in the wandring heads of the Galileans* (1646). Ross also attacked Sir Thomas Browne and Sir Kenelm Digby for their departure from orthodox Aristotelianism. Hobbes was therefore in good company when Ross turned his attention to *Leviathan*.

On Ross's own account, some of his friends asked him to look at *Leviathan* and to give his opinion of it in the first half of 1652. As a result he set aside his other studies over the summer of that year to investigate the book more thoroughly. The reason why Hobbes's 'chief Tenets' needed investigating in this way was, according to Ross, Hobbes's influence upon younger students. Hobbes's ideas, 'though erroneous and dangerous, are swallowed down by some young Sciolists without nauseating'.[98] The danger in *Leviathan* lay in the way that it packaged heterodox ideas in a superficially convincing manner:

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[96] Malcolm, 'Hobbes and the Royal Society', in *Aspects*, pp. 317–35.

[97] D. Allen, '"An Ancient Sage Philosopher": Alexander Ross and the Defence of Philosophy', *The Seventeenth Century* 16 (2001), pp. 69–94; but see also Malcolm, *Aspects*, pp. 281–2 especially note 108.

> I finde him [Hobbes] a man of excellent parts, and in this book much gold, and withal much dross; he hath mingled his wine with too much water, and imbittered his pottage with too much Coloquintida: there are some of his positions which may prove of dangerous consequence, to green heads, and immature judgments, who look no farther then the superficies, or outside of things, thinking all to be gold that glisters, and all wholesome food that is pleasing to the tast; under green grass lurch oftentimes snakes and serpents, such as *Euridice* perceive not, till they be stung to death.[99]

Ross's verdict here echoes Duppa's view that the book was an odd mixture of the good and the bad, but Ross takes upon himself the task of exposing exactly what the dangerous consequences of Hobbes's theory were. For Ross, and it seems, many early readers, *Leviathan* was a difficult and paradoxical work whose implications were very hard to read. As with the Presbyterian reaction, it was perceived to be a matter of some importance to draw out from *Leviathan* exactly what it was that made the book so dangerous, but in contrast to the Presbyterian case, Ross followed Filmer and to a certain extent Ward in standing back from an accusation that Hobbes was being malicious. Indeed, there is a perhaps surprising sympathy for Hobbes, already revealed in Ross's compliments about Hobbes's abilities; on Ross's account, Hobbes the talented philosopher has simply made dangerous mistakes that he should amend:

> In discovering of these errors, I quarrel not with Mr. *Hobbs*, but with his book; which not onely I, but many more, who are both learned, and judicious, men, look upon as a piece dangerous both to Government and Religion. All the hurt I wish him is, true illumination, a sanctified heart, and Christian sobriety; that he may retract what is amiss.[100]

Ross's view of *Leviathan* was that it represented not so much a coherent system as a heterogeneous compilation of ancient heterodoxy. Faced with the challenging task of deciding exactly what *Leviathan* represented, Ross played with an image of the biblical *Leviathan*, in this case swallowing not Jonah, but Cerinthus the heretic: Hobbes had carelessly strung together a whole series of heretical doctrines and 'vomited up the condemned opinions of the old hereticks', including (amongst others) the 'the *Anthropomorphits*, *Sabellians*, *Nestorians*, *Saduceans*, *Arabeans*, *Tacians* or *Eucratits*, *Manichies*, *Mahumetans* and others'.[101] One of the striking things about early readers of *Leviathan* like Ross, Duppa and Hammond, is the difficulty that they have in placing the book within recognisable traditions. *Leviathan* is a strange mixture or a 'Farrago', or a 'Rapsodie' rather than a programmatic statement with an identifiable provenance. When faced with the difficulty of identifying where *Leviathan* was coming from, Ross could only see it in terms of a ragbag of regurgitated heresy, a position that allowed him at once to identify the character of the dangers involved, but which also had the effect of denying an intellectual unity to Hobbes's project. This analysis allowed Ross to retain the thought that Hobbes might adjust his views by jettisoning the mistakes, something that the uncovering of a sinister underlying project might not have allowed.

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[98] A. Ross, *Leviathan drawn out with a hook, or, Animadversions upon Mr. Hobbs his Leviathan* (1653), Sig. A3r.

[99] Ibid., Preface. Coloquintida was the spongy pulp of the bitter cucumber, an Asiatic plant related to the watermelon. Eurydice was famously stung by a serpent concealed in a meadow which caused her death and descent to Hades.

[100] Ibid., To the Reader.

