

The Effect of Affect: On Fear & Social Order

Thomas Catlaw
Assistant Professor
Arizona State University
School of Public Affairs
411 N. Central Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85004
Email: Thomas.Catlaw@asu.edu
Phone: (602) 496-0459

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Introduction

Though it typically describes itself in the more appealing language of advancing democracy and the public interest, public administration, at its core, is an enterprise of creating and sustaining social order, irrespective of whether we bound the field in narrowly “governmental” or broader “governance” terms. By and large, though, the field has ignored assiduously the general theoretical question of order, preferring to focus its intellectual energies on locating a legitimate place for public administration in a particular socio-political order (i.e. liberal capitalism)¹ or in viewing itself as a benign instrument rather than a historical form for instituting order itself. In any case, both tacks are concerned primarily with advancing existing administrative authority, either in terms of augmenting the broader academic and social legitimacy of public administration or of enhancing the managerial capacities of the administrative class in general.

The avoidance of the problem of order is especially problematic for “critical” approaches that seek to “re-found” or reconsider the position of public administration in contemporary society because, as I argue below, our liberal understanding of government follows logically from a prior conceptualization of social order, an understanding which binds us even as some attempt to reject it. This, in turn, informs a specific understanding of interpersonal relationship or the social bond and, more specifically, a certain conceptualization of authority. To rethink public administration we might usefully return to the generic question posed vividly by the thought of Thomas Hobbes—namely, how is society possible? We find in Hobbes a sophisticated theory of the origins of order as well as a set of compelling challenges for reconsidering human relationships and the problem of order.

Authority, Fear and Government

In the context of political liberalism, “fear” is intimately bound up with authority and social order. This strikes me as especially important to note in the context of public administration since there is a tendency to view large bureaucratic organizations in terms of their impersonality, neutrality, and emotional evacuation. However these organizations are in fact saturated by emotion, though they succeed in blocking their expression outside of service to organizational ends and are still viewed as “unwelcome visitors” (Gabriel, 1998). With regard to the broader question of order, fear is, in effect, a strategic and prescriptive answer to the question, “How is society possible?” The classic

formulation of this relationship is, of course, that of Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes (1991/1651) begins from the striking proposition that ordered human society is not the natural order of things but something to which humans are subjected. Hobbes, of course, is not the only exponent of this account of social order. As varied thinkers as Locke, Tom Paine (1976/1776), Dostoevsky's (1976/1881) "Grand Inquisitor," and Freud (1961/1930) advance related arguments about the necessity of imposed, "artificial" authority arising from the human inability to manage the demands of instinct. Yet Hobbes's is perhaps the most well-known and precisely framed and, as I will suggest below, it has particular contemporary relevance insofar as he advances an understanding of order that depends neither on a pre-political natural order of things or a highly problematic pan-social normative order.

Writing against what he takes to be the taken-for-granted Aristotelian axiom that humans are animals borne for society (Hobbes, 1998/1641 22), Hobbes argues that the natural human condition is to "dissociate" (1991/1651, 89).² It is a state of war, which is less a state of actual fighting or battle than one in which there is a "disposition thereto" and no assurance of peace (89). In this natural state, there is no coherent body politic but only, argues Hobbes a *Multitude* (*Multitudo*). Critically, this state of war is on account of the natural *equality* among people and similarities in their relative strength and abilities. It is society that introduces inequality. He writes, "Nature hath made men so equall, in the faculties of the body, and mind; ... the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himselfe any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he" (86). But equality causes problems because "from this equality of ability, ariseth equality of hope in the attainment of our Ends. And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies, and in their way to the End ... endeavor to destroy, or subdue one another" (89). Vaguely anticipating Sade's *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, because of this state of war in which equality of strength and reason prevail, "every man has a Right to everything; even to one anothers body" (91). At the same time, each person has the natural right "for the preservation of his own Nature; that is to say, of his own Life" (91) and may justifiably do anything in her power to preserve it.

So we see at least two problems in the state of nature. First, because people have more or less equal capacities, we all think we can get what we want, even if another wants it. From the side of the other, there is the natural instinct for self-preservation that will lead others to protect themselves and preserve their own lives. This produces a perpetual state of unease, of potential battle. The second problem with the Multitude appears to be its fundamental inability to reach agreement on a common point of view or End and, by extension, common line of action. "Masterless" people (149), argues Hobbes, compete for honor and dignity; they bicker over private and common goods; and many think themselves wiser and more capable of governing than others. This renders the Multitude insecure and unable to withstand invasion—in essence, it is the familiar problem of coordination. Even in the presence of a common enemy, "For being distracted in opinions concerning the best use and application of their strength, they do not help, but hinder one another; and reduce their strength by mutuall opposition to nothing" (118). Thus their differences in viewpoints also frustrate the identification of a common enemy against which their collective strength could be oriented.

