HONOR THY SOVEREIGN: HOBBES AND HONORING IN MID-SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

by

Monicka Patterson-Tutschka

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Political Science) in The University of Michigan 2008

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Donald J. Herzog, Co-chair
Professor Arlene W. Saxonhouse, Co-chair
Professor William I. Miller
Associate Professor Mika T. LaVaque-Manty
For Mama, my mother
Acknowledgements

I would like first of all to thank the members of my dissertation committee: Mika LaVaque-Manty, William Miller, and especially my co-chairs Don Herzog and Arlene W. Saxonhouse. It was Don who encouraged me to investigate honoring practices in context, and for this I will always be grateful to him. Don also helped me become a better writer (I still have a long way to go), and his comments and suggestions on individual chapters in progress were invaluable. Arlene taught me how to read the writings of great authors like Thomas Hobbes with tremendous care. Her knowledge of the secondary literature on Hobbes forced me to sharpen and tighten my own claims. Her enthusiasm and confidence in me and the dissertation were also invaluable, especially on those dark days, when the going got rough.

Friends combed through and commented upon individual chapters in progress. I would especially like to thank Emma Cohen de-Laura, Alexandra Hoerl, Ryan Hudson and Joan Sitomer for all their help. The dissertation would never have been completed without the support of Jenny Kehl. Our long conversations in Philadelphia about teaching, politics, and the dissertation kept me working and sane. I would also like to thank Andrew, my husband. His energy and enthusiasm was contagious. He spent hours listening to me talk endlessly about my dissertation project. I am so lucky to have Andrew in my life. Finally, I would like to thank my parents. They stood by me even though they had strong reservations about the utility of a Ph.D. in political theory. I am grateful to them for all for their support.
# Table of Contents

Dedication ................................................................................................................................. ii
Acknowledgments ..................................................................................................................... iii
List of Abbreviations ............................................................................................................... vi
Abstract ..................................................................................................................................... vii

## INTRODUCTION TO THE DISSERTATION ............................................................................. 1
  0.1 Overview of Dissertation ................................................................................................... 1
  0.2 Six Historical Idioms of Honoring ................................................................................... 9
  0.3 A Working Definition of Honoring .................................................................................. 18
  0.4 Terms Used to Signify the Honoring Practice ................................................................. 21
  0.5 Hobbes and Honoring ..................................................................................................... 24

## PART I: HONORING FOR THE GODLY .................................................................................. 27
  Chapter 1: Honoring Mortals, a Moral Obligation ................................................................. 29
    1.0 Overview of Chapter 1 .................................................................................................... 29
    1.1 Fashioning the Argument ............................................................................................... 32
    1.2 The Political Obligations that Follow .......................................................................... 44
    1.3 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 65
  Chapter 2: Honoring God ........................................................................................................ 68
    2.0 Overview of Chapter 2 .................................................................................................... 68
    2.1 Honoring God, a Moral Obligation .............................................................................. 72
    2.2 How to Honor God ......................................................................................................... 77
    2.3 With Tongue and Limbs ............................................................................................... 84
    2.4 Honoring Practices: Their Meaning and Function ...................................................... 100
    2.5 Social Consequences of Honoring God ...................................................................... 115
    2.6 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 123
  Chapter 3: Honoring God and Mortals: Paradox or Dilemma? ............................................. 125
    3.0 Overview of Chapter 3 .................................................................................................... 125
    3.1 In Search of Reconciliation ........................................................................................... 130
    3.2 Beyond Reconciliation ................................................................................................. 139
    3.3 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 150
  Coda to Part I ......................................................................................................................... 151

## PART II: HONORING VIRTUE AND FLATTERY ..................................................................... 153
  Chapter 4: Vicious Flattery and Honoring Virtue ................................................................. 160
    4.0 Overview of Chapter 4 .................................................................................................... 160
    4.1 Flattery or Honoring? ................................................................................................... 162
    4.2 Honoring Virtue ............................................................................................................ 165
    4.3 Flattery as the Opposite of Honoring Virtue ................................................................. 181
## PART III: HONORING IN EXCHANGE RELATIONS………240

### Chapter 7: Honoring Superiors: A Most Advantageous Gainful Duty...242
  7.0 Overview of Chapter 7........................................242
  7.1 To Whom The Conditional Promise Applies...............250
  7.2 What God Promises Honorers................................256
  7.3 How the Conditional Promise Motivates Honoring.........271
  7.4 Why Did God Annex the Conditional Promise?............276
  7.5 Honoring and the Promise in Historical Frameworks......285
  7.6 Conclusion..................................................296

## PART IV: HOBBES AND HONORING………………………………………………298

### Chapter 8: Sovereign Authorization as an Honoring Practice........305
  8.0 Sovereign Authorization as Honoring.........................305
  8.1 Words and Actions...........................................308
  8.2 Surrendering and Transferring Right........................315
  8.3 A Sovereign to Hold Them In Awe............................329
  8.4 Motivating Sovereign Authorization..........................340
  8.5 Authorization, Obedience Within the Honoring Narrative...348
  8.6 Conclusion..................................................367

## CONCLUSION……………………………………………………………………...369

### Chapter 9: Conclusion.........................................................369
  9.1: Re-configuring honor............................................369
  9.2: Hobbes’s account of honoring.................................373
  9.3 Sovereign Authorization and the Honoring Narrative........376

## BIBLIOGRAPHY……………………………………………………………………379
List of Abbreviations


ABSTRACT

HONOR THY SOVEREIGN: HOBBES AND HONORING IN MID-SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

by

Monicka Barbara Patterson-Tutschka

Co-chairpersons: Donald J. Herzog and Arlene W. Saxonhouse

The dissertation has four principal ambitions. First, I supply a careful analysis of the social practice and the discourse of honoring in mid-seventeenth-century England. Second, I place Thomas Hobbes’s account of honoring within its historical context and show where Hobbes’s account corresponds to and deviates from familiar mid-seventeenth-century English accounts. Third, I argue that Hobbes’s account of sovereign authorization is an account of honoring; authorizing the sovereign is an honoring practice. Finally, I embed Hobbes’s justifications for sovereign authorization and obedience into a mid-seventeenth-century honoring narrative.

The third objective challenges current legal-juridical accounts of sovereign authorization. Scholarship on the development of early modern political thought traditionally understands Hobbes’s account of the founding of political order as a matter of contract. The dissertation, however, demonstrates that Hobbes’s description of the act...
through which an individual authorizes a sovereign more closely resembles the Christian relationship constituted by a humble individual honoring God than it does a contract between members of a nascent bourgeoisie. Far from assuming independence and relative equality, the discourse of honoring presupposes or constitutes unequal relations between subjects-to-be who humbly give honor and the sovereign who is honored. I thus challenge contemporary accounts of Hobbes that overemphasize the secular underpinnings of his political thought by situating sovereign authorization in a religious discourse and by identifying it as a sacred practice.

In addition, conceptualizing the act of sovereign authorization as an act of honoring has profound implications. It affects our understanding of how early modern subjects conceptualized inequalities and hierarchies, and impacts our understanding of the constitution of unequal power. It influences our understanding of the motivation, on the one hand, of the sovereign to protect and, on the other, of subjects to obey. Finally, the very idea of sovereign authorization as well as arguments justifying obedience shift when we see how they are embedded in the secular and sacred idioms and practices of honoring that I analyze in the dissertation.