As a result, Ross works through Hobbes's chapters in order, albeit with a selective interest in his science and theology, rather than in his politics. His reaction to Hobbes's science simply demonstrates the vast distance between Ross's Aristotelian worldview and Hobbes's new paradigm. The early sections of *Leviathan* propose a physics and physiology completely alien to Ross's experience, eliciting little by way of commentary other than the slightly impatient correction of basic lapses from Aristotle's judgement. But this soon gives way to more substantial objections.

For example, commenting on chapter 5, Ross notes that Hobbes makes the idea of faith being inspired or infused an absurdity on the grounds that nothing can be poured or breathed into anything but body.[102] Ross quickly notes that the consequence would be to argue that on these grounds the soul and the Holy Ghost must also be body. Ross also unpacks the problems latent in Hobbes's controversial definition of religion in chapter 6 as 'Feare of power invisible, feigned by the mind, or imagined from tales publiquely allowed . . . '[103] Noting the subversive implication of Hobbes's position he comments that: 'We must mend the Creed, if Mr Hobbs his religion be true; and instead of saying I believe in God, we must say, I imagine, or feign in my minde an invisible power.'[104]

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[101] Ibid. [102] Ibid., p. 8; cf. *Leviathan*, ch. 5, pp. 34–5.

[103] Ibid., ch. 6, p. 42. [104] Ross, *Leviathan drawn out*, p. 15.

Ross pays particular attention to Hobbes's deployment of paradox, perhaps Hobbes's trademark technique in *De Cive* and *Leviathan*. Ross realised that Hobbes's unusual reversals of traditional conceptual relationships were the features of his argument that led readers towards highly controversial conclusions. Ross's strategy for dealing with them was to draw out the dangerous consequences in order to exhibit their self-evident absurdity. In one example, Ross scrutinises the 'strange Paradoxes' in chapter 10 where Hobbes parades a series of apparently counter-intuitive and provocative formulations that what is honourable is 'whatsoever possession, action or quality, is an argument and signe of Power'. One of the consequences is that an unjust action, if joined with power, is honourable because honour arises from the opinion of power.[105] For Ross, the simple correlation of honour and power allows the possibility that Caligula and Domitian could be honourable men by virtue of their power alone, thus denying that virtue or goodness might be essential attributes of honourableness. Hobbes's odd statement may sound superficially plausible, but its simplifications conceal a wide variety of intolerable consequences.

Despite his stated interest in the political consequences of Hobbes's work, Ross offers no commentary at all upon some of the most notorious passages of Hobbes's political theory. *Leviathan*'s account of the state of nature and the laws of nature is passed by without comment, and there is no discussion of Hobbes's contract theory or the seditious consequences of chapter 21 or the 'Review and Conclusion'. Hobbes is portrayed straightforwardly as an occasionally inconsistent theorist of tyrannical absolutism. Ross does defend Aristotle's political views against Hobbes's sometimes direct assaults. Although he concedes that all men are equal 'in regard of the essential perfection of the soul', he echoes Hyde's defence of Aristotle's argument about natural inequalities and the resulting need for subjection.[106] Ross reveals that his political preference is for a form of constitutional Royalism which puts him severely at odds with what he perceives to be Hobbes's apology for tyranny.[107] Commenting on chapter 18 of *Leviathan* where Hobbes argues that princes can do no injuries to their subjects, Ross comments that this is a doctrine that 'will hardly down with free born people, who choose to themselves Princes, not to tyrannise over them, but . . . to rule them. The people were not mad to give their power so to Princes, as to be their slaves.'[108] Although Ross was a Royalist, like

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[105] *Leviathan*, ch. 10, pp. 66–7. [106] Ross, *Leviathan drawn out*, pp. 18–20.

[107] Ibid., pp. 30–1. Ross defends a constitutional Royalist account of a self-binding monarch in his account of oaths, covenants and promises.

[108] Ibid., p. 21; cf. *Leviathan*, ch. 18, p. 124.

Filmer he angled his attack on Hobbes's theory of authorisation to reflect its difficulties for a republican account of popular sovereignty. Staying within a republican idiom, Ross also attacks Hobbes's reductive suggestion that 'whether the commonwealth be monarchical or popular, the freedom is still the same'. Ross rejects Hobbes's conflation of the situations, distinguishing between conditions of absolute monarchy where 'there is no liberty but meer slavery', and other regimes (monarchical *or* democratic) where the amount of liberty varies according to 'the condition of the times, and the people, and the disposition of the Governors'.[109] Ross derides Hobbes's attempt in chapter 20 to elide the distinction between tyrants and kings:

> This is to put no difference between the Father and Butcher of his Countrey, between the Shepherd and the woolf, between sharing and fleaing of the sheep. A King governs, and is governed by laws; a tyrant hath no law but his will; *jus est in armis, opprimit leges timor.*[110]

Ross's distinction between just/lawful and arbitrary/tyrannical power is subsequently used to deny practical features of Hobbes's absolutism, particularly his property theory. Here Ross's formulation returns to those pre-civil war Royalist arguments that had caused Hobbes to reject these distinctions in the first place: '. . . the property then of the subject excludeth not the Princes right in cases of necessity, but onely his arbitrary power.'