Given these conditions, the reasonable thing in Hobbes's view is to seek peace and lay aside one's right to all things. While reason informs this decision, fear compels people to form a social order and to maintain it. Ordered, stable, and secure society is generated, produced through the institution of "*visible* Power to keep [people] in awe" (117, emphasis added) and only fear of punishment binds people "to performance of their covenants" and observation of the laws of nature. Social order is,

as Hobbes says explicitly, *artificial* (120, 147), though it is also *inevitable* given humankind's desire for self-preservation. It is this self-conscious act of contract that imposes order. There can be no "peace without subjection" (119). In doing so, a single body-politic is created from the Multitude; one is created from the many. "A Multitude of men, are made *One* person, when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented; so that it be done with the consent of everyone of that Multitude in particular. For it is the *Unity* of the Represented, not the Unity of the Represented, that maketh the Person *One*" (114). Later Hobbes describes the sovereign as "the publique Soule" that gives "Life and Motion to the Common-wealth" (230). In this one artificial person, this representative, the Multitude can speak with one voice, see with one set of eyes, judge as a single common Judge, wage war against a common enemy. This one person is a Commonwealth (120) with a civil government, endowed with the indivisible power, strength, and terror to advance mutual aid internally and protection from incursions from abroad. This artificial person is also called Sovereign or state (234) and all others are called subjects. Prosperity comes from obedience to the sovereign and concord among the subjects. Remove the former and the later is soon to disappear.

We see, then, an important series of theoretical linkages with important implications. Order is produced by the conjuring of a unified sovereign power. Yet notice that Hobbes does not say that the represented, the Multitude, itself is unified through contract and the institution of the Sovereign. Rather order and stability are produced by a double fear. First, there is the *common fear* of the strength of the visible, dreadful image of a unified Sovereign. It is through a shared, fearful identification with the Multitude's representative that order and security are produced and maintained. Protection and security are, moreover, "the very essence of Government" (154). Second, *mutual fear* of one another—the equality of others and their right of Nature—compels institution of this sovereign authority. The first fear unites; the other divides.

As a consequence of the movements inspired by these two fears, a deep ambivalence about government and authority is inscribed into this political imaginary. By virtue of the human desire for self-preservation and inherent uncertainty of the state of nature, a power is instituted freely.³ However this come at the cost of surrendering (or at least compromising) one's natural right to an external power authorized to decide matters of life and death. In effect, the stage is set for the state to become the object-cause of personal frustration and dissatisfaction. At the same time, while peace and security may be the result of creating the commonwealth, on my reading Hobbes gives no indication that mutual fear withers in political society. Rather it is the ongoing, persistent *common fear* of punishment that continues to secure order and configure this particular mode of ordering. Foucault's analysis echoes this conclusion. "Hobbes does not simply claim that this war of every man against every man gives birth to the State on the morning—which is both real and fictional—on which Leviathan is borne. It goes on even when the state has been constituted, and Hobbes sees it as a threat that wells up in the State's interstices, at its limits, and on its frontiers. ... So even once the State has been established, the threat of war is there; there is war in any case" (Foucault, 2003 89-90). Indeed were people able to overcome their individual fears of one another, they might begin to wonder why they had created this sovereign power in the first place.

Note, too, that Hobbes emphasizes that the *visibility* of authority is critical to the constitution and maintenance of the Commonwealth.⁴ The sovereign must be visible in order to inspire fear and dread. This is significant because it suggests, again, that the state of war is something other than an *actual* war. With shades of Goffman, Foucault (2003) notes, "There are no battles in Hobbes's primitive war, there is no blood and there are no corpses. There are presentations, manifestations, signs, signs, wiles, and deceitful expressions ... We in a theater where presentations are exchanged,

in a relationship of fear in which there are no time limits” (92). The *state* of war is not the same as an actual war or battle. It is a *condition* or, as it were, stage upon which a certain kind of political drama unfolds. Richard Sennett (1980) has similarly described authority itself in terms of the repetition of certain *images of strength* that must be performed on an ongoing basis. It is easy to see authority, then, as a performance that enacts both a certain kind of drama but also creates a certain relationship and affect. Central, then, to the fearful image of Leviathan is the projection of unity, stability, and terror.

I want to suggest, too, that in addition to the feelings of fear and ambivalence, this image of sovereign authority may also evoke other emotions—shame and inadequacy. I mean this in two senses. First, Marxists and anarchists often talk about the “relative autonomy” of the state with regard to civil society. The state appears as a power transcendent or above society. As is the case with the authorizing autonomy of expertise, this autonomy or separation allows for a position of judgment (Catlaw, 2007, in press-a). Hobbes makes this clear as would Locke later in his account of “the common judge.” Sovereign authority is autonomous. In his discussion of autonomous authority in interpersonal relationships, sociologist Richard Sennett (1980) writes, “autonomy removes the necessity of dealing with people openly and mutually. There is imbalance; they show you their need for you more than you show your need for them. This puts you in control” (86). Authority need not reveal anything of itself but may stand in judgment of the subordinate’s feelings and failures. Indeed I have already suggested how Leviathan establishes an ambivalent relation to authority and, furthermore, Hobbes aims expressly to institute imbalance or differences in strength into the social order. Indeed in this scenario the sovereign is everything the Multitude is not—ordered, confident, powerful, and distinctive. The integrated, unified body of the Sovereign stands in contrast to the fragmented, disintegrated body of the Multitude.

