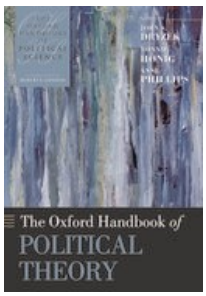

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CHAPTER

40 Paranoia and Political Philosophy

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Abstract

This article examines the relation between paranoia and political philosophy. It suggests that internal psychological conflict affects political reality through the force of belief systems and explains that belief derives from the complex interplay between the structuralization of the inner self, its affective and developmental foundations, and what the external world produces as data and sensation. It also contends that both realms of experience, the psychological internal and the political external, infuse each other and each depends on the other.

Keywords: paranoia, political philosophy, psychological conflict, political reality, belief systems, inner self

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1 Paranoia as a Marker for Theory

Thinking psycho-dynamically about political concepts raises the larger issue of the relation between political theory, as a mode of organizing the public, and defenses within the self, modes of organizing or protecting the inner or private self. Hannah Arendt (1958) and others have argued that such correspondences do not exist; to see a connection is to mystify the public space, distort motive and intention, and posit a false link between unconscious dynamics and actions in the public. However, in opposition to this view, I would suggest that internal psychological conflict affects political reality through the force of belief systems. And belief derives from the complex interplay between the structuralization, or its lack, of the inner self, its affective and developmental foundations, and what the external world produces as data and sensation. While it is an oversimplification to suggest that the internal life completely patterns external reality, internal psychological ↳ structures, through their presence in ideology and belief, exercise considerable influence on what happens in and to the public.

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People believe "x" or "y" not only because they come from a certain class in society or have had instruction in philosophic reasoning or represent the interests of a specific and culture-bound historical setting. In addition, internal psychological dynamics having their origin early in the developmental process may push

the self towards identification in which *affect* takes shape as belief or theory. What we construct as psychological defense, particularly in its primitive forms, may appear in the adult as moral and ethical belief, as ideology, or as religious commitment or fanaticism. Paranoid political systems and theory, therefore, may be a symbolic reflection of emotional fears stated indirectly or projectively through conceptions that organize a culture's politics. Politics is understood here as symptomatic of broader pathologies in the culture. And what we are unable or unwilling to accept or acknowledge in our fantasies about human motivation and desire, we embrace in our political life as a kind of repository for bad self-representations: murderous rage, destructive aggression, paranoid schemes of surveillance, the institutionalization of deceit, the lack of superego constraint. Politics, as a vital psychological space within the culture, comes to hold split-off, unwanted, and shed parts of the self; it acts out literally the language of the unconscious. Narcissistic rage in the self, fantasies of domination, political arrogance may possess a significant impact on public policy.

Both realms of experience, the psychological internal and the political external, infuse each other; each depends on the other. A paranoid politics or political philosophy is impossible without an audience to refract its concepts and significance. Think, for example, of the public space as mirroring fractures in the self; it may, like the self, be more or less "cohesive;" or it may be subject to massive disintegration and fall into a kind of schizoid non-identity or confusion. Or the public may be enveloped in terrifying belief systems that posit enemies everywhere, that conceive of the world as perpetual threat.

Paranoia is an attack on the self, on its capacity to discern inner from outer: it subverts the will, confuses the relation between self and other. It is symptomatic of the paranoid to defend the self rigorously and with considerable energy from the power and fear of infection by "external" forces that endanger life (Meissner 1978). Consciousness, in psychoanalyst Leo Kovar's terms, works to make the self as "invulnerable as
p. 731 possible to future incursions by the scourges of doubt and uncertainty." It is believed by a paranoid that ↳ "thoughts and feelings" are "directed from the outside, as they were in childhood." For the "success of this most perfect form of imprisonment," the paranoid "must employ the perfect jailer," a persecutor who constantly threatens the self's survival (Kovar 1966, 300). Experience holds threat and pain; and the self suffers an internal tyranny as deadly as any form of external oppression. Innocence, safety, pleasure, or joyfulness have no meaning for the paranoid; and the universe appears as nightmare, the descent into terror, and the fear of consensual reality. Emotions find themselves defined by what D. W. Winnicott (1965) calls compliance demands; and an urgent inner compulsion, reinforced through external demand, drives the self into a state of distraction and terror.

