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Thomas Hobbes and the Problem of Self-Censorship

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At a time when questions of self-censorship are very much to the fore both in philosophical circles and in the wider public culture, it may be illuminating to consider the circumstances under which modern discourse of self-censorship came into being and to examine the historical development of self-censorship as a term of art in that discourse. Although to do so is to step back into a world that is in some respects very different from our own, not least in perspectives on freedom of speech, the issues dealt with by early modern writers were not so very far removed from those which continue to worry modern philosophers and writers about politics, for whom the tension between free speech and public order, and its implications for self-censorship, remain great problems.¹

Self-censorship was an extremely serious issue for early modern political thinkers, faced as they were with deeply conflicted societies. As we shall see, a formal recognition of its political necessity featured prominently in some of the major theoretical responses to the unprecedented religious strife of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Discussions of self-censorship in a political setting drew upon a cluster of concepts that had been designed to cope with new political realities:

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¹ I should stress at the outset that in this paper I am mainly concerned with self-censorship understood as a form of *self-constraint*, where an individual adopts values that constrain the expression of their attitudes. This might be distinguished from the other very common discourse of self-censorship in early-modern societies (to be considered elsewhere), which arises from consideration of situations where individuals are dominated by others such that they are forced to self-censor in accordance with the dominating agent. This form of *self-censorship by proxy* can be held to be distinct from *self-censorship by self-constraint* insofar as the latter is not dependent upon the existence of a dominating agent external to the individual. The distinction is clearly not absolute but constitutes a useful way to differentiate commonly recognised forms of self-censorship. For discussion of this point, see Philip Cook and Conrad Heilman, 'Two Types of Self-Censorship: Public and Private' March 20 2010. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1575662>. For discussion of self-censorship in situations of domination, see particularly the work of Quentin Skinner: 'Freedom as the Absence of Arbitrary Power' in Laborde, C. and Maynor J. (eds), *Republicanism and Political Theory* (2008), 83-102, at 91-4.

refurbished classical and Christian notions of selfhood, secularised notions of the political community and the concomitant identification of public and private spheres with commitments peculiar to each. As this nexus of concepts retains a central importance in modern liberal political theory, to examine its character is not only to engage with thinkers dealing with similar problems in the past, but also to understand something about the terms in which we discuss those issues in the present.

Such an examination is all the more in order if, as some historians and philosophers have persuasively argued, some of the deepest conceptual problems facing modern liberal theorising are vestigial.² By examining the work of one of the most important contributors to its evolution – the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes – we may hope to discover something of interest not only about *his* solution to the problem of self-censorship, but also about our own, sometimes queasy, responses to the problem

Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the fact that Hobbes was a political philosopher who practised self-censorship.³ When it came to publishing his political, religious and scientific positions, Hobbes deliberately concealed his private views out of a concern for the way that his reading public might respond to them. One perhaps predictable motivation for this form of concealment was self-preservation, in both a narrow and a broader sense. The narrow sense relates to Hobbes's own self-preservation. If he had published his heterodox theological views candidly, it is highly likely that he would have faced prosecution on a capital charge like heresy – or perhaps even treason.⁴ But Hobbes's silences were not just about avoiding personal prosecution; he also self-censored even when his immediate personal safety was not in jeopardy.

Hobbes's silences bespeak a broader sense of the threats to peace, and therefore to self-preservation, that could result from the propagation of ideas that might too readily be misunderstood or misapplied. This broader concern to censor the self in the interest of peace was obtrusively present in Hobbes's political theory, in

² Here I have in mind the work of Reinhart Koselleck, particularly his analysis in *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (1959), which has recently been revived for an English-speaking audience in Ian Hunter's *Rival Enlightenments* (2001).

³ See particularly Kinch Hoekstra's 'The End of Philosophy: The Case of Hobbes' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 106 1 (2006), 23-60.

⁴ See J. Parkin, 'Baiting the Bear: The Anglican attack on Hobbes in the later 1660s', *History of Political Thought* 24 3 (2013), pp. 421-458. In this piece I show that heresy proceedings against Hobbes were taken seriously in the later 1660s, and that Hobbes's anxieties about such proceedings were not simply the product of paranoia.

which self-censorship was presented not simply as a matter of anticipating and avoiding legal proscription but rather as one of the natural duties of a responsible citizen, and a duty that played a crucial role in Hobbes's solution to the problem of political conflict.

To understand Hobbes's theory in these terms is to cast doubt upon some influential modern interpretations of it. Recent discussions of Hobbes's use of dissimulative techniques such as self-censorship have pointed to the similarities between his position and that of the renaissance *ragion di stato* (reason of state) writers in the Machiavellian tradition, whose *politique* distinction between the internal self and one's public *persona* offered a pragmatic solution to problems of political and religious pluralism. Self-censorship, in their writings as in Hobbes's theory, is a desirable characteristic of princes and subjects, and an essential condition of civil peace. It has been suggested that Hobbes's theory has the same essentially pragmatic structure.⁵ However, in exploring Hobbes's treatment of self-censorship, I would like to suggest that while Hobbes did indeed see benefits in the practice of censoring the self as the reason of state theorists recommended, he also saw costs.

In particular, Hobbes recognised the potentially damaging tensions produced by the recommended disjunction between one's public and private beliefs. Hobbes's proposed solution to this problem was an ambitious attempt to eliminate these tensions through a dramatic redefinition of the nature of the self. Hobbes may have self-censored, but, *pace* recent discussions, his ambition was to create a world in which the problems to which self-censorship was the answer were effectively eliminated rather than simply contained.

In what follows I shall examine Hobbes's views on the problem of self-censorship and the role that it plays within his theory. In the second section I consider the relationship between Hobbes's position on self-censorship and the reason of state tradition with which he has been associated. In the third section I argue that it might be better to think of Hobbes as a perceptive critic of the reason of state writers on this issue, and one who was proposing a distinctive solution to the problem of self-censorship that has been lost to view.

1. Hobbes and Self-Censorship

⁵ Hoekstra 'The End of Philosophy: The Case of Hobbes', 23-60.