What Sennett’s research also adds to this line of analysis is how such a relationship evokes feelings of shame; he also shows us how to cross from “political” or “organizational” levels of analysis, though, in essence, the core issue is the interpersonal relationship of authority. Shame can do the work of force or physical violence as mechanism for control and humiliation. That is, it is the daily experience of autonomous authority, its distance and indifference, that reminds those of us in the Multitude of our inadequacy and lack of strength in the face of the Sovereign One. Thus not only are bonds of fear essential to the constitution and maintenance of the Leviathan, so, too, is “nurturing” feelings of personal shame and inadequacy that erode a person’s sense of self-worth and instill a sense of weakness in the flat, unaffected face of power. In *The Invisible Bureaucracy* (1987) Howell Baum reaches similar conclusions, noting that impersonality creates differences in strength and psychological space between workers that can lead to feelings of shame and guilt and practices of blaming, victimization, scapegoating, and self-protection.

Indifference and “objectivity” work, then, as techniques of humiliation and degradation that encourage detachment and looking out for oneself, which, in turn, seem to justify the institution of sovereign power. These are relationships of control operating to produce a specific affect and form of social relationship. Autonomy is a strategy of condescension, a one-way relationship of unconscious sadism (McSwite, 2002 34-42). This is the kind of silent state of war that is staged and waged each day in our workplaces and organizations (Catlaw, 2007, in press-a; Robin, 2004 199-226).

Hobbes, Political Ontologist

While famous for his *Leviathan*, the war of all against all and its mobilizing fear, we see that Hobbes is also a rather remarkable political ontologist and theorist of order. Hobbes's work provides a clear account of the origins of human order and, in doing so, opens a space and rationale for the institution of government and authority. What Hobbes provides, in other words, is a compelling theory of the social bond—how it is created, how it is maintained, and the ends towards which it is instituted, here, security. It must be said, though, that Hobbes does not have mere physical security in mind as he clearly states in his account of the office of the sovereign. “But by safety here, is not meant a bare Preservation, but also all other Contentments of life, which every man by lawfull Industry, without danger, or hurt to the Common-wealth, shall acquire to himselfe” (231). This safety and its social bond are created by the institution of visible, sovereign authority and sustained on the condition of a divisive, mutual fear (fear of one another) and a uniting, common fear (of the sovereign). Critically, social order is an *artifact of human invention*; it is not the “naturally” occurring state of human relations but something to which we are *subjected*. “Bonds, that have their strength, not from their own Nature, (for nothing is more easily broken than a mans word,) but from Feare of some evill consequence upon the rupture” (93).

This ontology, of course, is readily and justifiably subject to myriad criticisms. Hobbes's assumptions regarding human nature, the assumption of mutual and common fears, the particular role of the state, the question of mutual consent, the “original position” of a state of war etc.: these are all readily and justifiably challenged on theoretical and empirical grounds. I, too, will offer a set of criticisms of this ontology on the basis that its conditions, in fact, undermine precisely that which they are intended to produce. In this section, however, rather than repeating familiar criticisms, I focus on the useful tools and problems that Hobbes gives us concerning this nexus of authority, order, and affect because he points to a conceptualization of human relationships and social order that is radically distinct from both the Parsonian emphasis on a macro-level cultural normativism and a Lockean exchange-based view of human interaction (Shlapentokh, 2006). This seems particularly crucial in the contemporary environment in which reconciliation of “values” is highly problematic (Catlaw, 2006a) and the exchange-based, utilitarian calculus of global capitalism is virtually hegemonic.

Above all, Hobbes points to the importance as well as the difficulty of maintaining social order. Both the importance of and desire for order and security—not incidentally as an important condition for the exercise of freedom—are abundantly on display around the world today. In the next two sections, I want to elaborate more fully the relevance of the Hobbesian account of order by linking his ontology in a general way to several other theories of social order and intelligibility offered in various aspects of the social sciences. I think that this line of thought points to a radical reconceptualization of “authority,” one detached from formal institutional as well as informal understandings. Authority, here, can be rethought as particular mechanism embedded in human relations that produces and maintains stability and sense. In the section that follows I want to suggest how this understanding of authority and order can illuminate the contemporary condition of human relationships and, in particular, our relationship with government. Central to both of these arguments is a view of authority as utterly *immanent* to human relationships. Hobbes was incorrect to view the institution of a unified power above society as essential to the constitution of order and security. However the impulse to escape from authority advanced by American-style individualism and constitutionalism—which is a *reaction against* Hobbes's *Leviathan*—is also misguided. Indeed the peculiar interface of the two positions produces conditions that undermine the efficacy of authority

and, in turn, order and coherence themselves—and the consequences of this can only be unhappy ones.

Towards a New Political Ontology

On my reading, Hobbes is basically correct in his assertion that ordered society is a construction; it is an artifact of human invention and imposition. There is no naturally-occurring, positive order of being. While it is certainly true that Hobbes uses this to justify the institution of a transcendent sovereign power over society, we need not follow him down this path. An immanentist view of authority emerges from Hobbes when juxtaposed with other theories.