Because of the power of pre-verbal affect and the globalizing emotions of pre-verbal thought, the Freudian notion of the origins of paranoia in repressed homosexuality is not useful in looking at the politics of paranoia and its presence in canonic moments in political philosophy.[1] Freud's analysis of Dr Schreiber, while clinically an interesting case study, bears little relevance to understanding the political and theoretical operations of paranoia in the public space. It is a narrow view of the origins of radical suspicion and possesses no utility in deconstructing the political origins of paranoia. What works in understanding the power of paranoia in the conscious self is to acknowledge the dynamic of paranoia as central to the development of perception and affect. But this dynamic is not derivative of confusion over sexual object; rather, it is a state of mind that may or may not turn pathological, that derives from archaic disintegration anxieties whose origins lie in distant, forgotten realms of pre-verbal experience. The fear that the world is falling apart may have as much to do with the resonance of this pre-verbal universe in consciousness, as it does with an objective appraisal of existing experience. It is, of course, impossible to know, outside of a clinical interrogation, with any certainty the extent of theoretical exaggeration of existing reality in paranoid conceptual systems. But given what contemporary psychoanalytic theory suggests about the ability of the unconscious to influence consciousness, it is a reasonable *psychological* assumption that

p. 732 paranoid ↳ anxiety, the fear of disintegrating, may be a factor in accounting for the theorist's conscious organization of the world.

Psychoanalytic evidence suggests global pre-verbal percepts may be significant in defining morality, action, and the perception of experience.[2] Similarly the psychotic realm of human experience, intense pre-verbal affect literally consuming consciousness, may have a significant impact on political thought and action. The work of Melanie Klein, Wilford Bion, Michael Eigen, Thomas Ogden, James Grotstein, and Vamik Volkan on paranoia and distrust in early psychological development offers more interesting and plausible theoretical interpretation than the early Freudian account. These psychoanalytic theorists see paranoia as originating in pre-verbal affect and trauma, leaving a lasting impact on the self. Paranoid projections, intense distrust magnified to a pathological degree through delusional constructions, derive from spaces in the self far more undifferentiated than Freud's sexual etiology. The power of disintegration anxiety in the self, the exaggeration of real world fears and embellishing them through delusional imagery, turn into defensive scenarios that possess an emotional valence far more global than what Freud conceived as anxiety over homosexual, erotic cravings. In the clinical discourse, the association of paranoia with the projection of enemies is a psychological dynamic producing extraordinary anxiety. The "enemy" is evil and threatening and needs to be destroyed; to allow the enemy to survive endangers political and psychological reality.

Paranoia, therefore, is a real factor both in the theoretical constructs of political theorists and the actions of political leaders. I want to focus on Hobbes in this chapter, but it is also the case that modern political leaders use paranoia as a weapon of political mobilization. To separate the internal psychological dynamics of political leaders from the actions of state ignores the close connection between political affect and political action. Modern psychoanalytic theory exploring paranoia demonstrates the close connection between public institutions and leaders, and powerful psychodynamic factors that affect political decision-making and administrative authority.

Reading Hobbes' *Leviathan* from the perspective of paranoid affect means that theory itself constitutes a defense against both the self and the world falling into a timeless disconnected universe of chaos and terror.
p. 733 Or to put it ↳ another way: paranoid imaginings constitute a defense against psychotic disintegration or madness; the paranoid perception (for example Hobbes' argument in chapter 13 on the natural condition of mankind) justifies strong political will, a psychologically grounded commitment to defending individuals and communities from the horror of political fragmentation. This I would submit troubled Hobbes: the power of the emotional world to drag down both the self and the political realm. He had good reasons for this view; it was evident in the civil wars, in the struggles over power, in the debates over belief and religion, and the pursuit of individual ambition and glory.

Paranoia may indeed be fueled by real-world activity; but for a theorist like Hobbes, real-world activity demands that political will (in the form of the sovereign) support paranoid political institutions. Hobbes believed that authority wrapped in a world-view of suspicion and scrutiny could bring order to chaotic political environments. It is a theoretical faith, but a faith that in *Leviathan* drew not from religion but from the propositional logics of geometry and unquestioned belief that geometric reasoning held the key to objective "reckoning." Yet it is also the case that paranoid theory rather than bringing security and safety can reinforce the very emotional and structural dynamics that brought the regime to the brink of disintegration in the first place. The fear and power of madness, and its presence in the natural condition, account for Hobbes turning to a political will distinguished by its absolute and repressive structure. *Leviathan* is a theoretical imaginative leap partly grounded in reality, but embellished through paranoid projections designed to prevent the disintegration of political order and the order of the self. The falling into madness, both in the self and the regime, is an omnipresent fear that Hobbes articulates throughout *Leviathan*.

2 Paranoia as Action

Hobbes demonstrates no sympathy toward a politics infused by participation, mutuality, spontaneity, or pleasure. It is quite the opposite. The spontaneous becomes the dangerous, the "decaying sense" of imagination leads to all sorts of phantastic imagery which has no interest in order; the unpredictable
p. 734 transforms into the threatening, And the avoidance of strict adherence to ↳ political law and rules is seen to be intolerable. In *Leviathan,* liberty, rather than being understood as expanding the boundaries of participation, is seen as a restrictive dynamic on the effectiveness of rule. Individuality, at least in the way John Stuart Mill uses the term in *On Liberty* (1974), the use of political words or rhetoric as legitimate questioning of authority, becomes an absolute danger in the political realm. For the paranoid political theorist (and regime), it is always the fear of sinking into nothingness, a psychotic un-hingeing of the world that underlies political recommendation. Hobbes attacks the "Babel" of political speech because too many words without common meaning inflame political imagination and undermine a single, absolute sovereignty.