It is difficult to find evidence of self-censorship among early-modern writers,⁶ but Hobbes is an intriguing instance of an author whose doctrine appears to recommend self-censorship, and whose private transactions appear to embody it. To begin with his doctrine: Hobbes's commitment to some form of self-censorship arises from the relationship between his formal commitment to free thought, and his striking claim that individuals have no entitlement at all to freedom of speech or action; not only are subjects formally obliged to profess whatever is required of them by the sovereign, but they also have an obligation to self-censor their speech and acts according to the requirements of peace, even where the sovereign has not commanded them to do so.

Hobbes's defence of free thought begins from the position that such freedom naturally pertains to human beings because beliefs simply cannot be coerced. Hobbes argues that belief can never be coerced because beliefs or opinions are not the products of voluntary action. This means that it is impossible to lay any sort of external obligation upon individuals' mental processes. As Hobbes famously notes, 'beleef, and unbeleef never follow mens commands'.⁷ As the internal sphere of belief is not amenable to coercion political communities are necessarily committed to the *de facto* toleration of all private beliefs; for as Hobbes puts it when discussing private religious beliefs in chapter 31 of *Leviathan*, 'Private, is in secret Free'.⁸ With regard to the external sphere of action, however, the story is very different.

Hobbesian subjects have no right to the free public expression of their beliefs, and are obliged to conform their public statements to whatever is required of them by the sovereign. This view is elaborated unapologetically in chapter 42 of *Leviathan*, where Hobbes confronts the potentially hard case of religious believers required by their sovereign to subscribe publicly to beliefs that they privately find intolerable.⁹ In response, Hobbes points out that any command to a Christian that forbids *belief* in Christ will simply be ineffective because belief, being involuntary, cannot be subject to commands. On the other hand, if a Christian is required to *say* that he does not believe in Christ, Hobbes counsels that 'Profession with the tongue is but an externall thing', and is no more than a gesture signifying obedience to the sovereign. Therefore

⁶ For discussion of a variety of self-censoring practices see particularly P. Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in early Modern Europe* (1990), especially ch. 12.

⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Tuck (1991), 343; see also ch. 26, 198: 'for mens beleefe, and interiour cogitations, are not subject to the commands, but only to the operation of God'.

⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Tuck, 249.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 343-4; see also the example in *De cive* ch. 15, 183-5 where Hobbes considers the case of Christians ordered to perform acts against their faith.

a Christian commanded to repudiate Christ has the same liberty as Naaman the Syrian in the Book of Kings who, after he had converted to the God of Israel, was still required to worship in the temple of Rimmon and did so (or so Hobbes claims) with the approval of the prophet Elisha.¹⁰

The Naaman example became one of the most notorious passages in the book: Hobbes appeared to be recommending nothing short of hypocrisy, violating the true Christian's conscience by asking the believer to fall in with the public conscience instead. Many of Hobbes's critics zeroed in on the Nicodemism of the Naaman passage as an indication not only of Hobbes's approval of dissimulation, but also as damning evidence of the probable insincerity of many of his other views, particularly his religious views.¹¹ On this basis, they suggested, nothing that Hobbes said could be taken to be a reliable marker of anything more than his willingness to pay lip service to the legal authorities. This willingness was unseemly in itself, but it suggested worse: that his true opinions were so outrageously heterodox that he felt compelled to hide them at all costs. The subtlety of Hobbes's position, as his opponents very quickly realised, was that it made it very difficult to prove that he held unorthodox opinions and almost impossible to convict him for doing so, since his own principles not only allowed but required him to recant any position of which the sovereign disapproved.¹²

Hobbes endorsed the self-censorship of one's views in deference to official orthodoxy. But his interest in self-censorship didn't end there. It carried through into his account of natural moral obligations, contained in his description of natural law. Natural law for Hobbes consisted in a series of linked conclusions or theorems concerning the best means of achieving peaceful coexistence. These theorems are not, he argues, formally obligatory laws like those made by the sovereign, but they are propositions that should be acted upon whenever it is safe to do so. Hobbes envisaged

¹⁰ The Naaman passage was a classic text associated with 'Nicodemism', a term deriving from Calvin's disparaging name for Protestants who conformed outwardly to Catholicism (after Nicodemus, the Christian Pharisee from John 3:1-2 who concealed his faith). Much of the early modern debate over the passage turned on whether Elisha's comment to Naaman 'Go in peace' signified the prophet's approval or a simple 'goodbye'. Hobbes's interpretation, although controversial, was not out of line with other orthodox Christian accounts of the passage.

¹¹ See for example, Bishop Bramhall in *Castigations of Mr Hobbes* (1657), 491-2; Thomas Tenison, *The Creed of Mr Hobbes Examined* (1670), 199; Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *A Brief View and Survey of Leviathan* (1676), 249-51; John Whitehall, *The Leviathan Found Out* (1679), 63ff.

¹² Hobbists would always simply recant any position not approved by the magistrate, a difficulty encountered by those prosecuting the Cambridge Hobbist Daniel Scargill in 1669. A contemporary broadside caught the difficulty quite nicely: 'If Justice Catch *Leviathan* in 's hook/ Will he implore the Benefit of 's book?', *The atheist's help at a dead lift* (1670). For the Scargill affair, see J. Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan* (2007), 244-52.

a situation in which the security provided by sovereignty creates an environment in which individuals should naturally seek to put natural law (which is obligatory only *in foro interno*) into effect (*in foro externo*) even if they are not formally commanded to do so by the sovereign.

Traditionally natural law, as a law of God, was as much concerned with the intention that lay behind an action as with the action itself. What is striking about Hobbes's discussion of natural law is how little concerned it is with the intentions of individuals, focusing instead upon how they should present themselves to others if they wish to secure peace. Perhaps the most interesting example of this is Hobbes's discussion of the third law of nature. This law specifies that people should be prepared to 'performe their Covenants made'. Indicating that you are prepared to keep your promises is an essential precondition of peace.¹³

To underline his point Hobbes introduces a character he calls the 'Foole' (alluding to the Foole of the Psalms), who, *pace* Hobbes's position, argues that since every man's self-preservation is in his own hands, there is no reason that an individual should not choose to break a promise whenever he judges it advantageous to his preservation to do so. In response to the Foole, Hobbes' most decisive counter-argument is to say that 'he which declares he thinks it reason to deceive those that help him, can in reason expect no other means of safety, than what can be had from his own single Power'. If the Foole 'declareth' that he may with reason break his covenant, then he 'cannot be received into any Society, that unite themselves for Peace and Defence, but by the error of them that receive him.' Individuals who go about advertising their willingness to break covenants are hardly likely to be accepted as trusted members of society: if you want to live peacefully, then you have to indicate to others that you believe it is just to keep your promises.