The treatment of Hobbes's religion is more detailed and interesting in Ross's attempts to identify the source of Hobbes's religious views. Ross is less interested in ecclesiology than he is in Hobbes's theology. Ross came to *Leviathan* after publishing the first English edition of the Koran in 1649, and one of his most striking responses to Hobbes's mortalist interpretations of the afterlife is to suggest that they are very close to an Islamic account of paradise. It would eventually become a commonplace for Hobbes's political theory to be compared to Turkish despotism, a conventional archetype of tyrannical government, but the identification of his theological arguments with this source is more unusual.

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[109] Ross wants to preserve here the classical category of the arbitrary tyrant whose subjects are slaves ruled by force. He seems to see liberty as freedom from arbitrary interference, a quality which can be enjoyed in monarchies as well as in commonwealths. Hobbes's redefinition of liberty as physical non-interference allowed him to remove these traditional distinctions betweens types of rule.

[110] Ibid., p. 22; the quote is from Seneca, *Hercules furens* CCLI: '. . . might makes right; fear silences the power of the law', cf. *Leviathan*, ch. 20. Ross also criticises Hobbes's shaky scriptural warrant for absolute power, a notorious passage from the book of Samuel (1 Samuel 8:11–12) detailing the servitude of the Jews; the passage in question, Ross argues, 'describes unto us, not the qualities of Kings, but of tyrants'.

Bypassing Hobbes's comments about the sovereign authorising scripture, Ross was more concerned with Hobbes's denial of Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch, offering alternate explanations as to how Moses could have written of his own death.[111] Regarding Hobbes's other assaults on Old Testament writers as 'of no moment or validity', Ross moves on to chapter 34 and a passage that would become a central piece of evidence in the argument over Hobbes's theism. In that chapter, Hobbes argues that 'For the *Universe*, being the Aggregate of all Bodies, there is no reall part thereof that is not also *Body*; nor any thing properly a *Body*, that is not a part of (that Aggregate of all Bodies) the *Universe*.'[112] Ross offers the first printed discussion of the point and identifies straight away the consequence that Hobbes was effectively saying that God, if he exists at all, is material.[113] Ross identifies Tertullian as a source for Hobbes's view, a Christian precedent to which Hobbes would himself allude in his own defence from 1662 onwards. Ross is nevertheless clear that the church had rejected Tertullian's position and saw God as an incorporeal substance of the sort that Hobbes denied.

Ross pursues the implications of Hobbes's robust materialism into his treatment of Christ, Heaven and Hell. The idea that Christ should return to the earth as a mortal king Ross simply finds at odds with scriptural accounts that state that Christ returns to earth only to judge the quick and the dead. Ross's strategy here, as elsewhere in his treatment of Hobbes's religious doctrine, is to uncover possible heretical versions of Hobbes's doctrine, in order to demonstrate that Hobbes's approach is neither original nor orthodox. Where Hobbes explicitly proclaims the novelty of his idea that Christ's kingdom is an earthly kingdom, Ross finds a precedent in the teachings of 'Cerinthus the heretick'.[114] Ross also denies the novelty of Hobbes's teachings about the soul's death until its resurrection at judgement day, arguing that it was the heresy maintained by the Arabian heretics and more recently by the soul-sleepers, or 'Psychopanuychits'.[115] Hobbes, in an opinion that 'relisheth too much of the Alcoran', simply mistakes allegorical accounts of Heaven in the scripture for descriptions of an earthly kingdom.[116] The same goes for Hobbes's earthly vision of Hell, 'a doctrine well beseeming the school of Mahomet, not of Christ'.[117]

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[111] Ross argues that Moses wrote in a scriptural mode that allowed him to anticipate his own death. For Hobbes's arguments on this issue, see N. Malcolm, 'Hobbes, Ezra and the Bible', in *Aspects*, pp. 383–431.

[112] *Leviathan* ch. 34, pp. 269–70; Hobbes makes the same point in chapter 46, p. 463.

[113] Ross, *Leviathan drawn out*, pp. 35–6; see also p. 87 commenting on the passage from *Leviathan*, chapter 46, p. 463.