Leviathan is a good example of how paranoia might be used for political ends; how the dynamics of the paranoid process infuse the theorist's view of what is just and right; how paranoia as a structure of control defines philosophical choice and the approach to and use of reason. Hobbes consigns cooperation, dispute, mutuality to the economic realm, the pursuit of what he calls the "commodious life." He provides a theoretical argument designed to dominate and tame an unruly nature through the imposition of political structure employing surveillance, sanctions, and the possibility of punishment for transgression. Theory fights tainted speech or political words (what today we might call ideology) turned upside down by the unpredictability of passion. *Leviathan* is a peculiarly modern statement about repressive values governing political perception and action, and a reminder that not everyone regards civic freedom or political tolerance as absolute goods.

Threats to the state and the self are, of course, real; however, theoretical imagination may take the real threat and transform it into an inviolable law of political governance. Paranoid readings of reality produce overkill, and trust disappears in what political nature requires to make reality governable. Hobbes justifies order and stability through a persistent and relentless scrutiny, watchfulness, or hyper-vigilance. An effective authority in Leviathan is one that sacrifices the free play of political speech for unquestioned obedience to the will of whoever decides the "rules." Authority thrives on fear: the fear of breaking limits, the fear of transgressions, the fear of speech that might contradict what Hobbes calls the common "names" or signs of the entity, or person who rules. Philosophy, then, in the hands of Hobbes, transforms the real into the paranoid; and the rationality of philosophic form becomes the instrument that removes from the
p. 735 polity ambivalence, questioning, ↳ uncertainty, contingency, and political passion or intensity that might undermine the order of the sovereign's domination.

I am not arguing from the character of the philosopher to the status of the theoretical construct. The evidence is in the construct itself, in the imaginative premises that sustain the theoretical model. Nor is my argument an attempt to show that mysterious paranoid forces drive Hobbes, although with many in the tradition that dynamic certainly was present. I want rather to reflect on paranoid structures within Leviathan's governing regime, within the theoretical imagination, and to suggest it might be useful to see these structures as part of a complex pattern of paranoid defenses that emerge from the theorist's view of human nature and the motives behind action. For example Nietzsche's (1968) hatred of slave morality and Plato's (1961) fear for the *demos* demonstrate the contempt each holds for human selves acting because of desire and self-interest rather than a higher, more "purified" perception. Hobbes' cataloguing of the passions in *Leviathan*, Part I shows an awareness of the power of desire to influence choice and define action; Plato's description of the decline of the state and its relation to human character in Book 9 of the *Republic* reveals a human nature ("monstrous winged drone ... unsatisfied yearnings" running "amuck,"

infected with "frenzy") that, with all its imperfections, cannot be trusted to make right and correct decisions (Plato 1961, 573b, 799–800).

In Plato's *Laws* (1961), the purpose of the nocturnal council, the pivotal administrative body charged with overseeing law, is to enforce obedience to the polity, fidelity to the laws and their operation. Yet this organization at the heart of Plato's political argument meets in darkness; its deliberations take place in mystery after nightfall; its objective lies in enforcement; and its aim is to guarantee compliance to the laws of the state. Plato demands that the political function maintains scrutiny of all potential threat. "The world is full of good things but no less full of their contraries, and those that are amiss are the more numerous" (line 906). Thus the governing council of the *Laws* must be on guard against the possibility of decay, decline, disintegration, and madness. "The fight we have in mind is, we maintain, undying, and calls for a wondrous watchfulness" (line 906). How different is this from Nietzsche's purified breeder in *The Will to Power* (1968), who makes sure the elect, those who truly "see," are not contaminated by the corrupting morality and desires of the mass? What contempt here for the political intelligence of the *demos*! Watchfulness is the
p. 736 central function of institutions ↳ like Plato's nocturnal council, the Hobbesian sovereign, and the imagery of discipline and self-control that recurs in Nietzsche's thought.

3 Domination and the Psychology of Command

Leo Kovar (1966) argues that the paranoid personality is obsessed with command, with the "physiology, as it were, of interpersonal power," and "power over people may be implemented either by force or by influence" (1966, 290). Harry Stack Sullivan (1953) suggests that the paranoid obsession with control is an effort to defend the self against intimacy. Domination replaces tenderness; the conflicts of the intrapsychic absorb the consensual. Harold Searles (1965) sees the paranoid self as a product of internal objects, whose objective lies in persecution. "The patient lives characteristically under the threat, that is, not only of persecutory figures experienced as part of the outer world but also under that of introjects which he carries about, largely unknown to himself, within him" (1965, 467).[3] These agents imposing themselves on the self (autonomous persecutors) are experienced as coming from "without;" the paranoid views these "foreign bodies" in the self as real, having the power to harm or injure, and develops elaborate strategies to dominate and control their power.[4] The paranoid self, then, spends an enormous amount of time engaged in
p. 737 complex imaginative power operations whose ↳ objective lies in domination, even though, psychologically, the origins of these perceptions lie "inside" the self, in the intrapsychic domain of experience.