Hobbes's core position is accommodated by the post-structuralist formulation of language as well as other accounts of order and sense in social science. Its radically anti-representational (in the mimetic sense) critique, post-structuralism exposes political, scientific, and social authority as constitutive acts of power and imposition. However unlike the modernist critical enterprise, this critique does not promise emancipation from "false" authorities of tradition or superstition through reason or science. It, therefore, does not shut one door of authority and open up into another. Rather the all-encompassing nature of its critique constructs a windowless room, the doors of which are all locked. Still, elements of the post-structuralist critique generate an intriguing paradox that helps to outline the distinctiveness of post-structural theory along Hobbesian, namely the *necessity* for some kind of authoritative imposition (Catlaw, 2006b). This paradox follows, in part, from the analysis of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign and the constitutive, generative affects of power.

First, as Saussure argued, there is no natural or essential relationship between the signifier and the signified, much less between the object of language and the object of visual perception. Rather what stability exists in those relationships is a product of human convention. Jacques Derrida, among others, challenged Saussure's fixing of language and the process of the production of meaning. Sign or signification systems are not stable, as Saussure had suggested. Rather, as Sarup (1989) notes, "signifiers and signifieds are continually breaking apart and reattaching in new combinations. ... The process is not only infinite but somehow circular: signifiers keep transforming into signifieds and vice versa, and you never arrive at a final signifier in itself" (35). The consequence of what Jacques Lacan (1981) called the sliding (*glissement*) among signifiers and signifieds is that meaning (or signification) is itself also highly unstable—it will shift from context to context, moment to moment. Second, power is productive and generative. In different ways, this is visible in both Lacan and Foucault. In Lacan, power assumes the form of a structuring discursive relationship (e.g. discourses of the master, hysteric, university, analyst (Lacan, 2007/1991)). In Foucault, power is productive and generative of possibilities and resistance, not simply restrictive or limiting.

The point to emphasize is that, at a basic level, intelligibility and coherence in language is produced through the temporary fixing or arrest of the sliding of the signifier. With regard to the specific question of authority, we can see the post-structuralist reworking of the practice in several ways. At the most basic, generic level authority can be seen as precisely that *mechanism* (not necessarily a person, institution, rule, or norm, though these are not excluded) that temporarily arrests the play of differences and produces intelligibility within a bounded domain. The arresting mechanics of authority, however, create fundamental divisions through their *selective* schemas. That is, divisions between inside and outside are produced since the bounding mechanisms cannot be all-encompassing. As I shall come to, how the status of the elements (e.g. representation of the One) is a critical matter.

Not unlike Hobbes's account, the imposition of power or discourse is *authorizing* in a double-sense, indeed in the double-sense of the word. Power is authorizing in that it is productive and creative like authorial invention, though it is neither intentional nor purposive. Power is also authorizing in that it makes possible certain kinds of speech and modalities of relationship. By extension, it also establishes certain asymmetries of speech and position. It is this *authorization* that grounds and distributes traditional forms of authority, such as the state, tradition, or organizational position, that, in turn, *legitimizes specific forms of domination* in the Weberian sense: "the probability that a command with a specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons" (Weber, 1978, 53). In this context, it is critical to appreciate that human subjects are *produced* by discourses and power; we are subjects of power and discourse. To modify Hobbes, there is no subjectivity without the imposition of discourse. But it is also, however, in light of this discourse of fear, this particular political ontology, that we need to understand both our subjectivities and the unique dimensions (its form and content) of the imposition.

In contemporary public administration, this ontology of order is elaborated by McSwite (2004) in their account of the production of meaning. In this Lacanian reading of Camilla Stivers's (2000) *Bureau Men, Settlement Women*, they argue that Bureau Men and Settlement Woman provide us with a way to describe the two basic functions for the producing and maintaining meaning. "Man" and "Woman" name these two moments—production and maintenance, respectively. Lacanian theory understands human relations as fundamentally linguistic or discursive in nature.⁵ In this view, "Women" is the structural position that produces words. The symbolic function of "Man" is to stop that production so that, like a period at the end of a sentence, we can make sense of the world and establish a stable context for action. Social life is the product of this dialectic of stoppage and generation. McSwite (2004, 417) writes,

Both functions are essential and equally important. Distortions of the process can occur as either the function of the man or the woman is overemphasized, thus impairing the operation of the other function. When the overemphasis is on the function of the man, dogmatism and stasis occur. ... [This makes for] a strict linguistic positivism. The feminine function can also be overemphasized. In this case, meaning is destabilized. So many words are created that the necessary process of reflexing back to the master signifier fails to function. Words overwhelm meaning.

We find a related account in the anthropologist Victor Turner's (1969) work on structure and anti-structure. Based upon historical and anthropological evidence, Turner suggests that ordered human societies are founded upon a dialectic of structure and what he calls *communitas*. He writes

It is as though there are two major "models" for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating. The first is of society as structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men [sic] in terms of "more" or "less." The second ... is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relative undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit to the general authority of the elders. (96)

[S]ocial life is a type of dialectical process that involves successive experience of high and low, *communitas* and structure, equality and inequality. ... [E]ach individual's

life experience contains alternating exposure to structure and *communitas*, and to states and transitions. (97)

There is, then, a general order (the dialectic of structure and *communitas*, states and transitions) to the worlds Turner studies.