[114] Cerinthus was an early Christian Gnostic-Ebionite heretic referred to by Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, I, c. xxvi; III, c. iii, c. x, and Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, III, xxviii, 2. Cerinthus distinguished between Jesus and Christ. Jesus was mere man, though eminent in holiness. He suffered and died and was raised from the dead, or, as some say Cerinthus taught, He will be raised from the dead at the Last Day and all men will rise with Him.

Hobbes's 'strange wheemsie concerning the blessed Trinity' causes particular confusion for Ross and he refers to Hobbes's adaptation of his theory of representation as 'strange stuffe'. He had noticed it first in chapter 16, where Hobbes lays out his theory of representation to argue that God had been represented by Moses and Christ.[118] For Ross this made no sense because only separate individuals could represent each other, but Christ and God were one and the same. In considering Hobbes's treatment of the issue in chapter 42, Ross makes the orthodox objection that the term 'person' in the Trinity did not refer to an act of representation at all, but rather to a particular manifestation of God's unitary essence. Hobbes's use of representation had been designed to demystify a Christian doctrine that was close to tritheism. However, for Ross, Hobbes's attempt to make sense of the idea of the Trinity with his unitary account of personation opened the way to absurdity; if representing God makes an individual a person of the Trinity, then three people hardly reflect all those priests and kings who have a claim to represent God on earth: 'in this respect the Trinity may be called a Legion, or rather innumerable persons.'[119] Ross's doubts about the relevance of a more general theory of representation to the Trinity may already have been expressed to Hobbes, who reported that John Cosin had thought the passage insufficiently 'applicable to the mystery of the Trinity'.[120] As we shall see, the outraged response to this particularly heretical doctrine would lead Hobbes to make an uncharacteristic public retraction of the view in 1668.[121]

In terms of ecclesiology, Ross's complaints centre around the augmented status of the sovereign. Of Hobbes's claim in chapter 42 that sovereigns are to teach religion, Ross comments: '. . . to allow Princes power to teach what they will, is to make them absolute lords, not onely over our bodies and goods, but over our souls also, and to enslave our understandings to their wills.'[122] If Hobbes defines heresy as a private opinion 'obstinately maintained, contrary to the opinion which the publick person hath commanded to be taught', Ross was quick to point out that in non-Christian states this made Christians heretics: 'these are your hereticks, Mr. *Hobbs*; by this your definition, you may call Christ and his Apostles hereticks, for they held doctrines contrary to the opinions of the Scribes and the Pharisees, who (as you say) sat in *Moyses* chair.' Heresy, according to Ross, could only be those doctrines repugnant to God's word and the Christian faith.

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[115] 'Soul-sleepers' were followers of Richard Overton's teachings in *Mans mortallitie* (1643), a work whose materialism is often close to Hobbes's position. They allegedly believed that the soul falls asleep at death.

[116] Ross, *Leviathan drawn out*, p. 50. [117] Ibid., p. 73.

[118] *Leviathan*, chapter 16, p. 114 Cf. Ross, *Leviathan drawn out*, p. 20.

[119] Ross, *Leviathan drawn out*, pp. 54–5. [120] *EW*, IV, p. 317. [121] See below, p. 282.

[122] Ross, *Leviathan drawn out*, pp. 59–60; cf. *Leviathan*, 42.

Ross sees well enough that Hobbes's strategy is 'to overthrow Christs Kingdom in this world, as being an invention of the Romanists and Presbyterians to uphold their own greatness'.[123] But at the same time Ross dismisses Hobbes's noisy polemic about Roman Catholicism as old news. Indeed, Ross challenges Hobbes's suggestion in chapter 47 that either the Roman Catholic or the Presbyterian churches had ever claimed to be Christ's kingdom on earth.[124] Identifying Hobbes's generic threat to all clerical claims to authority, Ross attempts to present Hobbes's kingdom of darkness as a community of straw men.

The closing chapters of *Leviathan* include a crushing indictment of scholasticism, or in Hobbes's terms 'vain philosophy'. In response Ross offers a lengthy defence, citing Protestant supporters and admirers of Aristotle, vindicating his political and religious utility and uncovering Hobbes's purpose in launching so desperate an assault. Ross argues that it all comes down to Hobbes's ambition to replace Aristotle in the university curriculum, referring to Hobbes's recommendation that *Leviathan* might be taught in the universities.[125] This Hobbesian policy often attracted the attention of the book's academic readers, and Ross was rightly sceptical about Hobbes's chances of success. It would be this aspect of Hobbes's work that would embroil him in disputes with Oxford a year later.