The fear of being attacked, the knowledge of the world as persistent malevolence, the frantic effort to escape threat and danger, consume consciousness in a dialectic that oscillates between the compulsion to dominate and the fear of imminent annihilation and disintegration. Further, much of this psychological effort is a struggle to avoid the terror and boundlessness of falling into a condition of non-identity and chaos, what Eigen (2002, 168) calls an "evasive, hallucinatory exoskeleton." The paranoid world-view, then, provides certainty; it defends against dissolution; it constructs a peculiar but nonetheless very real identity. At its extreme, paranoia defines the self's core identity. I recall a patient at the Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Hospital who told me he could never go outside, because the hills around Towson were filled with long-range cannon that would immediately explode and kill him, if he were to leave the building. His strategy inside the hospital was to build (in his own phantastic imagination) more powerful cannon to destroy the ones "outside." Delusion produces hermetically sealed images of power (Glass 1985, 1989).

Similarly with Hobbes; threats to the polity come from agents or presences or phantasms or impure moralities attacking from outside. Granted many of the threats are real; but do they require for their containment the extraordinary measures advocated by *Leviathan*? Is protection of the body politic from infectious agents a fundamental political objective? And what are the political and cultural implications in

projecting paranoid defense as the primary task of the theorist and the state? Power, as Barrington Moore, Jr., argues in his remarkable study, *Moral Purity in History* (2000), attaches itself to the demand for cleansing, vigilance, the elimination of the impure, the disruptive, the chaotic. Moore's historical analysis is at times uneven, but the material showing the power of phobia and aversion, and its attachment to the fear of being poisoned by the "unclean" and toxic, is fascinating. His discussion of the French revolutionary terrorist, Saint Just, persuasively demonstrates the origins of the terror in the hatred of the unclean, decadent, and impure. Power steeped in a "vision" strives for the ideal of a political environment liberated from contaminating and entropic forces. But what kind of Power demands these kinds of actions? For Moore the impact of the righteous political will on the body politic is horrendous. And while Hobbes disavows
p. 738 righteousness as ↳ the motive behind the power of Leviathan, he nonetheless sees his construct as an ideal model, the only theoretical venue that will guarantee an orderly and ordered political environment. The redemptive hope Hobbes held for authority modeled on Leviathan should not be underestimated. The sovereign would save the political space from the entropy of unleashed, competing, and angry political wills. Unrelenting scrutiny guarding against the intrusion of what is defined as impure or poisonous governs action in the paranoid political universe. It is essential therefore for Power, in Hobbes' view, to censor public speech, to monitor public pronouncements, to guard against infectious political words. It is not fortuitous that Hobbes uses the imagery of "sickness" and madness to describe dangers to the commonwealth.

Philosophy, impelled by the paranoid will, defines the world in split images of good and bad. Like the psychological paranoid system, philosophy isolates "enemies" in relation to forces ordering the polity. It roots out the "boils and scabs on the body politic" (Hobbes), the "drones" (Plato), the "slaves," the "weak" (Nietzsche). Logic appears as argument banishing the "bad" or as biting attacks on presences the philosopher finds repugnant. Hobbes rails against the "schoolmen," those who chase "phantasms;" he mocks "unnatural" spirits, political ideology with "wind in the head" or "hot bloods" who "Having gotten the itch, tear themselves with their own nails, till they can endure the smart no longer." He warns his audience against the political diseases of "distemper," "venomous matter," "incurable wounds," "seditious doctrines," the "consumption of riot and vain expense" (Hobbes 1957, 209–18). He decries the "vain absurdities" of political claimants; he has no patience "for the misguided spiritualists," "unlearned divines" who speak of "kingdoms of fairies … darkness and ghosts … working on men's minds, with words and distinctions that of themselves signify nothing" (1957, 215). Sedition, religious ideological conflict, and political confusion: all contribute to the weakening of sovereignty and the threat of dissolution and the sinking into madness.

