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Realizing Humanity through Animality

An Interpretation of Nature and Artifice in Leviathan

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It is true that certain living creatures (as bees and ants) live sociably one with another (which are therefore by Aristotle numbered amongst political creatures), . . . and therefore some man may perhaps desire to know why mankind cannot do the same.

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Looking around the half-lit stall, Vronsky . . . took in at a glance all of the qualities of his beloved horse. . . . She was one of those animals who, it seems, do not talk only because the mechanism of their mouths does not permit it.

Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*

Among the many rifts within scholarship on Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* lies a fundamental disagreement concerning the extent to which the Hobbesian commonwealth institutionally redirects, as opposed to actively alters through reeducation, those aspects of human nature that render the state of nature so famously "nasty, brutish, and short" (xiii, 9).[1] One particularly cogent reading in the first mode is an interpretation advanced by Philip Pettit in *Made with Words: Hobbes on Language, Mind, and Politics*. As the primary distinction between humans and other animals in Hobbes' political theoretical framework, language, Pettit argues, explains why "certain living creatures . . . live sociably one with another"

[1] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994). All references to this work will be given parenthetically by chapter and paragraph number.

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while the natural condition of human beings is one of war.[2] Only as a consequence of language do human beings become anxious about the future and concerned with prestige and relative standing, the combination of which sparks unrelenting violence and makes the state of nature intolerable (xvii, 6).

If language has this "dark side," though, it also carries with it distinct benefits. In making ratiocination possible, language allows human beings to reason their way to the contraction of peace and transfer of natural right as a solution to the state of nature (xvii, 6). By enabling both personation and incorporation, language also empowers us to enact this solution in and through the sovereign, designed to enforce peace by way of its "unlimited power to punish potential defectors."[3] In this capacity the Hobbesian sovereign makes language meaningful. At the same time that the sovereign's enforcement of the commonwealth-generating contract makes the word of one's fellows trustworthy, the sovereign's ability to regulate and establish the meaning of words also advances the practice of ratiocination by giving all subjects fixed definitions with which to practice the "addition" and "subtraction" of the signification of words (vi, 1).[4] By Pettit's account, then, the problem of the state of nature is resolved through the institutional assurance of the observance of contracts, while those basic elements of human nature that incline us to aggression—fear of the future and desire for esteem—are otherwise left untouched.

While Pettit's interpretation correctly identifies fear of the time to come and the passion of pride as intrinsic features of human nature that motivate war in the state of nature, it overlooks two important aspects of Hobbes' account of the way in which such

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[2] Philip Pettit, *Made with Words: Hobbes on Language, Mind, and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 4.
[3] Ibid., 151.
[4] Ibid., 152.

innate violence is overcome.[5] The first of these is the way in which institutions themselves can conduct educative work, or the way in which the Hobbesian commonwealth actively sets about reconfiguring those elements of human nature that incline us to violence. The state may quell the problems of future anxiety and pride by institutional means—by, for instance, compelling us to uphold our contractual commitments—while at the same time promoting the kind of recursive self-work that results in the modification of such problematic traits. Relatedly, and second, this process of self-modification is not anthropocentric, as Pettit suggests; in order to fully appreciate the educative work achieved by the commonwealth, it is crucial that readers of *Leviathan* be attentive not only to Hobbes' account of what it is like to be a human, but also to the text's counterpart description of what it is like to be an animal. Hobbes' narrative of humanity's progression out of the state of war, that is, is tied to the animal, which, precisely because it is not driven by either future-oriented anxiety or the passion of pride, is by its very nature designed to live sociably and peaceably with others of its kind. As such, the animal in Hobbes' work stands as both a reproach to mankind's instinctive aggression and a demonstration of the possibility of social peace.[6]

[5] Pettit argues that the faculty of language is the root cause, in Hobbes' theory, of both future-oriented fear and pride, or concern with "relative standing." I do not contest Pettit's position on causation, but rather argue that whatever the underlying origin of these facets of human nature, the Hobbesian commonwealth is actively engaged in modifying them.

[6] There is a widespread tendency, not merely in relation to Hobbes' text, but much more broadly, to associate the violent or otherwise base dimensions of humanity—particularly in relation to politics—with animality. Not only was Hobbes accused by his contemporaries of reducing man to a beast in his characterization of human nature as aggressive and prone to physical conflict, but it has become commonplace in today's literature on *Leviathan* to link the Hobbesian individual in the state of nature with animalistic violence. See for instance John Ashcraft, "Hobbes's Natural Man: A Study in Ideology Formation," *The Journal of Politics* 33, no. 4 (1971): 1076-1117. On the contrary, part of the novelty of Hobbes'

Drawing on but also amending Pettit's reading, I argue that even though our nature as human beings makes us prone to conflict, it nevertheless contains resources that permit us to reformulate ourselves, building through artificial means the kind of peaceful society that comes naturally to animals. Endowed with reason, the faculty of which requires the facility of speech, human beings deduce the laws of nature and envision an end—the mutual transfer of natural right—to the state of war. Endowed with language, human beings actualize this solution linguistically through the social contract that generates the commonwealth and sovereign, the originating purpose of which is to realize the fundamental law of nature: "seek peace" (xiv, 4). To fulfill this aim, the Hobbesian commonwealth, on my interpretation, encourages its subjects—by quieting future-oriented anxiety and actively instilling modesty—to adopt those features of animality that are conducive to peace.[7] Counterintuitively, by artificially appropriating the elements of *animal* nature that foster sociability, man is able to realize the full potential of *human* nature: the capacity for reasoned thought and the attainment of scientific knowledge that is unique to mankind.[8] Put differently, only within the context of the inorganic

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political theory, and my reading thereof, is its inversion of the affiliation between violence and the animal.

[7] I do not mean here that animals, as characterized by Hobbes, can be said to be modest. Rather, that the absence of pride in their makeup is crucial to their innate sociability. Because human beings are not similarly pride-neutral, their conceit—if it is to be nullified—must be counteracted with humility. A discussion of the teaching of modesty follows in section III.

[8] This is not to paint Hobbes as an Aristotelian, concerned with the actualization of man's *telos*, or the perfection of human essence. Rather, when employing the language of potential in connection with human nature, I am simply observing that the opportunities for human beings to engage in the rational cognitive processes particular to them are seriously hampered, in Hobbes' account, prior to the formation the commonwealth. The state does not make human beings rational, then, but creates the conditions under which reasoned cognition can be practiced both more readily and more broadly. This position is developed in section III.

commonwealth is man empowered to make the most of his natural potential for science and reason. Read in this way, the Hobbesian individual is a being that must draw on artifice, actively recasting his very makeup, if he is to achieve his full nature.