The crucial point here is that the Foole's foolishness arises from his willingness to *publicise* his belief that it is acceptable to break promises when it suits. Hobbes's contemporaries and some modern commentators have been quick to note that this point did nothing to address the problem of the silent 'Foole' who self-censors his internal belief that promise-breaking is legitimate and present to the world an air of unquestioned respectability. All that Hobbes says is that, regardless of what

¹³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 101-3.

you really think, if you look like a promise breaker you are not likely to elicit the kind of social response that will promote your self-preservation.¹⁴

Similar points figure in Hobbes's accounts of the other laws of nature, which codify the kinds of public signal likely to produce peace.¹⁵ With regard to the fourth law, Hobbes states that the giving of gifts should be met with signs of gratitude; with regard to the fifth, Hobbes posits mutual accommodation between men, effectively requiring them to temper the expression of their natural diversity of affections. In discussion of the sixth, pardoning past offences is explained as a sign of a commitment to future peace, as is the abstinence from revenge required by the seventh law. The eighth law is particularly interesting for its focus upon social signs, as in its requirement that 'no man by any deed, word, countenance or gesture, declare Hatred, or Contempt of another'.¹⁶ There is no suggestion here that we must genuinely learn to love our fellow citizens, rather, the suggestion is that even if we don't think much of them, we should censor these sentiments in public. Again, the ninth law of nature requires that men regard each other as natural equals regardless of whether it is true that nature has made men so; whether one believes in the equality of men or not is beside the point. What matters is that 'because men will not enter into conditions of peace but upon equal terms, such equality must be admitted'.¹⁷

In each of these cases, Hobbes seems to be much less interested in what subjects actually think than in how they appear or present themselves to each other. Hobbes's laws of nature have little to say about the interiority of the subject, that is, about whether and how far the goodness of an action is connected to the intentions or beliefs or dispositions of the would be do-gooder. Instead, Hobbes's attention centres on the outward demeanour of citizens without reference to their internal beliefs. Samantha Frost suggests that this direction of attention is definitive of Hobbes's ethical approach, in which the vital condition of peace is the willingness of individuals to simulate appropriately peaceable qualities in the public sphere. In effect, says Frost, Hobbes's theory is all about the need to 'fake' the kind of external

¹⁴ The point was noted by William Lucy, *Observations, Censures and Confutations of Notorious Errours in Mr Hobbes his Leviathan* (1663), 222-3 and more recently has formed the subject of an interesting debate between Kinch Hoekstra and Peter Hayes. See Hoekstra, 'Hobbes and the Foole', *Political Theory*, 25, 5, (1997) 620-654; P. Hayes, 'Hobbes's Silent Fool: A Response to Hoekstra', *Political Theory*, 27, 2 (April 1999), 225-229; K. Hoekstra, 'Nothing to Declare?: Hobbes and the Advocate of Injustice' *Political Theory*, 27, 2 (April 1999), 230-235.

¹⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 103-111.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p107.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

commitments required to make individuals legible to each other as peaceable citizens.¹⁸

The thought that Hobbes endorsed this sort of fakery is reinforced by evidence that we have of his willingness to censor his own views along the lines suggested above. This evidence indicates Hobbes's readiness to suppress what he felt to be true doctrine in line with the demands of self-censorship implied by his account of natural law. Consider Hobbes's views on free will, which were perhaps the least objectionable – certainly from a legal standpoint – and in some ways the most popular items in the Hobbesian range.¹⁹ Even so, there is evidence that Hobbes would have preferred to keep these views private, for fear of the wider implications of publicising them widely.

In the early summer of 1645, Hobbes acceded to a request from his sometime patron, the Earl of Newcastle, to take part in a private debate at his residence in Paris with John Bramhall, the Bishop of Derry, on the subject of free will.²⁰ Hobbes's views of free will were the pendant to his materialism. The traditional notion of free will, he argued, was a delusion, because all events were the necessary consequences of prior material causes. Individuals might perceive themselves to be making choices through the exercise of their wills, but this was only because they were unable to identify the causes involved in producing the effect they wrongly attributed to their own choices.²¹ Bramhall was predictably outraged by Hobbes's position, not least because it offended traditional assumptions about personal responsibility and implied that God, as the first cause, was (albeit at a distance) the author of sinful acts. Newcastle subsequently asked Bramhall to provide a written account of his position; the Bishop agreed on condition that Hobbes was asked to do the same. Hobbes did so, but asked Newcastle to keep the contents of his paper private. He later explained his reasons for doing so:

¹⁸ S. Frost, 'Faking It: Hobbes's Thinking-Bodies and the Ethics of Dissimulation', *Political Theory*, 29 1 (February 2001), 30-57.

¹⁹ This was because they shadowed a recognisably Protestant understanding of the free will issue. Indeed, Hobbes referred to this fact in the course of his debate with Bramhall, whose account of free will Hobbes attempted to associate with Roman Catholic theology.

²⁰ Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan* (2007), 39ff.

²¹ Hobbes's position is set out very clearly (and amusingly) in response to Bramhall: 'A wooden top that is lashed by the boys, and runs about sometimes to one wall, sometimes to another, sometimes spinning, sometimes hitting men in the shins, if it were sensible of its own motion, would think it proceeded from its own will, unless it felt what lashed it. And is a man any wiser, when he runs to one place for a benefice, to another for a bargain, and troubles the world with writing errors and requiring answers, because he thinks he doth it without other cause than his own will, and seeth not what are the lashings that cause his will?' Hobbes, *English Works* (1845) vol. v, 55.