Paranoia destroys the epistemic and psychological structure of consensual reality, not to mention a participatory politics and its delicate balancing of interest and restraint. Paranoia and distrust is particularly damaging to democratic forms of deliberation and action, to the operation of a tolerant civil society, which requires a considerable measure of trust and interdependence.[5] If a paranoid politics is fueled by the terror
p. 739 so characteristic of ↳ paranoia in the self, the impact on culture can be disastrous. A paranoid politics in its effort to defend against madness, however it is defined, may paradoxically produce that which it most fears; and anxiety generated by the public space might intensify terror and increase the vigilance of paranoid political structure. The paranoid's "primary task," Kovar writes, "is to lock himself into a system that is foolproof and cannot be tampered with." And that system or delusion "must include him in such a way that it constitutes a prison in which he can reside over … after having slammed the gate shut behind himself" (Kovar 1966, 299). Does not Hobbes slam the gate against those who would threaten the paranoid and disciplined vigilance of the sovereign authority?

For Hobbes authority is more than a necessity; in *Leviathan* it becomes a fetish. Is the system of *Leviathan* not hyper-vigilant against the corrupting power of desire and the always-present forces of impurity? How odd it is that such pure, non-ideological authority, as Leviathan, this great geometry of political form, would

never fall to the temptation of enforcing in the name of an ideal, principle, or ideology. Can authority ever be so purged of passion-laden words or beliefs? This is one assumption of Hobbes that history has disproved. The power vested in agencies such as the sovereign rests on the fear of the "inside" (in the sense of the self's passions) breaking up the outside—the world of rules, laws, common names, order. But the threat is seen as coming from the outside. Yet, the more anti-democratic and anti-liberal the political environment, the more paranoia may come to dominate public consciousness and feed the uncertainty and fear it was designed to repress. Political authority believing in the paranoid projection, even in the face of convincing evidence to the opposite, uses that conviction or faith to frighten and therefore control its own political audience, and to buttress its own vision of political will.

4 The Vigilant Ruler and Paternal Authority

The Hobbesian sovereign possesses a mechanical, disembodied, non-human almost schizoid quality. The
p. 740 schizoid self relentlessly represses emotion or ↳ affect. Without feeling, particularly empathy, the exercise of power becomes easier; little constraint exists in doing harm, in imposing will. It is easier to repress or kill those who elicit little or no sympathy, those seen to be noxious or impure or diseased (Glass 1997). The sovereign functions according to this distance of command, claims omnipotence, and possesses properties very much like what Victor Tausk (1956) has called the "delusion" of the "influencing machine."[6] Hobbes' sovereign is attached to the collective psyche; it speaks directly to consciousness; it operates mechanically and appears to be hooked up to the minds of the subjects. In Tausk's analysis of the schizophrenic mind, he was impressed by the delusion of being hooked to, literally, a force of vast power and influence; that sense or feeling of being hooked up appears as a voice or an agent so powerful it defines the self's identity. Indeed, Hobbes' greatest fear echoes the horrifying dread that Julia Kristeva sees in a universe without boundary or constraint, "the unleashing of drive as such, without object, threatening identity, including that of the subject itself." For Kristeva, such a state is madness. "We are then in the presence of psychosis" (1982, 138).

Hobbes' political environment is a desperate attempt to avoid this unleashing of drive and a falling back into the madness of the natural condition. "Men for the attaining of peace and conservation of themselves thereby have made an artificial man, which we call a commonwealth;" but the commonwealth assures its own preservation by making absolutely certain that the laws will be obeyed. "So also have they made artificial chains, called civil laws, which they themselves, by mutual covenants, have fastened at one end, to the lips of that man, or assembly, whom they have given the sovereign power." The ears of the subjects are chained to command; no mistake here about the rigors of obedience. Sovereignty literally becomes a voice in the head. And the bonds will be made so strong that "breaking them" produces "danger" and retaliation (Hobbes 1957, 115).

Kristeva speaks of the "uncertainty" of the self's borders; its fragility in the midst of drive, desire, and violence. A similar preoccupation with borders appears in Hobbes; to strengthen the borders of the commonwealth and thereby prevent the sinking into psychotic nothingness requires strong authority. The Sovereign suggests a theoretic structure that moves to enhance, solidify, and make impervious the polity's
p. 741 boundaries to invasion, threat, and ↳ disintegration. In Kristeva's terms, part of the "paternal function," with all of its contradictions and injustices, is to shore up the walls of the self; to create a skin ego, as it were, that resists invasion, or in Hobbesian terms to prevent the descent into madness. A weak paternal function in the self, or, another way of putting this, a non-existent superego, opens "the door to perversion or psychosis." Patients struggling with narcissistic disorders (or a terrifying regression) find themselves consumed by "horror" and "its terror and the ensuing fear of being rotten, drained, or blocked" (Kristeva 1982, 63). Hobbes' sovereign, as a strong paternal function, blocks the countervailing forces in the self provoking violence, political contentiousness, and the loss of boundary. But it is at a considerable cost to liberty.