The thoroughgoing modification of human nature, however, should not be understood as a hubristic effort at self-creation or self-deification, a theme that runs through much of the scholarship on *Leviathan* that does embrace the re-educative mode of interpretation.[9] A radical humanist, one such line of interpretation goes, Hobbes' primary undertaking with *Leviathan* is to deify and aggrandize man as the creator of political life, or at the very least, to expunge God from the origination of political society. Ted H. Miller, for instance, argues that having adopted a metaphysical perspective that reduces everything to mere matter in motion, Hobbes envisions a human sovereign who—like a "creator god" or the immortal sovereign—is capable of manipulating such material, through recourse to mathematics and geometry, in a way that yields peace rather than chaos.[10] Thus, Hobbes "promised the foremost member of his audience the chance to be a god."[11] Positioning Hobbes as deeply indebted to the Renaissance humanist tradition, and its propensity for drawing parallels between human mastery and the divine, Miller interprets *Leviathan* as "radically level[ing]" the more traditional hierarchy of beast/man/God, posited by earlier

[9] *Leviathan*, among others of Hobbes' works, has been understood by some of its readers as an arrogant or prideful effort to win acclaim for its author as a political theorist. This is a different, though related, question from whether man's efforts to recreate his human nature constitute a conceited vision of humanity as rivaling divinity, and as such is not thoroughly treated here. See, rather, the debate between Sheldon Wolin, *Hobbes and the Epic Tradition of Political Theory* (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1970) and Julie E. Cooper "Thomas Hobbes on the Political Theorist's Vocation," *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 3 (2007): 519-47.

[10] Ted H. Miller, *Mortal Gods: Science, Politics, and the Humanist Ambitions of Thomas Hobbes* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 6.

[11] Ibid., 7.

humanists.[12] Because God's creation fails humankind—insofar as His formulation of human nature inclines us to violence and aggression—it is imperative that man, specifically the sovereign, takes the matter of creation into his own hands.[13]

Even those critical of the coherence and viability of such a project, like Jacques Derrida, embrace this general interpretive framework. On Derrida's reading, too, Hobbes is a radical humanist, though by his account one who seeks to purge sovereignty of any trace of either God or the animal, neither of whom are able to engage in contractual and so properly political relationships.[14] Man or the mortal sovereign "stands in" for God the absolute sovereign; in his capacity as such, man imitates God's art of creation, building the animal-machine that is the commonwealth. Unable either in logic or rhetoric to articulate a notion of sovereignty that does not draw on both animality and divinity, however, Derrida argues that Hobbes fails to truly break with either, arriving at an "artificial" or feigned notion of sovereignty that is hardly distinctive of mankind. Although Hobbes "does all he can to anthropologize and humanize the origin and foundation of state sovereignty," both the political theory he advances, and the language he advances it through, demonstrate his inability to do so.[15]

Although man's capacity for creation, or self-recreation, is crucial to the logic of Hobbes' argument, it should not be understood as a prideful attempt to deify humanity. On the contrary, by

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[12] Ibid.
[13] Man's capacity as a creator, argues Miller, extends beyond simply imitating God's work. Man becomes a creator-god not by replicating the content of God's creation but God's very capacity for creation: "Instead of remaking what God has made, we make what we wish. We become more dignified by creating something original" (Ibid., 50).
[14] Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign*, vol. I, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 49.
[15] Ibid., 53.

attending to the role of the animal in Hobbes' text, careful readers of *Leviathan* will appreciate the remarkably humbling quality of man's self-modification. Not only are we flawed in our very makeup, but the correction of such flaws requires we take on characteristics of the "lowly" animal, who is able to do naturally—to live sociably in a manner that is both peaceful and productive—what we are able to do only through the vast and complex machinery of the synthetically constructed commonwealth.

Such humility makes *Leviathan* an apt, if overlooked, resource for contemporary ecological political thought. With the goal of curbing human hubris, ecological political theorists often work to illuminate the interdependence of (among other material entities) man and animal by blurring or collapsing ontological boundaries. My reading of *Leviathan*, however, demonstrates that one needn't break down the human as a meaningful category of being in order to push back against anthropocentrism or counteract human pride. In fact, as Hobbes suggests, the *preservation* of ontological difference can achieve these goals.

I. Animal Nature

Animal nature, contrary to the nature of mankind, inclines non-human beings to peaceful sociability. Lacking a deep perception of future time, animals do not project their desires into the time to come, and so do not become fearful or distrustful that other living beings will hamper the satisfaction of these going forward. Motivated only by sensual concerns, animals do not fall victim to pride. As such, given their very nature, "animals in general," unlike "men in special," can live together quite amicably absent any artificial construct (ix, diagram). The animal, then, serves as both an example and aspiration for conflict-prone human beings. The

nature of animal being demonstrates that individuals of the same species can indeed live together harmoniously, holding out hope to war-plagued human beings that they too might achieve, through inorganic means, a similar form of sociability and peace.

Animals, like humans in Hobbes' materialist framework, are, at their most basic, simply bodies in motion. As such they too experience sensory perceptions, in the form of internal motions, when acted upon by external bodies. Consequently, like humans, animals can be said to experience imagination, or the decay of sense perception (ii, 2). To a limited extent, by virtue of this capacity for imagination, animals even possess understanding, which Hobbes takes to be the elicitation of imaginations through "words or other voluntary signs" (ii, 10). It is also by virtue of this capacity for imagination that animals, like human beings, are able to engage in mental discourse.

Hobbes breaks mental discourse down into two modes. The first of these is characterized by the stringing together of imaginations in a meandering and unguided fashion. The second of these consists in moving amongst imaginations in a regulated manner, guided by "some desire and design" (iii, 4). This second mode itself can take two forms, only one of which is available to humans and animals alike. This shared kind of directed mental discourse is when, from an imagined effect, a thinking being searches for its cause. Inaccessible to the animal is the inversion of this sub-mode, or when, from an imagined cause, one considers its possible effects, or "what [one] can do with it, when [one] has it" (iii, 5).[16] Whereas sensual passions and desires motivate the first sort of regulated mental discourse, shared by both human beings and

[16] Of this second form of directed mental discourse, Hobbes writes, "I have not at any time seen any sign, but in man only" (iii, 5).

animals, the second is directed by extra-sensual passion and as such is specific to mankind.[17]

While animals seek out the causes of the effects they perceive, Hobbes assumes that the extent of this particular mode of directed mental discourse is rather limited for them. Animal curiosity about causation is not motivated by future oriented self-interest; animals, unlike humans, are not "in search of the causes of their own good and evil fortune" (xi, 2). In fact, as animals have "little or no foresight of the time to come," their causal investigations are temporally bounded (xi, 4 and vi, 35).[18] Animals, unlike human beings, do not presume or search for a cause for all things (xi, 3). Concerned only with sensual pleasure and pain, the animal search for causation is limited to the world of sensation (xi, 4 and vi, 35). For want of speech, and so reason, animal inquiry into causation is also necessarily less sophisticated (iii, 11).