Finally, urbanist Nan Ellin has offered a conception of the urban built-environment that echoes these themes. She writes of “porosity” and a “translucent urbanism.” These terms capture, in another dimension, the fragile relationship between dogmatic closedness and unrestrained openness that McSwite and Turner describe. Ellin writes, “Walls—both real and symbolic—preclude a translucent urbanism. Such lack of porosity occurs within shopping malls, walled or gated communities, and schools that do not share facilities with the surrounding neighborhoods. At the other end of the continuum, too much porosity also precludes transparency. This is apparent inside big-box retail stores where a variety of uses blend together indiscriminately or in the sprawling suburbs ...” (62) Rather than trying to eliminate entirely or reinforce boundaries, a porous sociality “engages and enhances [boundaries and edges] by bringing differences (of people and activities) together through [a] range of porous membranes” (82). In her wonderful book *Integral Urbanism* Ellin outlines many different types of porosity (e.g. ecological, administrative, symbolic porosities) that, again, echo many of the themes in McSwite and Turner.

Authority as Mechanism & Process

In providing these allied examples from varied literatures, I do not mean to suggest that there are no differences among these perspectives and the distinct views they advance. There are important, probably major theoretical points of difference; for example, in the locations at which Hobbes and Turner locate the position of “oneness” or unity. For Hobbes it is in the Leviathan, for Turner it is outside formal institutions in *communitas*, though equality is located similarly. Some may have very strong reservations about being included in a set that includes Hobbes. Nevertheless, each provides an illustration order as an artifact of relationship of *fixity and movement and of the incompleteness of any fixity by virtue of the excess or movement beyond it*. In the case of language, sense and intelligibility are produced by an arrest of the play of the signifier. A boundary of meaning is, so to speak, *authorized* by this fixation; yet this fixation is fragile and unstable given the structure of sense-making itself.

Further, with the notable exception of Hobbes (though even in Hobbes there are hints of the need for balance in his discussion of dissolving effects of absolute power [222]), we see examples of how intelligible and ordered human worlds are imperiled by overemphasis on one dimension. That is, when one dimension dominates, the production of sensible, secure, and stable human worlds is endangered. Excessive rigidity in structure ossified creation and produces the desire to throw off all authority; absence of structure leads to an interminable flow of meaningless signifiers and the subsequent desire for the return of strong, visible authority that will restore safety and meaning.

This formulation of authority offers several things. First, it is a theoretical formulation that cuts across many different areas of human enterprise and suggests a theory of social production or, in the words of Bang and Sørensen (1999), “world-making.” This detached theorizing from a *specific* conception of socio-political order, and shifts to a more generic understanding (see Catlaw, 2007, in press-b). Worlds are made up by the ongoing process of fixation and movement, and authority names the *process* of fixation. Authority stops the sliding of the signifier; it bounds *communitas*; it is the semi-permeable, porous membrane between “the inside and the outside” that produces

sufficient coherence for sense and security but is not dogmatically rigid such that movement is arrested. Authority, then, is not representational—it does not represent the One. Rather it is generative, creative, and necessarily incomplete. It creates security not by virtue of its access to, for example, of the truth but by virtue of producing conditions for stability and security as well as movement and change. In this way, authority is a dynamic social process of world-making. As I will suggest below, this account also shows quite vividly why reliance on mutual and common fears in furtherance of order in fact imperils order itself.

With conventional, instituted authority, then, what we find are various historical manifestation or resolutions to the problem of order and meaning; various mechanisms for fixing temporality the sliding of the signifier and for producing an intelligible, relatively secure human order. I have explored these different mechanisms elsewhere (Catlaw, 2006a, 2006b; see also McSwite, 1997) but suffice here to say that, in this context, that we can view the Leviathan as one mechanism for fixation, one process of authority. I will turn to another in the following sections. The problem we encounter with these mechanisms, one that it revealed in both the Hobbesian and post-structuralist ontologies, is that each mechanism cannot defend itself with reference to some ultimate ground or foundation. There can be neither a socio-political nor linguistic positivism. This means that the mechanisms of instituted authority are (in a relative, historical sense) inherently unstable and open to contests of legitimacy since, to rephrase the argument, above, all fixation inherently implies a moment not only of fixation but *exclusion* since not all possibilities can be accommodated in the moment of arrest (Catlaw, 2005, 2007, in press-a). Regardless of whether a particular sense is held genuinely in common, it is nevertheless an *uncommon* sense. It is inevitably partial, a reality which is especially challenging given the universalism modern democracy and sovereign individualism.

Contemporary Order: Into Invisibility & Liquidity

If Hobbes and these social scientists are correct in this account of how order and, in turn, intelligibility and security are constituted and sustained then Hobbes has something important to say about how the problems of authority and social order have been exacerbated in modernity and the particular ways in which we have fearfully responded to the image of Leviathan.

As described above, Hobbes does not advance our typical understanding of political representation which, generally speaking, a *mimetic* or mirroring mode of representation. That is, a representation or representative makes present again or re-presents the object represented; it is not generative or constitutive. We might say that since Hobbes the locus of authority has shifted from the representative (Leviathan) to the object of representation or the referent; the project has shifted from making authority visible to rendering the object visible. Moreover the predicate of “unified” has similarly been shifted as the locus of sovereignty as shifted from state to people. It is a paradoxical movement as it marks a shift of authority into the domain of the *invisible*, though there remains the clear commitment to conceiving order in terms of oneness. This is evident in two major loci of modern authority, science and popular sovereignty.