Ross ended as he began, as a respectful, rational and open-minded critic, and he claimed that he would have Hobbes take note that 'I have no quarrel against him, but against his tenets; I honor his worth and learning, but dislike his opinions; I know not his person, but I know and respect his parts.'[126] Ross's odd formulation draws attention to a distinction between Hobbes's essence and his accidents, and in this polite treatment we can identify the persistence of the Royalist view that there was enough in

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[123] Ross, *Leviathan drawn out*, p. 94.

[124] *Leviathan*, ch. 47, pp. 474–5; cf. Ross, *Leviathan drawn out*, p. 94.

[125] Ibid., pp. 96–7. [126] Ibid., p. 102.

Hobbes of value to try to persuade him of the error of his ways. At no point does Ross accuse Hobbes of outright atheism; in line with other printed responses to *Leviathan*, Hobbes is portrayed as a writer guilty of blasphemous and heretical heterodoxy, but not of anti-Christian atheism. This would come later.

Leviathan drawn out with a hook was bound together with Ross's *Observations upon Sir Walter Raleigh's history of the world* and published by Richard Royston towards the end of January 1652/3.[127] William Rand judged that Ross's particular approach would pose no real threat to Hobbes; he wrote to Samuel Hartlib in February that 'Mr Hobbs need not feare the pedantick way of writing used by Al: Ross, though a learned Man in his way & veine of Learning.'[128] Part of the reason for this was Ross's reputation as a knee-jerk opponent of the new science. In 1654 John Davies, who knew Hobbes, commenting on Ross's critique noted that Ross was 'one who may be said to have had so much Learning as to have been perpetually barking at the works of the most learned'.[129] Rand's and Davies's response was probably representative of a scientific community that had long since parted company with Ross's brand of scholasticism (at least, when it came to science), but this shouldn't lead us to the conclusion that Ross's judgement on Hobbes was not read or taken seriously by other readers. In 1655 Thomas Barlow recommended Ross's work to undergraduates,[130] and in 1656 Seth Ward drew upon Ross's critique in his own attack upon Hobbes. It may also be significant that Ross's title appeared in William London's 1658 *Catalogue of the most vendible books in England*.[131]

However the book was received more generally, it proved to be the only dedicated critique of *Leviathan* to be published for several years. Indeed, the rest of 1653 proved to be rather quiet in terms of discussions of Hobbes's work in print, possibly because that year was also the first that did not see the publication of any works by the philosopher. The examples that we have demonstrate the wide range of debates in which Hobbes's work could either be used or criticised, often in contexts far removed from their usage in Hobbes's texts.

In June, Albertus Warren's *Eight reasons categorical* defended the common law against reformers (a very *un*Hobbesian cause) as a bulwark against

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[127] Thomason received his copy on 26 January. Ross's *Observations* date from 1650 and had been printed separately.

[128] *Hartlib Papers*, 62/17/2 A.

[129] Hobbes, *Of libertie and necessitie a treatise* (1654), Sig. A8r.

[130] *CTH*, II, p. 786; Cf. de Jordy and Fletcher, *A Library for Younger Scholaers*, p. 49.

[131] W. London, *A catalogue of the most vendible books in England* (1658), p. 12.

Hobbesian anarchy, praising the army's prudential defence of it in terms that recall *Leviathan*'s remarks about the relationship between sovereigns and their laws.[132] In July, John Austin was again appropriating Hobbes's anti-Catholic remarks for the cause of Catholic toleration, this time claiming that *Leviathan* offered a defence for Catholics unwilling to take the Oath of Abjuration. The sections quoted from chapter 46 argue against the legal proscription of the 'bare thoughts and Consciences of men by examination and inquisition of what they hold'.[133] This captures Hobbes's original anti-Catholic thought (Hobbes's pointedly capitalised and italicised *Inquisition* is suppressed in the quotation) that legislating over private thought is a violation of natural law, but Austin removes Hobbes's important qualification that punishment is only unjust if those opinions have not been expressed or acted upon. Hobbes may well have been tolerant when it came to freedom of thought, but when it came to external profession, he was uncomfortably intolerant, as the Presbyterian reading had indicated.[134] The difficulty for Austin was that Hobbes's theory provided a much simpler solution to the Oath of Abjuration issue: Catholics should take it because external profession had no effect upon internal beliefs. But Austin wanted to redeploy Hobbes's anti-Catholicism as a full-blooded endorsement of liberty of conscience, with Hobbes made an unlikely part of a roll call of 'the most eminent divines in the Reformed Churches (Osiander, Bucer, Buchanan, Foxe, Beza, Calvin, Polanus, Acontius, Perkins, Assembly of Divines, Hobbs, Chillingworth)'.[135] Austin's textual gymnastics show that *Leviathan could* be used to support the case for toleration, but the need to suppress key elements of Hobbes's religious authoritarianism also demonstrates the difficulties involved in using him this way. Although modern commentators have made a lot of Hobbes's supposed commitment to religious toleration, it is perhaps no surprise that Austin is one of only very few contemporary apologists for religious toleration to deploy *Leviathan* in this way. Hobbes's anti-clericalism might make *Leviathan* agreeable to the enemies of priests, but at the same time his authoritarian commitment to a civil religion made him a lot less attractive to those interested in freedom of religious expression.