Because animal curiosity is so limited, a *lack* of causal knowledge does not produce for animals in general, as it does for men in special, fear and apprehension. Not presuming a cause for all beginnings—not continually "endeavor(ing) to secure himself against the evil he fears," nor "procure the good he desireth"—the animal feels no anxiety about the future, and so no uneasiness about being unable to pinpoint causation (xi, 5). This explains, according

[17] That animals experience passions, if only in the realm of sensation, means for Hobbes that animals deliberate between "alternate succession[s] of appetites, aversions, hopes and fear" and can be said to will in settling amongst these (vi, 51). The will, or free will (a phrase Hobbes rejects as a contradiction in terms), while often pointed to as distinguishing the human from the animal, plays no such demarcating role in Hobbes' philosophy.

[18] Hobbes earlier acknowledges that animals, while not troubled by "the time to come," nevertheless have some elementary perception of future time. This is evident in their capacity for prudence, which is a "presumption of the future, contracted from the experience of time past" (iii, 10). Indeed, animals may even surpass some humans in their ability to make assumptions about the future based on past experience; "[t]here be beasts that at a year old observe more, and pursue that which is for their good more prudently, than a child can do at ten" (iii, 9).

to Hobbes, why animals do not practice religion. Religion, by allowing for the ascription of all phenomena either to an unseen omnipotent force or (less timorously in Hobbes' view) an ultimate cause or first mover, provides relief to human beings in desperate need of causal explanations (xii, 6). The animal's mental landscape, on the contrary, is characterized by the absence of future oriented disquietude.

As described by Hobbes, being an animal—not fretting about the time to come and remaining at ease with access to limited causal knowledge—disposes one to consonant relationships with others of one's kind. Put differently, although the natural condition of human beings, according to Hobbes, is one of war, this is not the natural condition of animals. In equating the state of nature with a state of war, Hobbes locates "three principal causes of quarrel" in human nature itself: "first, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory" (xiii, 6). I will treat the question of diffidence vis-à-vis the animal first, circling through the "principal causes of quarrel," and ending with the issue of competition.

Given the way animals are constructed in Hobbes' materialist philosophy, they are simply incapable of experiencing diffidence. Diffidence, or distrust, as construed by Hobbes, is always connected to uncertainty about being able to procure, or enjoy, that which one desires in the future. Because animals have "little or no foresight of the time to come," their desires, contrary to those of humans, are rooted in the present (xi, 4). Whereas humans endeavor to sate their desires not just once—not just in the present moment of want—but to ensure the satisfaction of all future desire as well, animals endeavor to fulfill the desires of the moment.[19] If wanting to provide

[19] Human desire, for Hobbes, is inseparable from anxiety about "the time to come," and indeed, the search for causal knowledge: "the object of man's desire is not to enjoy once only, and for one instant of time, but to assure forever the way of his future desire. And therefore the voluntary actions and inclinations of all men

for future enjoyment is generally a problem for humankind, this is exacerbated in the state of nature. Granting the basic equality of human beings when it comes to physical and mental dexterity, when that which is desired cannot be shared, individuals become distrustful of one another (xiii, 3). Looking ahead, and anticipating that others may deprive us of that which we desire, both now and going forward, we engage—quite reasonably—in preemptive violence (xiii, 4). This is not the case, however, with animals. The animal makes no calculation (indeed *cannot* make any calculation) about the likelihood that in the future another living being might obstruct the fulfillment of its desires. Consequently, the animal undertakes no prevenient violence.

If animal nature, contrary to human nature, eliminates diffidence as a source of quarrel among non-human creatures, it also precludes "pride and a desire for glory," though not because of the animal's particular relationship to time (xiii, 4).[20] The interrelated passions of glory, vainglory, and pride are extra-sensual, and as such simply do not affect the animal, "in whom the appetite of food and other pleasures of sense" predominates (vi, 35).[21] Rather,

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tend, not only to the procuring, but also the assuring of a contented life, and differ only in the way; which ariseth partly from the diversity of passions in divers men, and partly from the difference of the knowledge or opinion each one has of the causes which produce the effect desired" (x, 1).

[20] This quotation is from the 1668 Latin edition of *Leviathan*.

[21] Parsing how Hobbes understands the relationship between glory, vainglory, and pride is not always straightforward. Hobbes defines glory as "joy arising from imagination of a man's own power and ability." When this is grounded not on actual performance or experience but rather "on the flattery of others, or only supposed by himself, for delight in the consequences of it" it is not glory, but vainglory (vi, 39). Pride is, at different times, associated with each (see for instance xiii, 4 and viii, 18 respectively). If pride is connected to taking pleasure in contemplating one's own power, real or imagined, it is also associated with preferential comparison making. This is evident in Hobbes enumeration of the laws of nature: "for the ninth law of nature, I put this *that every man acknowledge other for his equal by nature*. The breach of this precept is pride" (xv, 21). To esteem oneself as superior to others is to engage in pride.

contemplating one's own power, and taking pleasure in doing so, seems to fall into the category of directed mental discourse unique to human beings. When I reflect on my power, reveling in my real or perhaps imagined ability, I consider what effects follow from it or "what [I] can do with it, when [I] ha[ve] it" (iii, 5). The third reason the state of nature is a state of war, for mankind, is that "there be some" who do precisely that; "taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires." These are the same individuals who "from pride and a desire for glory, would conquer the whole world" (xiii, 4). In fact, for human beings, the problem of pride actually compounds the problem of diffidence. Even modest individuals must take into account the existence of prideful persons. Looking ahead, because the latter, in their unquenchable quest for glory and reputation, will necessarily impinge on the former's ability to satisfy their own humble desires, it becomes logical for the modest to deploy preemptive violence against the prideful.