Modernity and the discourse of science mark radical shift away from a visible locus of power or origin to an invisible, displaced one. Foucault (1970/1966) has described this elegantly in *The Order of Things* with regard to the development of the human sciences. Representation moves out of the domain of the visible and deep into the mute structures of life itself; it does not dwell in the everyday realm of visibility. The object of representation now dwells off stage, in a place out of sight. At the same time, science is animated by a drive to render transparent or visible through

language and concepts that invisible realm. In this connection, philosopher Alain Badiou has described the twentieth century as being possessed by a “passion for the Real”—a drive to lay bare of the secrets of the inner workings of the human body, nature, and the cosmos. Significantly, the authority derived from this making-visible, from these representations, does not emit from the person of the representative but from *the truth of the object* itself. It is, in Weber’s (1978) terms, an *impersonal* authority. In conjunction with rise of invisible, impersonal authority, the technologies of management, planning, and public administration work to make individual subjects and populations more visible and legible (Scott, 1998) at the same moment that authority becomes embedded in the complex, hierarchical form of bureaucracy. Nan Ellin (1997) concludes, “As disciplinary strategies have evolved to the present, visibility of the ruled has continued to increase, but that of the rulers has decreased” (35). As Hannah Arendt (1970) famously wrote of the rise of bureaucracy, we enter an age of “rule by nobody,” what we might call an “invisible sovereign.” Thorne and Kouzmin offer the allied term “invisible oligarchs.” Similarly, economists Albert and Hahnel describe the emergence of an “invisible coordinator class”(Hahnel, 2005, 64-65) between the capitalist and working classes which frustrates the self-management of organizations.

The modern logic of popular sovereignty follows a homologous movement; a shifting of the grounds for authority to a displaced, presumptive unified object of representation and a *natural* order of things (Catlaw, 2007, in press-a). Popular sovereignty names a way of life in the figurative sense of the “life of the People.” This logic conflates a constructed political order with a natural, self-regulating one which, in turn, becomes the integrated, unified object of representation. A comparable movement of authority into the invisible emerges and this is especially vivid in the American federalist system. Indeed the American constitutional order is rooted a singular discomfort with the unified Hobbesian Leviathan (Ostrom, 1989/1973) as well as the People (McSwite, 1997), and certainly the federal system of government with its checks and balances and separation of powers aims to control abuses of a unitary state by sufficiently fragmenting authority through a constitutional system that produces the popular will. American government is created in opposition to this image and practice political power. But this oppositional, fragmented “Yankee Leviathan” (Bensel, 1990) is not freed from the problems of authority outlined above. Indeed not only does political power become relatively invisible behind the veneer of the constitutional machine, but it dispatches and so conceals the mechanisms of authority and social ordering undertaken in the supposedly free, unfettered, pre-political domains of civil society. As Foucault suggests, modern societies are plagued by a fundamental overemphasis on this most visible and conspicuous form of “political” authority, thereby conditioning a general failure to appreciate how this form replicates itself on an everyday, “micro” level in civil society and the workplace—the authority relations of which I sketched above. However the social movements and changes of the last four decades have witnessed increasing efforts to carry the contest against authority into the realms of civil society and the workplace as the quality of one’s singular life rather than the apparatuses of the state becomes the locus of political struggle.

This attitude towards authority generates the conditions for what sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2005) describes as the *liquid* nature of the contemporary world. He writes, “ ‘Liquid modern’ is a society in which the conditions under which its members act change faster than it takes the ways of acting to consolidate into habits and routines” (1). This speaks directly to the account of movement and fixity outlined above. In liquid modernity, it is fixity that is endangered. Things never seem to stop long enough for a world to cohere. Movement rules. “In short: liquid life is a precarious life, lived under conditions of constant uncertainty. The most acute and stubborn worries that haunt such a life are the fears of being caught napping, of failing to catch up with fast-moving events, of

being left behind, of overlooking ‘use by’ dates, of being saddled with possessions that are no longer desirable, of missing the moment that calls for a change of tack before crossing the point of no return. ... Life in liquid modern society cannot stand still. It must modernize ...—or perish (2-3).

The Consequences of Liquidity; or Movement and Markets

The world Bauman describes is not, of course, an unfamiliar one. His liquid modernity recalls Marx and Engels’s (1998/1848) observation that under capitalism “all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned” (38). “The bourgeoisie,” they write, “cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production... All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify” (38). Along similar lines, Deleuze and Guatarri’s (1987) analyses have elaborated philosophically the “deterritorializing” nature of capital. In the context, however, of the structure of order sketched above, it is in the category of movement that capital and the economic may be filed and, in historical terms, into fixation go mechanisms of regulation. Indeed this was the broad point argued powerfully by Karl Polyani (1944) in his theory of the “double movement” of the economic liberalism and social regulation. For Polyani, the collapse of nineteenth century civilization and the subsequent slide of the world into war and deprivation were generated by the “conflict between the market and the elementary requirements of an organized social life” (249). This was in no small measure informed by a misplaced belief in the self-regulating, self-propagating nature of markets (and their *natural, non-human* laws [126]) and a view of individual freedom as autonomy which reduced everything to the categories of the economic (movement). There became only “one big self-regulating market” (67). In the terms outlined here, this nineteenth century collapse can be read as a breakdown in the fragile balance between movement and fixation that makes viable human worlds possible. It was a breakdown in the mechanisms of authority and, as such, human society itself became threatened by annihilation, first, by the market itself and then by the divisions induced by and self-protective reactions to the market’s devastating movement. Humankind recovered, Polyani argues, by “discovering society” (258a) and a new terrain of scientifically-inform regulatory action. Indeed the field of public administration emerges on this new terrain of society and becomes *the* primary mechanism for regulating and authorizing (Catlaw, 2007, in press-a). It becomes a mechanism for inducing *slowness*.