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[132] A. Warren, *Eight reasons categorical* (1653), p. 5. On Warren see also Skinner, *Visions*, III, pp. 276, 281, 299, 304; but see also S. State, *Thomas Hobbes and the Debate Over Natural Law and Religion* (New York, 1991), pp. 128–9.

[133] W. Birchley [Austin], *The Christian moderator . . . Third part.* (1653), p. 21, selectively quoting ch. 46, p. 378 of *Leviathan* [pp. 471–2 in Tuck].

[134] See also p. 27 of *The Christian moderator*, where Austin selectively quotes from chapter 42 of *Leviathan* (p. 342 [p. 270 O.P.]) to the effect that priests have no power to punish belief. Austin omits Hobbes's less tolerant thought that if the clergy have sovereign power, 'then they may indeed lawfully Punish any Contradiction to their laws whatsoever'.

[135] W. Birchley [Austin], *The Christian moderator*, p. 27.

The paradoxical quality of *Leviathan* thus made it a tricky work to apply to contemporary discussions in a straightforward fashion, and the problem of working out how to situate Hobbes's ideas remained, particularly where Hobbes's theology was concerned. In November 1653 a Catholic writer named Guy Holland (1587–1660), perhaps a pseudonym of John Serjeant, produced a defence of the immortality of the soul titled *The grand prerogative of humane nature*, where Hobbes's materialist soteriology ('in a prodigious volume of his, called by him as prodigiously *Leviathan*') was placed in a tradition linking the philosopher to Pietro Pomponazzi and Daniel Sennert.[136] Holland simply reiterates the view that the soul is in fact an intellectual substance, and suggests that Hobbes's readings of scripture put an unnatural construction upon the sense of the text.[137] The response is typical of the incomprehension that tended to accompany readings of *Leviathan*'s theology, and although his hunch about *Leviathan*'s tradition wasn't a bad one, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that there was at this stage no real consensus amongst *Leviathan*'s early readers about where *Leviathan* came from, or what its unusual theories meant.

This may be part of the reason why the immediate response to *Leviathan* was relatively muted. Hobbes's readers had to work out exactly what they were getting from the strange mixtures and paradoxes in the book, which defied straightforward attempts to enlist it in a particular cause. This feature of *Leviathan* made it difficult to use as propaganda for the republic, as Rand realised. Hobbes's defection made it equally problematic for Royalists like Filmer. In religious terms we have noted that what *Leviathan* could provide by way of support for toleration, it simultaneously took away with its notion of a civil religion. What was one to make of Hobbes's rhapsody? If the verdicts of Filmer and Ross are at all representative, then one short answer was that the book was a potentially dangerous mess, and nothing more than that.

But in this paradoxical weakness lay *Leviathan*'s slow-burning strength. *Leviathan* may not have mapped onto one particular political template, but it was capable of speaking to many different agendas simultaneously; to the authoritarian Royalist at one moment, to the supporter of the republican regime at another; to the anti-clerical religious radical, and to the supporter of a national church. The relative critical silence thus concealed the extent to which *Leviathan* was being read and absorbed, in all sorts of different contexts, even if individual readers were not necessarily moved to endorse or condemn Hobbes's work *tout court*. In part, this process was made easier by Hobbes's self-consciously rhetorical presentation of the argument. Hobbes's metaphorical imagery was novel and readily transferable. It is striking that *Leviathan*'s sound-bites and imagery start to appear in the most unusual contexts.

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[136] G. H., *The grand prerogative of humane nature* (1653), pp. 119–20. Petrus Pomponatius was Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1524), whose *Tractatus de immortalitate animæ* (Bologna, 1516) defended the notion that the intellective soul is mortal and must perish with the body. Daniel Sennert (1572–1637) was a Wittenberg professor of medicine, whose work on the soul suggested that the soul was conjoined with seminal matter.

[137] G. H., *The grand prerogative of humane nature*, pp. 124–5.