I must confess, if we consider the greatest part of Mankinde, not as they should be, but as they are, that is, as men, whom either the study of acquiring wealth, or preferment, or whom the appetite of sensual delights, or the impatience of meditating, or the rash embracing of wrong principles have made unapt to discuss the truth of things, I must say I confess, that the dispute of the question will rather hurt their piety, and therefore if his Lordship had not desired this answer, I should not have written it, nor do I write it but in hopes your Lordship and his will keep it private.²²

Hobbes wanted to censor his views out of the concern that they could be misinterpreted in a way that would prove prejudicial to piety and moral behaviour. This latter possibility had been recognised by Bramhall, who had pointed out that by questioning the concept of personal responsibility Hobbes was effectively undermining the social order.²³ Evidently Hobbes agreed. In a later letter he explained that the men who he ‘thought might take hurt thereby’ were those that would reason erroneously to the conclusion that the determinism he was discussing reduced to a form of fatalism, ‘saying with themselves, if I shall be saved, I shall be saved whether I walk uprightly or no, and consequently thereunto shall behave themselves negligently, and pursue the pleasant way of the sins they are in love with’.²⁴ The problem was that unconstrained by its relations to his other doctrines, Hobbes’s view of determinism could be used to bolster a number of different positions, some of which might be used to legitimate vice.²⁵ For this reason Hobbes was extremely reluctant to let the doctrine out un-chaperoned into the public sphere.²⁶

The picture that emerges from this discussion of Hobbes’s doctrine and the evidence of his practise suggests that, in a variety of forms, self-censorship lay at the

²² Hobbes, *Of libertie and necessitie* (1654), 35-6.

²³ Bramhall comments, ‘if there be no liberty, there shall be no day of doom, no last judgement, no rewards nor punishments after death. A man can never make himself a criminal if he be not left at liberty to commit a crime. No man can be justly punished for doing that which was not in his power to shun. To take away liberty hazards heaven, but undoubtedly it leaves no hell’: V. Chappell, *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity* (1999), 4.

²⁴ Hobbes, *Questions concerning liberty, necessity and chance* (1656), 334.

²⁵ We have no record of Hobbes’s views being used to underpin justifications of libertinism, although the thought that they might underpin the libertinism of the 1670s was explored in Thomas Shadwell’s play *The Libertine* (1675), where the serial-killer anti-hero Don John excuses his various crimes by quoting directly from Hobbes. See Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan*, 304-11.

²⁶ Hobbes’s views were eventually published in a pirated edition of his manuscript copied by one of his amanuenses, John Davies of Kidwelly. Kinch Hoekstra suggests that if this had not happened, we would not know much about Hobbes’s views of free will. However, most of Hobbes’s position was reproduced very clearly in *Leviathan*; it is the context in which the argument was released that made the difference for Hobbes.

heart of the Hobbesian enterprise. Indeed, it might be helpful to think of Hobbes's doctrine as a large-scale exercise in self-censorship. *The* political problem, as described in all of Hobbes's political works, is the unrestrained expression of the beliefs and opinions of autonomous selves pursuing their own goods; the inevitable clash between them results in a state of war. An important part of Hobbes's solution is to create a mechanism, sovereign power, by which those individuals limit themselves to expressions of opinion and belief that do not create political instability. The fact that the *Leviathan* is created through the consent of Hobbesian subjects makes even this formal censorship a form of *self-censorship*, a point that Hobbes was keen to underscore in writing that the sovereign's action is always the subject's own.²⁷ Add to this the fact that many of the formal requirements of natural law involve censoring the self in the general cause of peace and the extent of the role played by self-censorship in Hobbes's work becomes clear.

2. Hobbes and Reason of State Theory

This brief exploration of the role of self-censorship in Hobbes's theory raises some interesting questions about both the ambitions of Hobbes's political theory and his place in the history of political thought. Hobbes has been taken to be a proto-enlightenment figure, in the sense that his philosophy is understood to have attempted to deliver ordinary people from the disabling threat of disorder by establishing a transparently rational structure to justify the authority of the state.²⁸ On the face of it, Hobbes's extensive reliance upon techniques of self-censorship would seem to put him squarely at odds with that enlightenment agenda. Hobbes's technique of self-censorship appears to involve a situation in which a radical distinction between the public and private spheres underwrites an argument in favour of the hypocritical subscription to views adopted simply for their public utility rather than their rational consistency or their truth. On this description, it looks as if Hobbes is asking people, and particularly the wise, to forsake the truth and sign up to a lot of noble lies.

²⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 17,120: The Hobbesian subject promises to 'owne, and acknowledge himselfe to be Author of whatsoever he that so beareth their Person, shall Act, or cause to be Acted, in those things which concerne the Common Peace and Safetie; and therein to submit their Wills, every one to his Will, and their Judgements, to his Judgement.'

²⁸ See, for example J. Waldron's comments in 'Hobbes and the Principle of Publicity', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 82 (2001), pp. 447-474.

This sceptical and *anti-utopian* aspect of Hobbes's thought has led some commentators to suggest, that in spite of appearances, Hobbes's underlying argument has less to do with modern rationalism than with the Machiavellian statecraft of the late renaissance reason of state tradition – a tradition in which the topic of self-censorship was an essential part of politics.²⁹ In the second half of this paper I examine the extent to which this identification makes sense, and suggest that although Hobbesian self-censorship is undoubtedly informed by the reason of state tradition, Hobbes's ambition was to go beyond this tradition in a way that he thought would ultimately remove the need for self-censorship altogether.³⁰

As many historians of political thought have pointed out, reason of state discourse was less a coherent political philosophy than a formal compilation of political techniques. Its form reflects its origins as a self-consciously anti-utopian response to religious and political strife.³¹ Machiavelli's *Prince* stands at the beginning of the reason of state tradition in the early modern period, infamously countenancing wrong-doing on the part of princes seeking to secure their states. As the phrase itself suggests, reason of state was a genre of writing that implied that the practice of statecraft, possessing its own logic of security, was exempt from conventional ethical considerations. A favoured topic of discussion in the genre was the practice of dissimulation by princes, and the various forms of deception required to maintain one's rule. These included classic Machiavellian stratagems such as the instrumental use of religion and the need to adopt appearances that might be at odds with reality.³²

These stratagems were predicated on the thought that the prince as a political actor might be required to conceal his true nature behind a public persona that could be used to manipulate and control the populace. Although Machiavelli's name soon became too disreputable to cite openly, his doctrines were too useful to ignore in a Europe riven by religious conflict, and the genre was subtly adapted, sanitised, and

²⁹ See particularly Hoekstra's 'The End of Philosophy', but this is also an implication of Jeffrey Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes* (2005).

³⁰ In this my argument hopefully supports Noel Malcolm's suggestion (*pace* Hoekstra) that in spite of some obvious similarities, Hobbes's position ultimately goes beyond reason of state theory. See his comments in *Reason of State, Propaganda, and the Thirty Years' War: An Unknown Translation by Thomas Hobbes* (2007), 121-3.