Mechanism and command, as political styles, enforcing the commonwealth's boundaries, appear consistently in *Leviathan*. "He that hath the sovereign power is also generalissimo" or "the power of all together, is the same with the sovereign's power" or "by all together, they understand them as one person" (Hobbes 1957, 119). Identity with the common power, fusion of will, and acceptance of authority: all these themes describe what is expected of the subject. Obedience to the will of the sovereign banishes dread and uncertainty and horror from the public space. The will of the sovereign is the will of the subject on matters political. Order in this paranoid political household constitutes the highest good; yet, it is precisely that demand for order that may produce psychically disastrous consequences. While Hobbes moves to prevent violence in the commonwealth, the practical effect of repressive authority may be just the opposite: encouraging civil rebellion and the assertion of political and ideological claims through the use of violence. To live under a regime of fear is to internalize paranoid beliefs and "messages;" it is to suffer what Kristeva calls the potential "collapse of the border between inside and outside" (Kristeva 1982, 53).

But it is Hobbes' belief that sovereign authority prevents that *political* collapse, the psychic movement backwards towards Kristeva's version of the "natural condition" of mankind: "an inescapable, repulsive … abomination … an archaic force, on the near side of separation, unconscious, tempting us to the point of losing our differences, our speech, our life; to the point of aphasia, decay, opprobrium, and death" (Kristeva 1982, 107). A paranoid politics, whose aim is to prevent this sinking back, or better, the fantasy of its ever happening, inevitably proscribes freedom; justifies oppression; and because of this terrifying potential, denies the free expression of will and defines specific political relations that are accorded legitimacy and
p. 742 those that are not. The consequence, then, of ↳ the hyper-vigilant political will may be the negation of order, the rise of entropy, and the sinking back into the chaos of the natural condition.

5 Paternal Authority, Psychological Nature, and the Unruly Self

In the parent's obsession to order the universe, to dominate psychological "nature," the child identifies power and order as the central dynamics in an emotional life. Note how Hobbes expresses this relation: "I put for a general the inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in death" (Hobbes 1957, 64). Or as a theorist of paranoia puts it: "The paranoid character renounces 'Love' for the sake of 'Power' " (Nydes 1963). The only epistemic outcome of this situation is the knowledge of the world as power: *the self comes to know its own "interiority," its own frame of being, its own existence, through the projection of power, fear, and threat as the underlying structures of all human experience.*

In Hobbes, nature demands a strong will to combat disruptive passion. "Passions unguided are for the most part mere madness" and may lead to the "seditious roaring of a troubled nation" (1957, 41, 48). Under the sovereignty of reason, Hobbes' theoretical commonwealth, nature is made less seductive, less prone to filling consciousness with desire, ambiguity, sensuousness, spontaneity, and the potential for madness. Science provides the antidote; it combats the unpredictability of nature with the unambiguous certainty of reason and the "reckoning" of consequences: "[T]he light of human minds is perspicuous words, but by exact definitions first snuffed, and purged from ambiguity; *reason* is the *pace*, increase of *science* the *way*; and the benefit of mankind, the *end*" (1957, 29–30). The demands of the sovereign are unmistakable; but unmistakable in the sense that the "truth" of geometric proof is unshakeable and admits no error. "Law in general is not counsel, but command; nor a command of any man to any man, but only of him, whose command is addressed to one formerly obliged to obey him" (1957, 172). The paranoid structures of the law,
p. 743 or what Hobbes calls command, protect ↳ against the dissolution of both the boundaries of the self and the state; it is an absolute constraint.

It is extraordinary, for example, the extent to which punishment as a defense against vulnerability is institutionalized in the Leviathan. Hobbes speaks of these defenses as fortresses against the "venom of

heathen politicians and ... the incantation of deceiving spirits." It is not overstating the case to suggest that the mechanics of punishment contain overtly repressive components. Compare, for example, how infrequently John Locke in the *Second Treatise* (1963) invokes punishment, aggression, or the *threat* of coercion or punishment as an inducement to live peacefully in political society.

Fear, terror, dread: all these feelings beset the child who faces the parent-as-tyrant. It is a human world very much like Hobbes' natural condition, a place filled with "force and fraud ... where every man is enemy to every man ... continual fear, and the danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes 1957, 82, 83). For the "paranoia-genic parent" (Kovar 1966, 294), spontaneity, playfulness, autonomy on the part of the child represent dangerous assaults on parental power and parental definition of reality. Alice Miller (1990) carefully documents the destructive impact of these practices in her analysis of parental domination, *For Your own Good*. Similarly, with the non-compliant subject who intrudes into the political "space:" to act in any self-willed fashion, moving against the commands of authority brings swift and uncompromising retribution. The Hobbesian sovereign has no use for imagination (what Hobbes calls "decaying sense") in his lexicon of political "signs." What the Hobbesian sovereign *decides* is right by virtue of the fact that the sovereignty *utters* the law, embodies it in language. It is not a matter of justice or injustice, guilt or innocence, but of power, domination, and the prerogative to define *meaning*. "The law is made by the sovereign power, and all that is done by such power is warranted, and owned by every one of the people" (Hobbes 1957, 227).