One interesting example is the Royalist gentleman and friend of Brian Duppa, Richard Ligon. Ligon had travelled to Barbados in 1647 and had returned to England in 1650, to be thrown into jail by his creditors. Still in prison in 1653, Ligon composed a now famous account of his voyage to Barbados, where the imagery of *Leviathan* allegorically shapes the memory of his first sight of the Barbadian jungle. Ligon comments on the symbiotic reciprocity that sustains the forest, in which the tall trees take nourishment from the earth and roots and in return offer protection and shelter from the heat of the sun.[138] The encounter is used to confirm the essential truth of Hobbes's political theory, an important lesson for Ligon's contemporaries:

> And truly these vegetatives, may teach both the sensible and reasonable Creatures, what it is that makes up wealth, beauty, and all harmony in that *Leviathan*, a well governed Common-wealth: Where the Mighty men, and Rulers of the earth, by their prudent and carefull protection, secure them from harmes; whilst they retribute their paynes and faithfull obedience, to serve them in all just Commands. And both these, interchangeably and mutually in love, which is the Cord that bindes up all in perfect Harmonie. And where these are wanting the roots dry, and leaves fall away, and a general decay, and devastation ensues. Witness the woefull experience of these sad times we live in.[139]

Leviathan is used to mediate and politicise Ligon's memories, but at the same time Ligon's image of the jungle is used to validate *Leviathan*'s political theory, a striking example of the way that Hobbes's work could insinuate itself through its appeal to nature. *Leviathan* and its peculiar and paradoxical sets of political relationships become new ways to see the world, and to characterise relationships within it.

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[138] R. Ligon, *A true & exact history of the island of Barbados* (1657), p. 20.

[139] Ibid., pp. 20–1.

The ability of *Leviathan* to provide transferable and memorable interpretative metaphors extended beyond politics. Mildmay Fane, the second Earl of Westmoreland, was a Royalist compounder who perhaps had more reason than most to ponder the mysteries of *Leviathan*. It is evident from his poetry, and other sources, that he was interested in Hobbes and his most notorious book.[140] In a poem to another Royalist poet John Cleveland, Fane's own puzzlement about the identity of *Leviathan* is dissolved when he realises that it characterises perfectly his relationship with Cleveland. Fane proffers his verse:

Which I heer offer to the skan
Of all great Arts *Leviathan*
For now I shall noe longer looke
Whence Hobbs intiteled his booke
Though surreptitious and by stealth
Since thou'rt above all commonwealth
Thy Straines Monarkike, nor can bear,
Th'affront of a Competitor
Wher Science Liberall is who guives
Not unto All prerogatives
Over the Tongue and Pen but brings
Those best deserve to be her Kings
Yet what are such if left alone
Nor Honord by Subjection.[141]

Fane ultimately uses Hobbes's argument in a complex way to stress the mutuality that underlies his submission to Cleveland's judgement.

It is unsurprising that Hobbes's theory was attractive to defeated Royalists like Ligon and Fane. But at the same time Ross's anxieties about Hobbes's influence on a younger generation suggest another constituency for whom Hobbes's new way of seeing the world proved particularly attractive. Although the traditional stuff of moral panic, especially for those like Ross who bemoaned the breakdown of traditional sources of values, there is some evidence that Hobbes was in fact gaining young converts. Charles Cotton is one obvious example, but there are other documented cases. In 1654 we find Hammond writing to Sheldon, concerned about the effect of *Leviathan*'s 'heathen principles' on Lady

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[140] Fane was a kinsman of the dedicatee of Cotton's translation of *De Cive*. His copy of Davenant's *Gondibert* was described as having MS. Verses on Hobbes, Waller and Cowley, by the Earl of Westmorland, Sotheby's 1887 lot 229, cited in Cain (ed.), *The Poetry of Mildmay Fane, Second Earl of Westmorland*, ed. T. Cain (Manchester, 2001), p. 421 n.

[141] Ibid. p. 257, ll. 9–22.

Packington's nephew, Sir George Savile, the future Marquis of Halifax.[142] Many of the attacks upon Hobbes in the later 1650s are prefaced by the thought that Hobbes had had a sometimes unexpected influence amongst impressionable young gentlemen, and students in the universities, and that this needed to be put right with a definitive statement of Hobbes's heterodoxy. But by this time Hobbes's paradoxical worldview and his metaphors had become common currency for many of his readers. In spite of its critics' belated efforts, Hobbes's paradoxical and novel philosophy was providing attractive organising structures for the thoughts of many different kinds of reader.