³¹ For general surveys of of reason of state theory, see P. Burke, 'Tacitism, Scepticism, and Reason of State', in J.H. Burns and M. Goldie (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700* (1991), 479-498, and Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (1993), 31-136.

³² See particularly Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Q. Skinner and R. Price (1988) ch. 18, 62; for the instrumental use of religion see Machiavelli's *Discourses*, ed. L. Walker (1970) I.11, 139-42.

made over along classical lines as Neo-Stoic and Tacitean ideas came to be incorporated in it. Justus Lipsius in the Netherlands was one of most prominent of the new generation of writers in the genre, infamous for the elaborating what he called ‘mixed prudence’. This idea arose out of consideration of various levels of fraudulent behaviour by rulers, ranging from ‘light’ (dissimulation and the concealment of intentions), through medium (active deception and bribery) to great (the breaking of treaties).³³ For Lipsius, only the last was unacceptable; dissimulation was regarded as advisable and other forms of deception were regarded as tolerable.

Lipsius’s political advice was primarily aimed at governors, but the political turmoil of late sixteenth century Europe soon meant that writers were turning their attention to forms of dissimulation that had become necessary for subjects. This was the case in France especially, where religious civil war pulled French society apart, leaving subjects with increasingly difficult choices, and never more so than when faced with the choice between following conscience and making the kind of *politique* compromises necessary for civil peace. As the Huguenot Agrippa d’Aubigne summarised in his fictionalised representation of the *politique* position: ‘Know then that almost all men have been reduced to this point: to be on bad terms either with their conscience or with the course of the century’.³⁴ The only solution for many was a categorical divorce between the internal and external spheres, with the prudent man effectively withdrawing into the private sphere in his judgements, while submitting his external actions to judgement of his ruler.³⁵

This solution was systematised in the work of the leading French *politique* writers, notably Michel de Montaigne, Pierre Charron and Guillaume du Vair.³⁶ These writers translated reason of state’s emphasis upon dissimulation not only into recommendations for princes, but also into handbooks for their subjects, offering advice for the wise caught up in an irrational world dominated and driven by opinion

³³ J. Lipsius, *Politicorum libri sex* (1589), 204-16. On Lipsius and his influence see G. Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (1982); A McCrea, *Constant Minds: Political Virtue and the Lipsian Paradigm in England 1584-1650* (1997).

³⁴ D’Aubigne, *La confession du sieur de Sancy*, quoted in Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, 19.

³⁵ It is worth noting that the distinction between internal and external spheres was hardly new in itself, being an integral part of the Christian tradition, and familiar from the work of Augustine and Aquinas. However the changes wrought by the Reformation removed the possibilities for reconciliation traditionally offered by the visible institution of the church, which held both together. This combined with the increasingly sceptical character of *politique* thought generated the basis for the novel accounts of subjectivity found in *politique* writers. See also the discussion in Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, 29, n. 27.

³⁶ For a general account of *politique* philosophy during this period, see Keohane, *Philosophy and the state in France* (1980).

rather than reason. The substance of their advice was to stress the importance of distinguishing between the politically necessary presentation of the external self and the identification of an authentic inner self as the only way to remain free from servitude to passion and opinion. As Charron puts it, in the language of a contemporary translation:

...we must know how to distinguish and separate our selues from our publike charges: euery one of vs playeth two parts, two persons; the one strange and apparent, the other proper and essentiall: we must discerne the skinne from the shirt. An actiue man will performe his charge, and yet withall not leaue to iudge of the follie, vice, deceit that is therein: he will conforme himselfe to euery thing, because the custome of his countrey requireth it, it is profitable to the weale-publike: the world liues so, and therefore it must be done. A man must serue and make vse of the world such as he findeth it; in the meane time, he must likewise consider it as a thing estranged from it selfe, know how to keepe and carie himselfe apart, and to communicate himselfe to his owne trustie good, howsoeuer things fall out with himself.³⁷

The practical necessity of separating internal and external commitments paved the way for an exploration of the essential self, embodied in Charron's slightly relentless demand that the sage 'Looke therefore into thy selfe, know thy selfe, hold thy selfe to thy selfe; thy spirit and will which is els where imployed, reduce it unto thy selfe... gather thy selfe unto thy selfe, and shut up thy selfe within thy selfe: examine, search, know thy selfe'.³⁸ The self here is characterised by its independence from external things; rather than the self being defined by its offices, it stands independently from all its roles, as a judging, reasoning entity, the deliberating actor behind the many masks it is required to wear. This self is a precondition, as Montaigne observed, of any effective performance.³⁹

³⁷ P. Charron, *Of wisdom* (1608), 252.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁹ See also Charron's comments to this effect: 'He that hath an erroneous knowledge of himselfe, that subiecteth his minde to any kinde of seruitude, either of passions or popular opinions, makes himselfe partiall; and by enthraling himselfe to some particular opinion is deprived of the libertie and iurisdiction of discerning, iudging and examining all things: *Ibid.*, Sig A2r. For a helpful discussion of *politique* concepts of selfhood see Geoff Baldwin, 'Individual and Self in the Late Renaissance', *The Historical Journal*, 44, 2 (June 2001), 341-364. Although Charles Taylor does not discuss these writers, or indeed Hobbes in much detail, his comments on Montaigne are also relevant: Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (1989).