That the nature of animal being excludes the passion of pride means that animals are innately capable of living together absent any artificially erected coercive power. Of the six reasons Hobbes gives as to why "certain living creatures," unlike human beings, are able to live together without a sovereign-like ruler, four of these relate to the non-interference of pride.[22] Because animals do not compete for honor and reputation, as men do, they do not experience "envy and hatred, and finally war" (xvii, 7). Connected to the competition for honor, and the problematic comparison-making to which it gives rise, animals do not distinguish between individual

[22] Also relevant is the animal's lack of language, which precludes violent disagreement regarding good and evil (xvii, 10), and the fact that "the agreement of these creatures is natural" while "that of men is by covenant only, which is artificial; and therefore, it is no wonder if there be somewhat else required (besides covenant) to make their agreement constant and lasting" (xvii, 12).

and collective benefit, and so will always work toward the common good. This is not true of the human individual, "whose joy consisteth in comparing himself with other men," and who is thus compelled to pursue that which will win him personal standing and eminence (xvii, 8). Additionally, because animals do not esteem themselves higher than their fellows—and, Hobbes adds, because they lack reason—they neither perceive societal shortcomings nor value themselves as best suited to initiate social change; "whereas amongst men there are very many that think themselves wiser, and abler to govern the public, better than the rest; and these strive to reform and innovate, one this way, another that way; and thereby bring it into distraction and civil war" (xvii, 9). Relatedly, unlike animals who, when they are "at ease" are unable to take offense with one another, Hobbes argues that "man is then most troublesome, when he is most at ease; for then it is that he loves to shew his wisdom, and control, the actions of them that govern the commonwealth" (xvii, 11). That the animal has no experience of pride means that it is much better suited than man, by its very nature, to peaceful, sociable, living.

One might counter that while animals do not experience diffidence or pride, surely competition—the first source of quarrel that renders the state of nature a state of war for human beings—nevertheless afflicts the Hobbesian animal. Animals, one might argue, while vying for the scarce natural resources that sustain life, necessarily engage in violence and consequently cannot be described as particularly peaceful or sociable. Even if animals are beset by this kind of conflict, such violence cannot be classed by Hobbes' reckoning as war, meaning that any disruption of peace in the animal world is qualitatively different from the discord that naturally erupts among human beings. The condition of war, on

Hobbes' terms, includes not simply actual instances of battle, but also the existence of a *will* to engage in physical conflict:

> For war consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting, but in a tract of time wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known. And therefore, the notion of *time* is to be considered in the nature of war, as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather lieth not in a shower or two of rain, but in an inclination thereto of many days together, so the nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting, but in the known disposition thereto. (xiii, 8)

Hobbes' very definition of war, that is, entails a perception of future time—the projection of a willingness to engage in violence if not in the present moment, in the time to come—that is not obviously available to the animal. Because violent conflict, but never war, may occur among animals, any disruption to the peaceful status quo is temporally limited and so comparatively circumscribed. Moreover, because Hobbes claims that within a given species, animals are often naturally predisposed to live and satisfy their material needs cooperatively, any such violence is likely to be inter-, rather than intra-, species oriented. This is of course not true of human beings.

The Hobbesian animal, unaffected by diffidence and pride, is hardwired to enjoy peaceful relationships with others of its kind. When violence does occur among animals, it is likely to arise between rather than within species-specific communities, and even then, is temporally bounded. The animal's natural sociability stands as a humbling reproach to human beings' innate propensity for strife, but also demonstrates that communal harmony is possible, providing an example worthy of mankind's emulation.

II. Artificially Approaching the Animal

Although human nature predisposes us to perpetual conflict, it also contains resources that enable us to reconstitute ourselves,

constructing through artificial means the kind of peaceful society that comes naturally to other animals. These resources, the faculties of speech and reason, are intertwined. Through reason, which requires facility with language, human beings come to recognize the necessity of establishing peace among themselves, and moreover, to recognize that the creation of such concord calls for the mutual transfer of natural right. In the process of founding the commonwealth, this transfer is actualized linguistically. Assuring its subjects peace and stability, the artificially constructed commonwealth works to diminish fear of the time to come, while also actively combating the passion of pride through the inculcation of modesty. In this way, the Hobbesian commonwealth allows human beings to enjoy, through synthetic arrangement, a form of sociability akin to that which animals enjoy organically.

A faculty particular to human beings, speech allows us to transform our trains of imaginations into trains of words and, as such, carries two distinct benefits. First, insofar as speech acts as a kind of "mark," it makes it possible to register or realize the consequences of our thoughts. Second, insofar as speech acts as a kind of "sign," it makes it possible for us to signify our thoughts and passions to others. Consequently, language aids man's pursuit of causal knowledge by allowing for both the registration of "what by cogitation we find to be the cause of anything" and the communication of such to others (iv, 3).[23] Although speech is necessary for man's political maturation (more on this below)—and indeed, prior to its invention "there had been amongst men, neither commonwealth, nor society, nor contract, nor peace, no more than amongst lions, bears, and wolves" (iv, 1)—it is not without its

[23] Speech is also advantageous in that it allows us to request the "mutual help of one another" and, less functionally, opens up new avenues for pleasure in the form of innocently motivated wordplay (iv, 3).

drawbacks.[24] Language can yield deceit, as when we deceive ourselves by using words incorrectly or when we deceive others by falsely representing ourselves, as well as harm, in the form of verbal attack (iv, 4).

Arguably the greatest advantage of speech, in Hobbes' view, is that it makes reasoned investigation and the acquisition of scientific knowledge possible.[25] It is only through the use of words that we can think in terms of categories and concepts, and so determine universal rules and principles (iv, 9). Given apt and settled definitions, human beings reason and arrive at scientific truths by correctly adding and subtracting the signification of words (iv, 12; v, 2). This means that there is a certain realm or depth of comprehension that is accessible to humankind alone:

[24] It is noteworthy that each of the animals Hobbes mentions here has been historically associated either with sovereignty, or its perversion, tyranny. While the lion replaced the bear as the symbol of kings during the High Middle Ages, the wolf has been linked with tyranny and the precariousness of social order from the time of antiquity. That is, two of the three animals Hobbes employs to connote the impossibility of social order have been associated with precisely the opposite: the monarchical organization of political society. In any case, the triad suggests that within Hobbes' framework, not all species of non-human animals are equally capable of peaceful sociability. See Michel Pastoureau, *The Bear: History of a Fallen King*, trans. George Holoch (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 135-36; and Leslie Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 150-53.