HOBBES AND ATHEISM

It is often assumed that the publication of *Leviathan* was swiftly followed by outraged public accusations of atheism, but in fact this didn't happen. Given the level of modern interest in the question of whether Hobbes was an atheist or not, it is slightly surprising that this point has not been investigated more carefully. There is no doubt that individuals did believe that Hobbes was an atheist and were prepared to say so in private.[143] That said, demonstrating that Hobbes was an atheist from his works was no straightforward matter. Hobbes talked about God at length, and in ways that were familiar to his audience. Indeed, the modern debate about Hobbes's atheism smoulders on precisely because there are no unambiguous statements of atheism in any of Hobbes's texts, something that Hobbes would later point out to critics. As a result, and possibly wishing to avoid an easy Hobbesian rejoinder, Hobbes's early critics tended to shy away from public accusations of atheism, and what is remarkable is not the volume of such accusations, but rather how few there were, and how cautiously they were made. No one appears to have made the allegation in print until the publication of Seth Ward's *Vindiciae academiarum* of 1654. Hobbes's doctrines were called heretical and blasphemous, charges grave enough, but the direct accusation of atheism did not appear for several years after the publication of *Leviathan*.

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[142] BL MS Harleian 6942 f. 27, see the discussion in Hayward 'Mores of Great Tew', p. 227. Sheldon may not have been completely successful in rooting out the influence of Hobbes; for examples of Halifax's occasionally Hobbesian views on property for example see *The Works of George Savile Marquis of Halifax*, ed. N. Brown (1989), II, p. 224 and n1. A copy of the first edition of *Leviathan* is recorded in Halifax's London library in catalogues of 1683 and 1684; a copy at Rufford (probably the one referred to here) is recorded in a catalogue of 1693. Ibid.

[143] See, for example, Robert Baillie's remarks, above, p. 55.

This may explain the otherwise puzzling fact that anti-atheist works of the period do not refer to Hobbes either. Indeed, Walter Charleton's *The darknes of atheism dispelled by the light of nature* (1652) refers quite favourably to Hobbes and we have already seen that he was an admirer of Hobbes's work. Even Henry More's *An antidote against atheisme* (1653), with its attempt to combat the distinctive form of atheism fostered by scientific naturalism, neither mentions Hobbes nor engages directly with *Leviathan*'s arguments. More would go on to attack Hobbes (although without accusing him of atheism) in *The immortality of the soul* (1659) after the publication of the latter's materialist science in *De Corpore* (1655) but his attitude towards Hobbes in the early 1650s is more difficult to establish. A Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and member of the group of divines known subsequently as the Cambridge Platonists, More's preoccupation from the 1640s onwards was to find a way of reconciling the new science with religion, specifically by demonstrating the role played by spirit. As he himself would testify later, his concern in the *Antidote* was to counter the materialist dangers that emerged from modern French natural philosophy, specifically Gassendi's neo-Epicureanism and even Descartes's mechanistic philosophy.[144] In this case More's desire to deal with the more general implications of cutting-edge French science may have taken priority over refuting Hobbes's highly ambiguous and apparently derivitive variant.

The thought that Hobbes's work was simply a misreading of French philosophy, particularly Gassendi's work, would become an important part of the way that More and his associates would make sense of the philosopher's *oeuvre*. From the late 1650s onwards Hobbes would be cast as a disreputable imitator of classical and more modern Continental Epicureanism. Given the difficulty of establishing exactly what Hobbes was in philosophical terms this characterisation supplied a simple answer, 'deciding' his paradoxical arguments in favour of traditions with which contemporaries were more familiar. Hobbes's complex argument would be regularly reduced to the caricatured anti-providential hedonism with which Epicureanism was commonly associated. This identification was also useful to Hobbes's critics because of the battery of anti-Epicurean arguments available in Cicero's works, particularly *De natura deorum* and *De finibus*. If Hobbes was *really* an Epicurean, then all one needed to do was to quote Cicero's anti-Epicurean characters against *Leviathan*. This classical mode of argument also carried with it additional benefits for those who might be worried about Hobbes's proximity to their own discourse; by redefining Hobbes as an Epicurean it was possible to put some clear classical water between *Leviathan* and one's own argument. For these reasons, the presentation of Hobbes as a disreputable Epicurean became a recurrent feature of anti-Hobbes works. Robert Sharrock's suggestively titled *De officiis* (1660) would attack Hobbes using a large dose of Cicero. Charles Wolseley in 1669 would redefine Hobbes almost exclusively as an Epicurean atheist, Richard Cumberland's 1672 refutation of Hobbes would rely heavily upon a Ciceronian stoic critique of Hobbes's Epicureanism, and right at the end of the century Richard Bentley's celebrated Boyle Lectures of 1692 would deploy exclusively anti-Epicurean arguments against Hobbes. In all of these cases, the authors had good reason to ensure that Hobbes's complexity and relationship to their own position was flattened out in a blanketing use of the anti-Epicurean critique.

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[144] H. More, *An explanation of the grand mystery of godliness* (1660), Preface, p. vii.