Arguments of this kind effectively prepared the ground for a new preoccupation with questions of self-censorship, in that reason of state discourse created the need to articulate the relationship between a novel formulation of selfhood and new accounts of an autonomous public sphere. In this context, the topic of prudent silence returns again and again in later reason of state discussions of dissimulation. For example Robert Dallington's *Aphorisms Civil and Military*, continuing the popular theatrical metaphor employed by Montaigne, suggested that those in public employment 'must of necessity wear vizards and change them in every scene. Because, the generall good and safety of a State is the Center in which all their actions, and counsailes muste meete: To which men cannot always arrive by plaine pathes, and beaten waies.' Openly expressing one's nature, or venting one's purpose, Dallington argued, is a thing of dangerous consequence'.⁴⁰ Francis Bacon, another English adapter of continental reason of state discourse with a keen sense of the need for the distinction between public and private, devoted an essay to the topic of simulation and dissimulation, which elaborated the degrees and circumstances of this 'hiding and veiling of a man's self'.⁴¹

As Kinch Hoekstra and Noel Malcolm have recently pointed out, Hobbes, a former amanuensis to Bacon, was familiar with reason of state discourse and its obsession with dissimulation and secrecy. Indeed as a secretary to the Earls of Devonshire, Hobbes was, by trade, a keeper of secrets. The art of a secretary, a contemporary advice book stated, 'is nothing other than the science of things that must be kept secret and revealed'.⁴² The library at Hardwick Hall, which Hobbes probably helped to stock, contained nearly all of the canonical authors in the tradition; Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Botero, Lipsius, Mariana and Charron.⁴³ Hobbes was not only familiar this continental literature, he had travelled across Europe and knew some of its leading figures personally.⁴⁴

Further evidence of Hobbes's fascination with reason of state comes from his earliest correspondence, which is full of discussion of *arcana imperii*, or mysteries of

⁴⁰ Quoted in McCrea, *Constant Minds*, 57.

⁴¹ Bacon, 'Of Simulation and Dissimulation', in *Essays*, ed. J. Pitcher (1985), 76-8; see also McCrea, *Constant Minds*, ch. 2.

⁴² Torquato Tasso, *Il segretario* (1605), 6, quoted in Hoekstra, 'The End of Philosophy', 43.

⁴³ Malcolm, *Reason of State*, 109-10.

⁴⁴ Hobbes was acquainted with the Venetian state counsellor Fulgenzio Micanzio, a friend of Paulo Sarpi, and facilitated a correspondence between him and his employer, the Earl of Devonshire.

state.⁴⁵ It also comes from works that he was involved in producing and translating for his patrons. A piece written by his patron but sometimes attributed to Hobbes, *A discourse upon the beginnings of Tacitus* (1620) is a study of the classical guru of reason of state writers with an interest in the political use of religion (Hobbes, 1995).⁴⁶ Noel Malcolm's recently discovered Hobbesian translation of the *Altera secretissima instructio*, a text immersed in reason of state culture, demonstrates that Hobbes's formative years were spent thinking about reason of state ideas.⁴⁷ As the brief discussion of Hobbes's work at the beginning of the paper indicates, Hobbes's later published work uses terms and concepts culled from the tradition: the obsession with the role of opinion, the critical distinction between internal and external spheres, the distinctive reliance upon dissimulation as the solution to political problems, and, most pertinently for present purposes, the critical role played by a systematic application of self-censorship.

The case, then, for seeing Hobbes as a late exponent of reason of state arguments looks unanswerable. And yet if we take this last feature of Hobbes's work seriously and attend to it closely, it turns out to be something of a mistake to reduce Hobbes's work to a variant of the anti-utopian techniques recommended by the reason of state writers. One of the most typical features of Hobbes's work was his ability to take a range of existing ideas familiar to his audience and to subtly transform and assimilate them to his larger project. This was certainly the case with Hobbes's treatments of religion and theology, treatments in which most of the familiar pieces of Protestant Christianity remained in play but the rules of the game had been quietly but fundamentally altered. There is a parallel case with Hobbes's use of the language of reason of state: if for all his deployment of orthodox Christian categories Hobbes was no orthodox Christian, so it is also true that for all his deployment of reason of state categories, Hobbes was no straightforward reason of state theorist.⁴⁸

3. Hobbes against Reason of State Theory

⁴⁵ Hobbes, *Correspondence*, I, 1-4.

⁴⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Three Discourses* (1995), ed. N.B. Reynolds and A.W. Saxonhouse.

⁴⁷ Malcolm, *Reason of State*, 105-23.

⁴⁸ It is possible to argue that those identifying Hobbes too closely with reason of state discourse fall into a similar trap as commentators like Martinich in interpreting Hobbes's religious views. The mere presence of orthodox elements conceals that fact that Hobbes's approach reconfigures them in accordance with his distinctive broader agenda. For Martinich's discussion of religion see *The Two Gods of Leviathan* (1992).

It is Hobbes's posture towards the question of self-censorship that reveals most clearly his distance from the reason of state thinkers. This claim may seem odd. Hobbes sometimes sounds as if he is directly paraphrasing Charron's *De la sagesse* in the distinctions that he draws between the internal self and the external performance. This is so not least at the beginning of *Leviathan* where, following Charron, Hobbes argues that what men ought to do is know themselves (*nosce teipsum*).⁴⁹ But with Hobbes the conscious echo is usually invariably a clue that something fishy is going on, and the familiar is undergoing a decisive change.

Anyone assuming that Hobbes is simply following the reason of state writers when it comes to the matter of self-censorship has failed to grasp the full implications of Hobbes's remarks about the self. Hobbes himself comments that the instruction to know or read oneself is 'not of late understood', its having been taken either as an excuse to countenance bad behaviour in princes, or, and importantly, to encourage their social inferiors in what he calls 'sawcie behaviour' towards their betters.⁵⁰ His own understanding of that instruction is elaborated in *Leviathan*; in positioning that instruction prominently at the beginning of his great work, Hobbes is not so much aligning himself with and endorsing the reason of state tradition as drawing his readers' attention to one of its decisive weaknesses.

It is often assumed that Hobbes's distinction between internal and external spheres maps very directly onto the reason of state model, either because he was simply endorsing the *politique* solution to political conflict or because he was endeavouring to reserve a suitably Charronian space for free thought. But the reason of state model generated consequences that Hobbes would have found deeply problematical. Perhaps the best discussion of this problem, which I think may be described not unreasonably as a problem of self-censorship, comes (ironically) from a critique of Hobbes by Carl Schmitt, which presented the English philosopher as the proponent of a novel account of the internal/external dichotomy.⁵¹

Schmitt argued that Hobbes adopted this dichotomous structure as a solution to the problem of religious and political strife. In doing so, however, Hobbes had sown the seeds of the destruction of his *Leviathan*: he had reduced the political sphere

⁴⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 10.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ C. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol*, trans. G. Schwab and E. Hilfstein (1996), especially ch. 5, 53-63.

to a morally neutral mechanism for stability, while at the same time creating a privileged and a-political space for the exercise of conscience that would, in time, reassert its authority over the political sphere with disastrous results.⁵² Schmitt's analysis was supplemented by greater historical detail in the work of his follower, Reinhart Koselleck, who argued that what he called the utopian strand of enlightenment thinking (and, through the working out of that strand of thinking over time, of the ideological forces arrayed against the modern state) was the anti-political progeny of this failed attempt to divide the public and the political.⁵³ Leaving aside for the moment the broader accuracy of this story, I think that although neither Schmitt nor Koselleck get Hobbes quite right, they do identify what Hobbes himself had recognised as the *damnosa hereditas* of the reason of state tradition.