[25] While the practice of reasoning generally requires the use of language, Hobbes allows that it needn't always: "When a man reckons without the use of words, which may be done in particular things (as when upon the sight of any one thing, we conjecture what was likely to have preceded, or is likely to follow upon it), if that which he thought likely to follow, follows not . . . this is called ERROR" (v, 5). Unspecified is whether non-lingual reason might be available to non-human animals. At the very least, given the animal's capacity for prudence and (albeit restricted) interest in causality, one might oneself reason that animals in Hobbes' schema may "reckon without the use of words" in some limited fashion. Hobbes, however, does not seem to be consistent on the question of whether reason can be practiced absent speech. In his mapping of the different branches of science, or the "knowledge of consequences," reason falls squarely under the category of "Consequences from *speech*," itself a consequence "from the qualities of *men in special*" (ix).

> When a man, upon the hearing of any speech, hath those thoughts which the words of that speech, and their connexion, were ordained and constituted to signify, then he is said to understand it, *understanding* being nothing else but conception caused by speech. And therefore if speech be peculiar to man (as for aught I know it is), then is understanding peculiar to him also. (iv, 22)

Reason affords mankind a superlative capacity for comprehension, but presents particular risks in the form of error, absurdity, and even madness (iv, 13).

Language and reason, despite their potential complications, are necessary for mankind's political development. Competition, distrust, and pride make the state of nature a state of war for human beings, but it is by employing reason that man comes to know the laws of nature and envisions a solution to such conflict. And it is through language that this solution is actualized.

While fear and desire play an important role in motivating man's exit from the state of nature, absent the force of reason, passion alone is an insufficient incitement. Rather, given the recognition of our natural condition as a "war of everyone against everyone," we deduce that in such a circumstance, "every man has a right to everything, even to another's body" (xiv, 4). Taking into consideration this natural right, and with an eye toward the future, individuals realize the likelihood of violent and untimely death, and so logically arrive at the first law of nature: "*that every man ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it, and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek and use all helps and advantages of war*" (xiv, 4). The first law of nature, in turn, leads us to deduce a second: "*that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far-forth as for peace and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things, and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself*" (xiv, 5). It is through reason—and, insofar as reason requires language, also speech—that mankind comes to recognize

the necessity of securing peace through the mutual transfer of natural right.

Such a transfer requires the faculty of language. This is not to say that all contracts must be performed linguistically, nor to suggest that words alone are adequate to insure performance, but rather that a shared language is needed to comprehend the content of a given contract. It is for this reason that human beings and animals cannot contract: "To make covenants with brute beasts is impossible because, not understanding our speech, they understand not, nor accept of, any translation of right, nor can translate any right to another; and without mutual acceptation, there is no covenant" (xiv, 22).[26] Moreover, while contracts in general needn't necessarily be enacted through speech, Hobbes' account of the social contract that establishes political society is heavily linguistic:

> The only way to erect such a common power . . . is to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will. . . . This is more than consent, or concord; it is a real unity of them all, in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner as if every man should say to every man *I authorize and give up my right of governing myself to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up they right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner.* This done, the multitude so united in one person is called a COMMONWEALTH. (xvii, 13)

The unification of all voices into a single body, with a single voice, is achieved by the effective voicing of authorization. Speech is the simile—"as if every man should say to every man"—through which Hobbes conveys the very construction of the body politic. Drawing on speech and reason, faculties particular to mankind, human

[26] One might also add here that the notion of covenant, unlike that of contract wherein transfer is performed immediately, entails an understanding of future time unavailable to the animal: "Again, one of the contractors may deliver the thing contracted for on his part, and leave the other to perform his part at some determinate time after (and in the meantime be trusted); and then the contract on his part is called PACT, or COVENANT" (xiv, 11).

beings endeavor to rectify the condition of war their nature inclines them to by founding the commonwealth, the *raison d'être* of which is to realize the fundamental law of nature and promote peace.

In order to achieve this goal, the Hobbesian commonwealth works both to minimize its subjects' fear of the future and to counteract the passion of pride. In other words, the Hobbesian commonwealth undertakes to remold its subjects, for the purpose of sustaining peace, in such a way that they bear a greater resemblance to the naturally sociable animal.

The covenant by which the commonwealth is established curtails its participants' future oriented fears, stilling mankind's uneasiness of the time to come and eliminating diffidence as a source of perpetual conflict. In authorizing the commonwealth and transferring their natural right, social contractors generate "that great LEVIATHAN, or rather . . . that *Mortal God*" who "hath the use of so much power and strength conferred on him that by terror thereof he is enabled to conform the wills of them all to peace at home and mutual aid against their enemies abroad" (xvii, 13). The sovereign's superlative power compels all individuals to abide by the social pact, and in this way, assures mankind of amicable social order both now and going forward.

To be sure, the polity-generating contract does not free men of fear altogether. The sovereign, of course, is born of men's fear of one another and rules through the fear it inspires, should one transgress the laws it erects. Rather, the contract diminishes our anxieties about the future. Most obviously, this is achieved by transferring natural right, which eliminates the "continual fear and danger of violent death" that makes human life in the state of nature so "nasty, brutish, and short" (xiii, 9). More subtly, though, the creation of commonwealth and sovereign decreases anxieties about satisfying desires (which are always, for human beings, projected

into the future) even beyond simple self-preservation. Without a doubt, even after the institution of civil society men will "desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy," but the formation of a supremely powerful sovereign undercuts the radical equality that otherwise allows such circumstances to blossom into conflicts (xiii, 3). As a consequence, diffidence or distrust is minimized as well. Moreover, sovereignty affords men laws by which to prevent, and an adjudicator by which to resolve, any such conflict. The commonwealth generating covenant does not ensure the unfettered satisfaction of all present and future desires, but, properly organized, either staves off entirely or redirects the disagreement that might accompany the pursuit of such. The social contract, then, is a means by which man can "endeavor to secure himself against the evil he fears" and "procure the good he desireth" (xi, 5). His fear of the time to come having been assuaged, the Hobbesian individual, like the animal, no longer engages in (what was previously logical) preemptive self-protection, but instead relates to his fellows in a peaceful manner.

The creation of commonwealth and sovereign also minimizes prideful self-estimation and thus encourages "men in special" to relate to one another with greater humility, thereby eliminating "pride and a desire for glory" as an impetus to war. In this respect too, the Hobbesian commonwealth's promotion of peace and stability is tied to a conscious effort to equip human beings for the kind of harmonious social interaction that comes naturally to animals. This is not to suggest that animals possess humility or modesty in Hobbes' philosophy, but rather to highlight how crucial the *absence* of pride is to their inherent sociability. Because human beings are not pride-neutral in the way animals are, the mere suppression or deactivation of conceit is unlikely to prove sufficient for the perpetuation of peace. To enjoy amity with his fellow social

contractors, and ensure the preservation of the commonwealth they've constructed, man must be rendered modest.