A political environment that lacks strong authority leads in Hobbes' words, to the "error and misreckoning, to which all mankind is too prone" (1957, 227). It is therefore essential that "the end of obedience is protection," and "the obligation of subject to the sovereign is understood to last as long, and no longer, than the power lasteth, by which he is able to protect them" (1957, 144). The subject has no choice; it is a massive acquiescence, even though Hobbes believes that such an arrangement will serve the life of the commonwealth and counter the natural "ignorance and passions of Men," the political "Babel" and confusion which inevitably produce "intestine discord."

6 Conclusion: Paranoia and Reason—The Assault on Liberty

The paranoid political theorist avoids questioning epistemic foundations because the purpose of theory construction is not to engage in dialectic, but to enforce the regime of certainty. What emerges is a closed system of explanation of interpretation, an anti-liberal position in the sense of John Stuart Mill's plea for tolerance regarding opposing views. It is this drive that determines how facts will be put to use, how the belief structures of the world will be composed, how knowledge will be interpreted. In extreme cases, fact becomes absorbed into delusion, even though delusion distorts socially based interpretive frameworks.

Hobbes *assumes* that "reason" or better, science has the power to remain uncorrupted or, at least, analytically detached from the human and passionate bases of political life. It is a hubris attached to reason that from a psychoanalytic perspective would suggest a serious misreading of the relation between the conscious and the unconscious self. It is also true that Hobbes saw realistic threats to political life that had a concrete historical meaning and significance. Yet, what is important for our purposes is the way theory approaches conflict over political will and how conflict is handled as a matter of interpretive reason, Hobbes' "perspicuous words."

For Hobbes, passion corrupts "perspicuous words" and confuses the mind. And it is the non-human, Tausk's mechanical influencing machine, the rational projection with its properties of force and omnipotence, the formalistic project removed from the spontaneous flows of nature, that brackets political geography and represses the passionate and restores order to the world. Yet what kind of order is this, the order of mechanism of bureaucratic fiat, of soulless human beings? What sorts of persons rule who are

soulless? Is Eichmann the apotheosis of the soulless bureaucrat? Or does the bureaucrat perform the scrutiny and punishment because of a strong belief in order and the righteousness of political will; and this strong belief allows actions that appear to be soulless, mechanistic actions (like the railroad managers, construction supervisors, banking managers, physicians, and scientists for the Third Reich), but whose consequences are in fact brutal and unyielding (Glass 2004).

Yet, there is a curious paradox in these paranoid theories and world-views; paranoia as a pathology derives
p. 745 from serious distortions in the structure and ↳ process of desire; it embodies and represents a struggle (having its origins in early psychological development) whose consequence is a terrifying rage and anger having no outlet except in the omnipotent and frightening constructions of the theoretical imagination. But *Leviathan*, as political treatise *and* imaginative action, bureaucratizes anger and retributive authority and attacks the human, the passionate, the embodied, and the indeterminate as absolute civil dangers. Hobbes argues his concept of political form is free from passion; yet in the paranoid pathology, the fascination with power, domination, and control implies a massive inversion of anger and rage, fear and dread. In other words the paranoid is full of passion, but it is the passion of fear and hate.

It is a mystification of human experience to suggest that any person or regime can be free of passion or the intrusions of desire; but that is precisely the claim made by Hobbes for authority. To demand that action be given up for order, that a rigid security replace a more spontaneous play of political energies, to enshrine institutional interest to the exclusion of antibureaucratic and democratic forces is to perform an operation on political expression no less radical than the effort to contain the eccentric or anarchic self by chains or lobotomy simply because its actions refuse to be controlled or fall outside of what reason projects as appropriate.

What fails for the paranoid, what is drowned in *fear*, is volition, agency, and the *autonomous* will. Domination, power, not reciprocity and mutuality, become the prototypes for human relationship. Spontaneity has been annihilated and the political self turns into a marionette, a thin dangling figure at the end of the puppeteer's string. This is what happens politically to the subject in Hobbes' commonwealth, to the hapless victims of administrative fiat in Plato's *Laws*, to the pathetic masses at the other end of Nietzsche's will to power and limit-shattering hero, Dionysius. For the political philosopher, this kind of power finds itself inviolable precisely because it is controlled by the narcissism of its own self-contained logic, the paranoid's "insistence on doing the impossible" (Kovar 1966, 303). What is sacrificed is the unpredictable, yet generative quality of the contingent, what Ludwig Feuerbach (1972) called the "sensuous;" as it is expressed in the interplay of desires composing political and cultural life. It is a mark of a democratic society that trust and participation, community and cooperation, distinguish its politics from those of tyrannical domination.