The recourse to a very sharp distinction between mutually exclusive public and private spheres, no longer policed by an omniscient church-based religion, may well have provided a temporary self-censoring solution to the political problems identified by the *politiques*. But the same distinction stored up future trouble by generating a potentially authoritative moral self at odds with the public sphere. Far from being a long-term solution to it, for Hobbes this was yet another species of the problem that *Leviathan* was trying to address, namely the need for the systematic elimination of any source of authority independent of the political realm if a civilised common life were to be possible.

⁵² Ibid., 56-7: 'The distinction between private and public, faith and confession, fides and confession, is introduced in a way from which everything else was logically derived in the century that ensued until the rise of the liberal constitutional state. The modern 'neutral' state, derived from the agnosticism and not from the religiosity of Protestant sectarians, originated at this point. If looked at from the perspective of constitutional history, a dual beginning was made here: first, the juristically... constructed beginning of modern, individualistic right of freedom of thought and conscience and thereby the characteristic individual freedoms embodied in the structure of the liberal constitutionalist system; and, second, the evolution of the state from one inherently... into a justifiable external power, the *stato neutrale e agnostico* of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.' Schmitt goes on to state that Hobbes 'underscores the importance of absorbing the right of private freedom of thought and belief into the political system. This contained the seed of death that destroyed the mighty Leviathan from within and brought about the end of the mortal god.'

⁵³ Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, 38-9: 'Pressed by the need for a lasting peace, the State conceded to the individual an inner space that did not much impair the sovereign decision; as a matter of fact, it was essential to that decision. It was essential for the State to be politically neutral if it was to preserve its political form. Moral neutrality was the distinguishing mark of the sovereign decision... The State created a new order, but then – in genuinely historic fashion, fell prey to that order. As evident in Hobbes, the moral inner space that had been excised from the State and reserved for man as human being meant... a source of the unrest that was originally exclusive to the Absolutist system. The authority of conscience remained an unconquered remnant of the state of nature, protruding into the formally perfected state.'

I think that this comes across very clearly from Hobbes's reconfiguration of what it actually means to 'know thy self'. It certainly does not mean the recovery of some essential and unique self, or the delineation of a private sphere in which the self can act as an autonomous source of authority. Hobbes effectively goes to war against this notion of the self throughout *Leviathan*, subjecting it to a devastating critique.

Hobbes's demolition job involves the redefinition, rewriting or brute rejection of what were conventionally understood to be the authoritative sources of the self. The underlying logic of that redefinition is supplied by his commitment to materialism, which precludes the possibility that anything identified with an autonomous self might enjoy a mode or manner of existence that could not be explained in material terms. On one side this logic rules out the notion that the self is an immaterial entity (this same logic, of course, had motivated Hobbes's objections to Descartes' *Meditations* and helps to explain the Frenchman's very testy replies); on the other side it removes the standard basis for claiming that its operations are not susceptible to human analysis. The traditional constituents of the self are all systematically reformulated by Hobbes according to this logic, in a way that undermines their potential for acting as independent sources of authority.

Thus Hobbes downgrades reason from the scholastic 'right reason' that connects man with God to an instrumental calculating faculty, which enjoys no privileged access to truth.⁵⁴ Free will is similarly reduced to an effect of material causes. As I have noted, Hobbes argues that the will has nothing to do with an independent faculty of deliberation; every act of man's will, he explains, 'and every desire, and inclination proceedeth from some cause, and that from another cause, in a continuall chaine... they proceed from necessity.'⁵⁵ Hobbes is withering in his treatment of conscience, a word now used, he says, by men 'vehemently in love with their own new opinions (though never so absurd)' who being 'obstinately bent to maintain them, gave those their opinions also the revered name of Conscience, as if they would have it seem unlawfull, to change or speak against them; and so pretend to know they are true, when they know at most, but that they think so'.⁵⁶ As Johan Tralau has recently discussed, Hobbes dismisses the notion of individual conscience

⁵⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 32-3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 146-7.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

as an improper metaphor, emphasising instead the idea of conscience as externally shared knowledge.⁵⁷

The aim of Hobbes's rewriting of the self is to leave his readers in little doubt that what they take to be the formal properties of an autonomous entity – the self – with a range of causal powers are in fact merely *effects*, necessary consequences of their embodied material existence. Hobbes's self possesses neither the autonomy nor the private authority that is an essential feature of Charron's self. In effect what Hobbes reveals, and in a manner that is calculated to deflate the dualism that is so dear to the reason of state writers and the clergy alike, is that there is no way that an autonomous self could be isolated and secured inviolably against the intrusions of the outside world in the way they suggest. This is so because there is no 'inside' that can be favourably juxtaposed against the outside, no internal world that is categorically separate from the external world, no intelligible world that stands over and above the world of sense. Hobbes's nominalism and his materialism are put to work together, and their cutting effect, like that of a pair of scissors, derives from their mutual interaction. Everything is body, and the names we give to bodies tell us only how we think of them, which opens the possibility that we could learn to think differently about them.⁵⁸

Together, Hobbes's materialism and his nominalism cut through a whole range of putatively authoritative claims made by his predecessors about the self. But Hobbes's aim is positive as well as negative. This destructive work is accompanied by a positive explanation of the kind of practical self-knowledge of which men are capable under these conditions. Hobbes explains that to 'know oneself' is to understand and recognise the psychological mechanisms that lie behind and generate all human behaviour. The phrase *nosce teipsum* is designed, he says,

to teach us that for the similitude of the thoughts, and Passions of another, whosoever looketh into himself, and considereth what he doth, when he does thinke, opine, reason, hope feare, &c and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know, what are the thoughts, and Passions of all other men, upon the like occasions.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ J. Tralau, 'Hobbes contra Liberty of Conscience', *Political Theory* 39, 1 (2011), 58-84. Tralau's exposition of Hobbes's position on liberty of conscience complements the position argued for in this paper.