Pride and the search for glory prompt individuals to war with one another beyond the bounds of necessity in the state of nature, but also pose a particular threat within the context of civil society itself. In freeing mankind from the threat of violent death, the commonwealth can actually generate a kind of ease or tranquility in which pride can flourish and in fact instigate conflict and disarray. Man, Hobbes writes, "is then most troublesome, when he is most at ease; for then it is that he loves to shew his wisdom, and control the actions of them that govern the commonwealth" (xvii, 11). If pride is not to undo the advantages that accompany the formation of political society, it must be actively tempered.

This is achieved in two ways. On the one hand, the sovereign's overwhelming power cannot help but make individuals aware of their own impotence. In relation to the sovereign, to whom nothing on earth can be compared—who like the leviathan of the Book of Job is "made so as not to be afraid" and who "seeth every high thing below him, and is king of all the children of pride"—members of the commonwealth are reminded of their relative powerlessness (xxviii, 27). Pride is tamed by the sheer dominance of sovereignty. On the other hand, compulsion alone is an insufficient check on pride and, unaccompanied by less forcible means, may actually contribute to the break down of political order.[27] To this end, Hobbes proposes the cultivation of modesty through the teaching of the Book of Job, which highlights human vulnerability in the face of an all powerful and mysterious God.[28] Because the Hobbesian sovereign prescribes religious doctrine, a reading of

[27]Julie E. Cooper, "Vainglory, Modesty, and Agency in the Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes," *The Review of Politics* 72, no. 2 (March, 2010), 264.
[28] Ibid., 267.

Job—that focuses on the way in which, "(e)ven when humans acknowledge equality, and act in concert to reduce the likelihood of violent death, they remain subject to God's unfathomable power"—can be disseminated via the pulpit and affect public sentiment.[29] The sovereignty established by covenant mitigates human pride, indeed actively inculcates modesty, paving the way for peace by compelling human beings to relate to one another in a manner that is not conceited, and in this respect, bears a resemblance to the manner in which intuitively sociable animals interact with others of their kind.

III. Realizing Human Nature through Artifice

Thus far I have put forward an interpretation of the Hobbesian commonwealth as an institution that endeavors to promote among human beings a kind of peaceful sociability similar to that which comes naturally to animals, specifically by reducing its subjects' fear of the future and counteracting their prideful inclinations. In this section, I demonstrate that, paradoxically, it is only by emulating the animal's innate sociability through the synthetic construct of the commonwealth that mankind is able to realize the full potential of human nature. The uniquely human capacity for reasoned thought and the accumulation of scientific knowledge (in the Hobbesian sense) are allowed to truly flourish only *following* the institution of commonwealth and sovereign. Crucially, the investigation of the interplay between animal and human nature helps to illuminate the larger, and remarkably thorny, question of the relationship between nature and artifice in *Leviathan*. Man according to Hobbes, I will

[29] Ibid., 264, 267.

argue, is a being that must employ artifice to realize or capitalize on its nature.

That human nature maximizes its positive potential through the artificial imitation of those elements of animal nature that allow for sociable living helps to elucidate the otherwise problematic exchange between nature and artifice in Hobbes' treatise. Indeed, the relationship between nature and artifice in *Leviathan* is both intricate and perplexing from the text's very outset. Hobbes begins his introduction to the work: "Nature (the art whereby God hath made and governs the world) is by the *art* of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal." As if the interplay between the artificial and the natural were not puzzling enough with this opening sentence, Hobbes continues: "*Art* goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, *man*. For by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE…which is but an artificial man, though of greater stature and strength than the natural" (Introduction, 1). Through nature, or divine art, God creates man, but man also employs art to imitate God; man imitates God's capacity for creation, but also the content of His creation, or the fashioning of man himself.

Hobbes' decision to begin *Leviathan* in this way demonstrates the centrality of the relationship between nature and artifice to the text as a whole, but how are we to understand their complicated interaction? As formed by God, natural man is defective by Hobbes' account. Whereas God has molded his animal creations such that they are hardwired to enjoy peace and live sociably with others of their kind, bare human nature, per God's design, makes man deficient in this regard. Consequently, man must alter his nature, reconstituting himself through "*art*." Yet art and nature are not strictly binary; if nature as it pertains to the

human is imperfect and in need of artificial modification, nature also furnishes both the faculties through which such modifications can be made and the model after which such modifications are fashioned. That is, man employs the faculties of reason and speech, inherent aspects of his nature that distinguish him from other animals but also contribute to the volatility and violence of his natural condition, to construct the commonwealth.[30] Itself an inorganic construct, the commonwealth works to artificially manipulate human nature—by minimizing our innate fear of the time to come and our propensity for prideful self-estimation—in such a way that its members are encouraged to incorporate into themselves those features of animal nature that are productive of peaceful sociability. Nature and artifice, in relation to the well-being of mankind, are inextricable.

This is particularly true in relation to the realization of human beings' capacity for reason. This faculty only reaches its highest potential (as demonstrated below) through and within the manufactured commonwealth. Man, then, as theorized by Hobbes, is a being that must utilize artifice to actualize the full potential of its nature. Bare human nature, the work of God, must be supplemented with human art and innovation, if it is to fulfill its true promise. It is within this context that we should interpret Hobbes' assertion that "*Art* goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, *man*" (Introduction, 1).

[30] As should become clear below, I qualify the innate capacity for reason as nascent here because, while Hobbes attributes a basic degree of reasoning to all human beings in the state of nature—such that this natural condition logically becomes one of war (xiii, 2-3) *and* such that the laws of nature can be appreciated by all (xv, 35)—it is not the case that the faculty of reason is fully formed prior to the completion of the commonwealth. Moreover, as Hobbes makes clear, while the state promotes the cultivation of reason, the development of this capability requires serious investments of time and discipline on the part of individual practitioners (v, 17).