If authority is a process of fixation and movement, we can see why liquid modernity is a problem. Polyani’s analysis also makes this clear. Liquidity endangers the delicate dialectic that is necessary to create viable worlds. Indeed liquid life careens in the direction of movement and renders the desire for fixity, security, and rigid authority ever greater. Less appreciated is how this affects our ability to identify and locate threat and danger. As authority (as dialectical process) breaks down and sense is unbounded, we lose the individual and collective capacity to identify threats and fears. Potentially, everything and nothing can scare us and appropriate lines of action are unclear. Paradoxically, our fears become both more vague and more concrete and personal. Amorphous, shifting threats of “the Other” emerge (the Immigrant, the Terrorist, the Government) and, as Bauman suggests, “we focus on things we can, or believe we can, or assured we can, influence: we try to calculate and minimize the risk that we personally, or those concurrently nearest and dearest to us may fall victim to the unaccountable and indefinable dangers which the opaque word and its uncertain future hold in store” (68-69). Thus we may become highly focused on the regulation of our selves and our personal bodies. Here, again, we see the drive for *autonomous* authority and its ethic of withdrawal and detachment. In turn, what fades is the habitable terrain of the *common*.

Fear as Ontological Condition

The rub is that fear cannot be eliminated from human life. Nor, it seems, can it be relegated to the sidelines, a reality appreciated not just by Hobbes but by psychoanalysts like Lacan and Freud and phenomenologists like Heidegger (1962/1926)⁶, not the least of reason for which is because we are “thrown” into a world rather than born into a natural, self-regulating order. Fear, like love, is a possible albeit powerful way of encountering the world; it is a sign that we are connected to and concerned with a world. In this sense, fear is an ontological condition⁷, the ultimate horizon of which is death. Certainly Hobbes was correct in his concern with fear and security and, moreover, for seeing fear as intimately bound up with the question of order and being as such. More instrumentally, it cannot be denied that fear and the threat of punishment play a role in maintaining social order. I also am not persuaded that it is fruitful to attempt to distinguish “real” from “imaginary” or sensationalized fears since fear is necessarily linked to the uncertainty and anticipation that inheres in the human condition (Shlapentokh, 2006). Moving beyond Hobbes, we can also appreciate the desire for security in light of the discussion of the fixation-movement conceptualization of authority. Worlds are fragile and, especially under contemporary conditions, always in danger of coming undone—of sliding into the suffocation of authoritarianism or the agoraphobia of liquidity.

While fear must be given its due, a political ontology that *founds* and *maintains* itself on this ontological *possibility* runs into problems that endanger precisely that which it was posited to create—namely security (in a broad sense) and order—by frustrating the creation of human relations that can fruitfully attend to the dialectic of fixity and movement. We see this in how the social bond in this ontology is produced and maintained through, to borrow a phrase from Teresa Brennan (2004), the “transmission of affect,” in this case, *fear*. This transmission occurs not simply between the Sovereign and its subject but throughout society—as if mini-Sovereigns are installed through out the everyday domains of civil society, home, and the workplace. Rather than encouraging interactive, creative world-making and dynamic sustenance, the tendency inspired is towards an *autonomous*, detached view of authority and, paradoxically, distending insistence of oneness. Drawing from Richard Sennett’s work, we find that the affect of fear helps to produce subsequent feelings of shame, ambivalence, and detachment. Resistance to the Sovereign replicates this form and the desire to be a sovereign individual and for the invisibility of authority. I think we might also plausibly see the contemporary “cynical” attitude as simply a variant of this form of autonomous authority; an attempt to reclaim one’s individual sovereign and exhibit one’s untouchability by those seemingly with no other means of resistance at their disposal. Here, again, we raise the question not simply of the persistence of a set of ontological commitments but also of the affectively colored environment and the qualitative texture of human relation encouraged by this bond, one is actually at odds with its declared aims. While fear is an ontological possibility it is not the *preferred* possibility; why the transmission of this particular affect actually endangers precisely that which it is transmitted to help make possible, order and security.