John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* is a fine example of a non-paranoid set of assumptions governing political recommendation. Liberty, tolerance, the acceptance of deviance drive Mill's understanding of the
p. 746 individual's relation ↳ to the public realm. It is not suspicion that defines the theory but trust; the political life-world embraces reciprocity, the acceptance of justice, and compassion. Community would not be tyrannical; nor would it require what Rousseau (1950) in *The Social Contract* demanded as the profession of a civic faith, a civil religion. Rather the public space would celebrate the possibilities of trust, its creative dimension, and its ability to forge alliances built not on paranoid projections, but on the hard work of democratic consensus building. Indeed, such political alliances and actions are possible; and paranoia need not be a threat to democracy or the creative individualism of Mill's liberalism. This seems also be a fundamental assumption of John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*; paranoia has no place in the assessment of either the least advantaged or the original position.

One of the most eloquent expressions of a non-paranoid political universe is to be found in Herbert Marcuse's (1955) *Eros and Civilization*. But Marcuse extended Freud's concept of Eros, even more so than

Freud himself was willing to go. For Freud and modern psychoanalytic theory, paranoia possesses considerable power in eroding the social and political foundations of trust. Contemporary psychoanalytic object relations theory reflects pessimism grounded in Freud and Klein's view that Thanatos persistently erodes both the human and political bases of cooperation. Bounded on one side by the presence of imaginary and real persecutors and on the other by the need for order and control, the political self moves in a narrow field. In the face of uncertainty and the attack on its borders, the political leader or group may retreat into the hermetic fantasies of power and domination or may see the world as full of enemies that need to be tamed and brought to justice. The paranoid regime or leader may reject love, compassion, and trust as luxuries unsustainable in a world full of threat, disintegration, and the micro-centers of power dominating civil society. The success of democratic and liberal political institutions may hinge on the ability of leaders and their constituencies to see beyond their fears, to reject paranoid resolutions of political conflict, and to build coalitions for whom trust is rooted in a collective self-interest.

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Notes

1 Freud's (1958) analysis of Dr Schreiber is regarded as the seminal study in the psychoanalytic approach to paranoia. For a detailed discussion of Freud's analysis of the Schreiber case, see Morton Schatzman (1973). Freud, throughout his clinical work, holds to this general line of interpretation in looking at paranoia in the self. Subsequent psychoanalytic object relations research in the Kleinian tradition offers less confining and sexualized accounts of the origins of paranoia. The work of Michael Eigen, Thomas Ogden, and James Grotstein on paranoia and distrust in early psychological development offers a more interesting, plausible theoretical interpretation than the early Freudian accounts.

2 See, for example, Melanie Klein (1957); Juliet Mitchell (1986); Fred Alford (1989). Klein's study of infantile anxiety is particularly instructive and both she and Wilfred Bion (1959) point succeeding generations of psychoanalysts in the direction of studying the importance of pre-verbal affect and the psychological origins of psychotic perceptions (see Thomas H. Ogden 1989, 1994; Michael Eigen 1986).

3 Harold Searles (1965). The introject persecutes; it is power assaulting the self. For Searles the paranoid introject literally consumes the self and defines the world, including values in the world.

4 For the paranoid what is felt as real is real, even if consensual reality demonstrates little “real” grounding for the fear. Some theorists may be overtly paranoid; others conflate the real world of political conflict with the imaginative world of containment and domination. Given, however, the power of disintegrating anxieties in the self, to exaggerate real-world fears and to put forward sometimes repressive theories of containment are not implausible, projective scenarios. This is often the dynamic motivating the construction of delusion and it holds as well, I would suggest, for paranoid political constructions (see Alistair Munro 1999; James M. Glass 1985, 1994).
Plato's Athenian, the narrator in the *Laws*, harbors powerful anxieties about a polity falling apart, about its constituent elements being infected by the poison of passion, poetry, and tragedy. Plato in the *Laws* seems as obsessed with what is “enemy” to reason as he is with constructing a regime regulated by administrative authority. In the clinical discourse, the association of paranoia with the projection of enemies is a psychological dynamic producing extraordinary anxiety. Anxiety over the corrosive power of poetry and desire appears consistently in the Athenian's narrative. For a multi-

perspective study of paranoia, including psychological, cultural, and institutional factors, see Joseph H. Berke, Stella Pierides, Andrea Sabbadini, and Stanley Schneider (1998). For an extraordinary psychoanalytic and political analysis of the role of “enemies” to the self and regime, see Vamik Volkan (1988).

5 For insightful and thoughtful analysis of the dynamic of trust in the democratic process, see Eric M. Uslaner (2002); Mark Warren (2001).

6 Victor Tausk's essay, “On the Origin of the Influencing Machine in Schizophrenia” (1956), is a small masterpiece of the analysis of the phenomenology of delusion.