Rationality being the pinnacle of nature, only when man is able to organize himself and modify his behavior in such a way that that his innate capacity for reasoned thought is equipped to promote his prosperity—rather than impel him to violence and war—is nature's "most excellent," but otherwise incomplete and self-destructive work, wholly formed. Man *becomes* nature's crowning achievement through artifice. It is in this respect that Hobbes can describe the commonwealth, or artificial man, as being "of greater stature and strength than the natural." While Hobbes clearly has the commonwealth's sheer size and might in mind here, man's work of art can also be thought of as more robust than that of God's in that the first provides the conditions under which the second can be fully actualized.[31]

The first way in which the commonwealth allows the specifically human talent for reasoned thought and scientific investigation to thrive is by codifying it as law. While it is true that in deducing the laws of nature, human beings employ reason to envision an alternative to their natural condition, these only become laws as such with the establishment of political society. This is because, while the laws of nature are "immutable and eternal" (xv, 38), they are, "without the terror of some power to cause them to be observed," actually "contrary to our natural passions, that carry us to partiality, pride, revenge, and the like" (xvii, 2). The laws of nature only become true laws with the formation of the commonwealth, for

[31] One might ask here, if Hobbes describes the art man employs to create the commonwealth as an imitation of God's art, specifically his "rational and most excellent work of nature, *man*" (emphasis added), why ought we construe the commonwealth as undertaking to instill in its subjects those elements of *animal* nature that yield peace (Introduction, 1)? Hobbes himself pivots between describing the product of human artifice as "an artificial animal" and an "artificial man," and in fact the two contain one another; by characterizing man as a work of nature, Hobbes has already affirmed our relationship to the animal.

"without the sword," covenants are "but words" (xvii, 2). Or, as Hobbes writes:

> The law of nature and civil law contain each other, and are of equal extent. For the laws of nature . . . are not properly laws, but qualities that dispose men to peace and to obedience. When a commonwealth is once settled, then are they actually laws, and not before, as being then the commands of the commonwealth, and therefore also civil laws; for it is the sovereign power that obliges men to obey them. (xxvi, 8)

Reason, epitomized by the laws of nature, only becomes codified and enforceable, only enacted in the world, through the polity-generating covenant, itself a feat of human reason (xxvi, 8).

Not only does reason become enshrined in law within the Hobbesian commonwealth, it is only within this context that it overpowers mankind's propensity to hold irrational beliefs and positions, solidifying the primacy of reason over ignorance. Human beings' reliance on easily disoriented sensory data (ii, 8), combined with the "perpetual fear, always accompanying mankind in the ignorance of causes (as it were in the dark), [that] must needs have for object something," means that we easily succumb to superstition and mysticism (xii, 6). Whereas in the past this took the form of the worship of "satyrs, fawns, nymphs and the like," "now-a-days" it manifests in the "opinion that rude people have of fairies, ghosts, and goblins, and the power of witches" (ii, 8). Because these kinds of irrational explanations for causal phenomena disrupt the logic of the construction of the sovereign—which must monopolize power in order to ensure peace (xvii, 109; xxxviii, 1)—they have the effect of making men "unfit" for "civil obedience" (ii, 8). As a consequence, it becomes imperative that the Hobbesian commonwealth root out such irrational convictions.

This is also true of certain interpretations of Scripture. Those readings that promise either eternal life or eternal damnation threaten to disturb the sovereign's ability to "overawe" its subjects

(xiii, 5). As such, Hobbes goes to great lengths to demonstrate that neither divine reward nor, particularly, punishment will exceed that which we experience in the here and now (xxxviii, 14; xxxviii, 17). Biblical passages indicating otherwise, Hobbes reasons, and urges sovereigns to instruct their subjects, should be understood metaphorically (xxxviii, 11). Likewise, we should understand the kingdom of darkness—"'the rulers of the darkness of this world,' 'the kingdom of Satan,' and 'the principality of Beelzebub over demons'"—allegorically. The kingdom of darkness consists not of supernatural demons, but of those who "endeavor by dark and erroneous doctrines to extinguish in [men] the light, both of nature and of the gospel" (xliv, 1); the kingdom of darkness consists of ignorance and error (xliv, 3). This means that spiritual darkness can be staved off in part by employing reason to correctly interpret Scripture and rejecting the view—as Hobbes does—that upholding the tenets of Christianity requires the renunciation of our capacity for rational thought, which is a gift from God that ought to be cultivated (xxxii, 2).

At the same time that the Hobbesian state empowers human rationality by eliminating superstitious answers to the questions of how and why, it also expands the *breadth* of mankind's investigation into causal phenomena by liberating curiosity from a preoccupation with basic physical security. In the state of nature, where competition, diffidence, and pride run rampant:

> there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently no culture of the earth, no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea, no commodious building, no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force, no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society. (xiii, 9)

Faced with the threat of imminent violent death, and lacking any assurance of enjoying the ends of the pursuit of knowledge, any

development in the disciplines of agriculture, navigation, engineering, architecture, biology, history, art, and literature is stymied in the state of nature. Only with the guarantee of peace afforded by the commonwealth are subjects empowered to capitalize on the human capacity for reasoned investigation and thought. Put differently, only with one's security guaranteed by the commonwealth is one free to direct one's curiosity *beyond* the search for causation merely as it pertains to bodily security. Peace having been established through the artificial construct of the polity, that which distinguishes man from animal is allowed to blossom. With curiosity permitted to roam beyond the realm of physical safety, reason is empowered to sate the "desire to know why, and how" through scientific investigation into all manner of causal phenomena (vi, 35).

Counterintuitively, it is through the artificial approximation of those aspects of animality that are conducive to sociability that human beings are empowered to actualize the full potential of human nature. This is because only through the commonwealth is the specifically human faculty of reason allowed to thrive. Enshrining reason in law, the commonwealth counteracts the darkness of ignorance and irrationality while facilitating reasoned thought and the collection of scientific knowledge. In this way, through the synthetic arrangement of the commonwealth and its remolding of human nature, man imitates God's capacity for creation while also modifying God's original work of art, man himself. Human nature, the design of God, must be augmented with mankind's own art and creativity if it is to fulfill its greatest promise; the human is a being that must make use of artifice to achieve its highest nature.

The self-manipulation of our nature should not, however, be read as a self-aggrandizing effort to claim for human beings a power

for creation that rivals the divine. Not only does Hobbes repeatedly warn his readers of the political threat pride poses—leading one to prefer an interpretation that resolves any contention of conceit as more thoroughly consistent with the text itself—but the kind of self-manipulation man must undertake in *Leviathan* constitutes an exercise in humility. The impetus behind our self-recreation, that is, stems from a defect in our very core. Unable to live with one another peacefully, we are chastened by the example of the animal, who is able to do so easily and intuitively. Mankind is only able to approach a comparable *pax* through the intricate machinery of the commonwealth, which seeks to recreate through artifice those elements of animal nature that yield an effortless sociability.