As I have argued here, much of this can be linked to the originary commitment to the Sovereign One and, more specifically, the image of strength rooted in *self-containment*; here understood as both the self-contained unity of the Sovereign Leviathan (opposed to the fragmented Multitude) and the autonomous power of the supervisor or sovereign individual (as opposed to the affective subordinate or “dependent” person). The image of self-containment also limits how we think about the transmission of affect. Here transmission occurs through the traditional means of visibility. Certainly this is one part of the story, a point confirmed by the contemporary study of mirror

neurons. But as the emerging field of psychoneuroendocrinology makes clear, affect is transmitted, so to speak, *invisibly* through air borne chemicals (Brennan, 2004), constantly emitted and received by the *porous body*. If the body is porous or translucent, the image of sovereign self-containment is patently wrong and misleading.

The tradition reaction against the Leviathan has been to do away with this unified sovereign power and, as suggested above, displace the locus of authority into the domain of an invisible, presumptively unified self-regulating domain. But in the reaction against these twin pillars of Leviathan (unity and visibility) exemplified by the Yankee Leviathan we find the problems associated with what the prominent German psychoanalyst Alexander Mitscherlich (1969/1963) called a “society without the father.” Moreover, in the movement from visible to invisible authority, we see that the presumptions of the Leviathan, self-contained unity and visibility, are nevertheless carried forward, albeit in modified forms. Unity shifts from the subject to the object; self-containment shifts from Leviathan to the autonomous individual. It is almost as if Hobbes’s commonwealth is turned upside down; or that the Multitude itself comes to identify with this image of unity. But inversion does not mean subversion. As Freud suggested *Group Psychology & the Analysis of the Ego* although the band of brothers kills the father who stands in the way of happiness and fulfillment, they are more fiercely haunted in memory by the father’s ghost than they ever were while he reigned in life. The father, we might say, haunts as affect even after the physical body is dead and buried. As Mitscherlich (1969/1963) wryly observed, “George Orwell hit the nail on the dead when he spoke, not of ‘Big Father’, but of ‘Big Brother’” (207).

So if we are going to confront our liquid life another way forward is needed, a process of authority other than the Hobbesian and Yankee Leviathans.

Partially Concluding

Certainly, then, a central question of our time concerns the mechanism for *fixation* in an era evacuated by faith in tradition, government, and instituted authority, in general. The question, in other words, is once again *how is society possible?* Meaning, by what mechanism of fixation can movement, melting, or liquidity be slowed?

From one dimension, the trite conclusion that we can draw is that what we really need is a balance. Of course, a balance is needed. But I think that, more basically, we need a political ontology of human order that makes sense of why balance is essential and, moreover, makes clear that is a balance between or among *precisely what* elements. I have tried to offer the broad contours of such an ontology here and have elsewhere pointed to the particular practice of currently-instituted authority that might follow from this (Catlaw, 2006a). The answer, I think, is also not to advocate for a stronger, more centralized state in opposition to the capitalist market as some postmodern-inspired thinkers have (Ankersmit, 1996) and as some normative theorists in public administration intimate. I do not think that the question here should be framed in terms of strong or weak or “the state”—the operative orientation is towards a *different* understanding of the social process of authority detached from institutional or sectoral division (Catlaw, 2007, in press-b). In the first place, we might say that no modality of authority can be a representation of the One or purport to constitute the multitude as a sovereign, even if popular sovereign.

We need to give *slowness* its day (Honore, 2004) (see www.slowmovement.com); a practice of slowness and fixation need be neither reactionary nor sabotage in the sense of constraining ones

identity or destroying important mechanisms for social life. These can be read as effects of a distended, fearful production of order. The desire for slowness manifests itself in everyday, mundane things like traffic calming devices. These are material, *porous* expressions of authority that seek to inspire slowness and to mitigate the consequences of liquidity. It is fixation and slowness that allow for the *temporal* connection to people and place necessary to make and sustain the dialectic of world-making.

What of affect and this composition of authority or, as I have called it, *fixation*? I think that the direction this essay points to is towards visible authority embedded in mutual relationship, by which I mean relations among the elements of which do not assert themselves as representations of the One but rather are generative and actively engaged in the making-up of the world with authority's "outside." Authority is visible in its manifestations but not self-contained or autonomous; the "outside" also does not stand for the One but expresses the potential for dynamism, change, movement. It expresses, in other words, the possibility for a future. It is this mutualism is that evokes security not merely in the physical sense but, as Sartre (1956/1943) wrote, "my being *secure* in the consciousness of the Other" (480). And this could be what we call *love*.

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Notes

¹ Comparative administration is an exception to this rule.

² Unless otherwise noted all Hobbes references are to *Leviathan*.

³ Hobbes also allows for the possibility of sovereign subjection through *acquisition*, i.e. invasion.

⁴ It has been Kym Thorne and Alexander Kouzmin's (2004; , 2006) work that has attuned me to the problem of the visible and invisible.

⁵ A related, post-structuralist inspired account of social order is Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) landmark text *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.

⁶ I am side-stepping the distinction Heidegger draws between fear, which he claims has a specific object, and *angst* (usually translated as anxiety or dread), in which "nothing" or my existence itself bothers me. Nothing, generally speaking, names the awareness of one's finitude and being-towards-death rather than fear of a discrete object of experience. In these moments of *angst* the world is unfamiliar and strange to us; we have the experience of the uncanny. At the same moment, *angst* individualizes us by rendering us apart from the everydayness of the world.

⁷ Thanks to Ludmila Kouzmin and Alexander Kouzmin for turning my attention to this dimension of fear.