⁵⁸ I would like to thank Tim Stanton for this compelling explanation of the relationship between Hobbes's materialism and his nominalism.

⁵⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 10.

Understanding the self is no longer a search for an authentic inner self, but rather an attempt to identify the external conditions that cause the thoughts and passions that lead to certain sorts of action, not only in oneself, but also in others – an almost complete externalisation of the self, which exposes what individuals conventionally take for self-consciousness as the necessary effect of the operation of one body upon another. It tacitly assumes that the generation of certain sorts of output is dependent on two factors: a given set of sensory inputs and the self-knowledge needed to process those inputs in the appropriate manner to obtain the desired outputs. This metaphysical framework structures the political argument of *Leviathan*, in which the identification of the political conditions required to achieve the self-preservation that Hobbes identifies as the common root of human motivation is matched by an account of how people must understand themselves and act if they are to sustain the conditions that sustain them.⁶⁰ With the quest for self-knowledge now entirely reoriented towards the conditions required for the continued existence of the self, the Hobbesian subject and the Hobbesian sovereign alike are in a position to grasp the rational necessity of the political relationships that Hobbes describes. In grasping this necessity, the beliefs, opinions and actions of subject and sovereign are reshaped accordingly.⁶¹

In other words, Hobbes's project embodied a *two-pronged* approach to the problem of the divided self: on the one side generating a set of formal requirements designed to pacify the external political sphere, and on the other laying the groundwork for an ambitious materialist reconstitution of the self through which the individual's private understanding and their public *persona* could be brought into alignment. Far from requiring any long-term subscription to noble lies, Hobbes's ambition was to create a situation in which the sovereign's requirements and the

⁶⁰ I think that the lack of this extensive political account of the natural necessity of sovereignty was the reason Hobbes self-censored his doctrine of free will in 1646. Presented without it, the argument could be used to legitimise any form of action, and this is why Hobbes felt able to publish it in the broader context of *Leviathan* in 1651.

⁶¹ Hobbes's scheme therefore required that *Leviathan's* doctrine, or at least a summary of key arguments, should be taught in the universities. It should be noted that this was not, as David Wootton has recently suggested, simply a form of brain-washing. Hobbes makes clear, as I have noted, that the beliefs and opinions required for the stability of the political community, cannot simply be commanded. Individuals have to be persuaded by the argument. Hobbes thought he had produced a suitably persuasive argument that would prove its worth by delivering peace. For this view see my forthcoming paper 'Toleration of Education?: Hobbes's Project in the Later 1660s'. For David Wootton's interpretation of Hobbes as a Machiavellian, see his 'Thomas Hobbes's Machiavellian Moments', in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain*, ed. D. Kelley and D. Sacks (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998), 210-42

subject's opinions and beliefs converged around the imperatives of peace or what he called 'natural law'. That this ideal of perpetual peace was his ambition appears in his assessment in *De cive* of what a properly realized moral science might do for mankind:

For if the patterns of human action were known with the same certainty as the relations of magnitude in figures, ambition and greed, whose power rests on the false opinions of the common people about right and wrong, would be disarmed, and the human race would enjoy such secure peace that (apart from conflicts over space as the population grew) it seems unlikely that it would ever have to fight again.⁶²

Hobbes was aware of the need to be careful about the public expression of doctrine and more aware yet of the need to couch his arguments in terms familiar to his audience; but borrowing terms is not the same as borrowing positions. Crucially, Hobbes sought to transform and synchronize diverse forms of doctrine in a single unified system, to generate a mortal God to embody and represent what was essentially unknowable and institutionally fragile: the single, unitary authority without which civilization could not stand.⁶³

Conclusion

This brings me back to the question of self-censorship. Hobbes's model, with its mechanism for reconciling people to a natural political necessity, effectively dissolved the potential for tension between an inner self and its external commitments by showing all too clearly that those external commitments were what constituted and sustained that self in the first place. Hobbes's new version of self-knowledge promised to eliminate the need for political self-censorship altogether, for it would do away with the problems that resulted from the attempt to divide the private from the public world. Schmitt and Koselleck were wrong to see Hobbes as the inaugurator of what we might call the political problem of self-censorship; in fact, he saw the problem very clearly and envisaged a radical and enlightened solution. But if their casting was poor, there nevertheless remains something compelling about the story they tell of the Manichaean conflict between the inner world of the self and external

⁶² Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, 5.

⁶³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 120. It should be noted that this analysis brings Hobbes's position much closer to Spinoza's.

world of the political. Their story does seem to capture very well some of developments in political thought after Hobbes.

Few went as far as Hobbes in deploying a systematically materialist conception of the self. But lacking this conception, or something like it, the tensions introduced by the reason of state discourse persisted in the seventeenth century natural law thinkers. The most influential European theorists of the post-Westphalian period, particularly thinkers like Samuel Pufendorf and Christian Thomasius, pursued arguments that carried these unresolved tensions at their core.⁶⁴ Although Locke attempted his own reconciliatory reformulation of the self, the theological dimension to his solution was soon eclipsed by secular good intentions, only to be recovered to sight, if only as an item of historical interest, in recent times.⁶⁵ As Ian Hunter has recently suggested, the persistence of the problem set the scene for a clash between the structures generated by the political and pragmatic thinkers who emerged from the reason of state tradition, and the metaphysical and utopian forces of the Republic of Letters, cultivated in the private sphere created by the early modern state.⁶⁶ In this latter tradition of enlightenment, unconstrained by the requirements of the political, self-censorship would become less a necessary political virtue than an unacceptable compromise. This is the legacy that, in various ways, we still live and continue to grapple with today in our own uneasy responses to issues of self-censorship

⁶⁴ Both writers were clearly indebted to Hobbes in their dualism, although this became harder to admit as the reaction to Hobbes gained momentum. However in rejecting Hobbes's materialism and lacking a convincing account of divine obligation, they arguably failed to find a response to the problem.

⁶⁵ For Locke's reconfiguration of what he calls the 'penalized self', see James Tully, 'Governing Conduct: Locke on the Reform of Thought and Behaviour' in his *Locke in Contexts* (1993), 179-241.

⁶⁶ Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments* (2001), 364-376. See also Noel Malcolm's suggestive comments on the character of the Republic of Letters, which also appear to follow Koselleck's analysis: Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (2002), 537ff.