IV. Conclusion

Read in this light, not only is Hobbes disinterested in the hubristic self-deification of man (*pace* Miller and Derrida), his telling of the origins of political life is a remarkably humbling narrative. The implicit humility of *Leviathan* vis-à-vis humanity and animality makes it a powerful, if surprising, resource for and contributor to contemporary political theory's growing discourse on ecology. Although much of the work being done in this area focuses on reining in anthropocentrism by obscuring ontological difference, Hobbes demonstrates that our conceit can be tempered without eliminating the human—or for that matter the animal—as a distinct category of being.

Seeking to displace the human and upset any fixed notion of the subject, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, for instance, advance a concept of becoming (including becoming-animal) that encourages the radical displacement of the self. Part of the goal of this process is to become trans-human, which Deleuze and Guattari view as

paradoxically maximizing our human potential. This is in part because by de-humanizing ourselves we gain a novel and preferable kind of freedom: "not the freedom of a human self who can be disengaged from the force of life, but a freedom gained by no longer seeing ourselves as a point of view detached from life. We become free from the human, open to the event of becoming."[32] Relatedly, Deleuze advocates the replacement of morality, which he argues anthropocentrically focuses on what bodies within or in relation to the category of the human ought to do, with an ethics of ethology that focuses on the agency of all bodies and what they can do.

In conversation with Deleuze and Guattari, Jane Bennett has also drawn theorists' attention to the political relevance and agency of even non-living material things or "actants." Highlighting the way in which all manner of matter is interconnected and interdependent, Bennett too works to deflate human hubris by demonstrating "the extent to which human being and thinghood overlap."[33] In the course of breaking down "onto-theological binaries"—including human/animal—Bennett argues for a politics of ecology that emphasizes the horizontal quality of relationships between human beings and other material entities.[34] Embracing this ecological view of politics involves shifting away from an anthropocentric tendency to think of politics as a human enterprise in favor of a "notion of publics as human-nonhuman collectives that are provoked into existence by a shared experience of harm."[35]

Although Hobbes has much to contribute to these sorts of concerns, his work is almost entirely excluded from contemporary political theoretical discussions of ecology. Given the deeply divisive quality of the Hobbesian state of nature, coupled with the mistaken

[32] Claire Colebrook, *Giles Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 2002), 129.
[33] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 4.
[34] Ibid., x, 10.
[35] Ibid., xix.

view that the vicious violence found therein is indicative of a perverse bestiality, it is typically assumed that Hobbes has little to tell us about any productive relationship or interconnection between man and animal.[36] An important exception to this rule, however, is Samantha Frost's interpretation of *Leviathan*.[37] Taking Hobbes' materialism seriously, Frost maps out the way in which each of our thoughts and ideas, according to Hobbes, are based on sensory perception and thus are necessarily intersubjective and interdependent, insofar as other materials and bodies affect our sensorial intake.[38] Given the deeply enmeshed quality of all life, the primary ethical concern of any political theoretical project (and the standard by which all action ought to be assessed) must be the maintenance of peace: "To persist in war is to fail to recognize our fundamental intersubjectivity and our profound interdependence to lay down the conditions for one's future failures. Conversely, Hobbes's argument suggests that we must seek peace because of our interdependence."[39] Frost argues that an important consequence of such a view is the de-privileging of the individual as a meaningful unit of philosophical inquiry. Hardly a theorist of the atomistic

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[36] When Hobbes does make an appearance, he is often cast in the role of a negative foil. Hasana Sharp, for instance, positions Hobbes as exemplifying the kind of problematic turn to the animal Spinoza warns against and that contemporary etho- and ecological thinkers ought to avoid. Hobbes' invocation of the animal, that is, reveals "melancholy or felt powerlessness" rather liberation. For Sharp, the Hobbesian state of nature is "but one example of how an image of man can motivate self-negation rather than the discovery of those who might be standing beside us, already in perfect agreement with our natures. In Hobbes's state of nature, one sees the threat of the wolf, responds in kind, imitating his affects, and overlooks Eve." See Hasana Sharp, *Spinoza and the Politics of Renaturalization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 217.

[37] Samantha Frost, *Lessons from a Materialist Thinker* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

[38] Frost does not, however, go so far as to suggest that Hobbes conceives of no distinction of nature among different kinds of "variegated" matter, as for instance, between animal and human.

[39] Frost, *Lessons from a Materialist Thinker*, 169.

individual, Hobbes' political philosophy highlights our embodiedness in the world around us. In this way Frost reconciles *Leviathan* with the ecological concerns of contemporary political theorists.

If Hobbes is "already" thinking ecologically in the way Frost describes, my interpretation of *Leviathan* demonstrates that he does so in a way that counteracts human pride—one of the primary goals of an ecological perspective, particularly as formulated by Bennett—while at the same time *preserving* ontological difference. One needn't, Hobbes shows us, break down the human as a meaningful category of being, which runs the risk of degenerating into a kind of ascetic self-subordination of the human to the non-human, in order to chasten human hubris or deflate anthropocentricism.[40] Rather, on Hobbes' telling the animal remains radically other, by virtue of which it illuminates human shortcomings; the contrast between the animal's easy and intuitive sociability and the human's natural inclination for conflict is both humbling and instructive. Calling attention to the viability of an alternative to perpetual violence, the Hobbesian animal serves as a model to otherwise aggressive human beings, without requiring that we repudiate our humanity. Although the commonwealth refashions the facets of human nature that incline us to conflict, at no point does it animalize man or ask him to "become-animal."

In fact, and to the contrary, the benefit of learning from and respecting ontological difference in Hobbes' political philosophy is that it allows us to make the most of our particularity *without* succumbing to prideful self-estimation. The artificial imitation of

[40] Sharp, by way of Spinoza, identifies "the direct inversion of a human-centered perspective, in which nonhuman nature becomes the model for existence" as a potential pitfall of the ecological perspective of politics that ought to be guarded against and worked around (*Spinoza and the Politics of Renaturalization*, 187). In contrast to my reading here, in Sharp's view, Hobbes has no positive role to play in doing so. See footnote 36.

those aspects of animality that yield peace allows human beings to cultivate the potential of our distinct nature, or, according to Hobbes, our faculty of reason. True, and sobering, that this potential would be unrealizable absent the adoption of elements of animal nature, it nevertheless remains our unique promise. Hardly the purveyor of a "melancholic" and "powerless" notion of man's relationship to either animality or nature, Hobbes encourages us to appreciate man and animal as interconnected and yet discreet. *Leviathan* demonstrates that we can cultivate, and even celebrate, that which makes us distinct as human beings while at the same time acknowledging that our ability to do so is contingent on the existence of other, very different, beings.