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Hegel derives a great deal from his reading of Heraclitus's philosophy. Above all, he sees the surviving fragments as establishing a pattern to follow in the treatment of paradox and contradiction in philosophy. He takes from Heraclitus the idea that philosophical analysis ought not to be put off by apparent difficulty and contradiction in the expression of a view. Heraclitus shows how paradox and contradiction are more often than not a necessary, if sometimes painful, part of experience. Hegel appears also to derive from Heraclitus the view that once contradiction and paradox have been properly comprehended they are already some way towards being resolved. This is, for Hegel, the crucial task of philosophy: in reducing paradox and contradiction to their constituent elements it paves the way for knowledge of the Idea. For Heraclitus the task of the philosopher is to discover the *logos* in the incomplete and confused experience of the shared world of human beings. Both Heraclitus and Hegel believe that through the broadening of our understanding and our reason it is possible to come to terms with conflict and strife. Heraclitus's attitude is that we should not be puzzled by division and conflict, but that we should view them as an expression of the dynamic nature of the universe. This is an attitude Hegel shares. Hegel tries to work out in greater detail the principle of dialectical change which underlies Heraclitus's philosophy in his *Science of Logic*, by stressing that identity is only through difference. In his *Logic* he comes to the conclusion: 'our consideration of the nature of contradiction has shown that it is not, so to speak, a blemish, an imperfection or a defect in something if a contradiction can be pointed out in it. On the contrary, every determination, every concrete thing, every notion is essentially a unity of different and distinctive moments, which by virtue of their clear and essential difference pass over into contradictory moments.'⁷⁵ Thus, on Hegel's own authority, we can regard Heraclitus's dialectic as the first, and perhaps most important, forerunner of the Hegelian dialectic.

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⁷⁵ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 422; *Werke* 6, 79.

THUCYDIDES AND HOBBS'S STATE OF NATURE

George Klosko and Daryl Rice

Scholars have long been aware of Thucydides' influence on Thomas Hobbes's political thought. In 1628 Hobbes published a translation of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*.¹ In his prefatory address 'To the Readers', Hobbes discusses the value of reading Thucydides, especially the historian's vivid description of past events. By reading them, an intelligent man is able to add to his own experience.² It seems that Hobbes himself profited from his reading, which undoubtedly helped to shape his ideas. Scholars have noted that Hobbes's distrust of democracy was influenced by the lessons of Thucydides,³ while his generally unsentimental view of politics no doubt bears a similar stamp. In fact, as Richard Schlatter says in his valuable article on the subject, many of Hobbes's reflections on how human beings behave 'read like generalizations from Thucydides' examples'.⁴ The clearest instance is the fact that Hobbes's account of the three major sources of strife in the state of nature—competition, diffidence, and glory—is probably based on the analysis of human motives presented by the Athenians in Book I of Thucydides, who attribute their actions to 'fear, honor, and profit'.⁵

The purpose of this brief paper is to point out one particular instance of Thucydides' influence on Hobbes that has gone unnoticed. We believe it can be seen that the specific elements in Hobbes's classic description of human life in the state of nature are heavily influenced by a brief description of life among the earliest inhabitants of Hellas in Book 1 of Thucydides' *History*. We think this is worth pointing out here, not only because the description in question is one of the best known in all of political thought, but because it

¹ This occupies Volumes VIII and IX of *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, collected and edited by W. Molesworth (11 vols., London, 1839–45) (all references to Hobbes are to this edition, abbreviated *E.W.*) Hobbes's translation was reprinted in 1959, edited by David Grene, with an Introduction by B. de Jouvenal (Ann Arbor, 1959)

² *E.W.*, VIII, viii.

³ See, e.g. de Jouvenal, 'Introduction', xii; R. Schlatter, 'Thomas Hobbes and Thucydides', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 6 (1945), pp. 358–60. In his verse autobiography, Hobbes relates that he garnered an anti-democratic message from Thucydides, the propagation of which was one of his reasons for translating the work; also see *E.W.* VIII, xvi–xvii.

⁴ Schlatter, 'Thomas Hobbes and Thucydides', p. 357.

⁵ Schlatter, loc. cit.; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch.13 (*E.W.*, III, 113); Thucydides I, 75. (Here and throughout, we use Hobbes's translation of Thucydides).

affords additional evidence of Thucydides' continuing influence upon his translator.⁶

Hobbes's language in the paragraph in question is well-known. We reproduce it here, with numbered divisions for convenience of reference:

(H 1) In such condition there is no place for industry, (H 2) because the fruit thereof is uncertain: (H 3) and consequently no culture of the earth; (H 4) no navigation nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; (H 5) no commodious building; (H 6) no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; (H 7) no knowledge of the face of the earth; (H 8) no account of time; (H 9) no arts; (H 10) no letters; (H 11) no society; (H 12) and, which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; (H 13) and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.⁷

As we shall see, there are no parallels in Thucydides for the details in (H 7-12), nor for the rhetoric in (H 13), but the other six details can in varying degrees be traced back to a passage early in Book I.

We reproduce the passage from Thucydides' description of the earliest Hellenes, with similar numerical divisions. The translation is Hobbes's, though it should be borne in mind that Thucydides' language is extremely dense and impossible to render literally in English.⁸ Since Hobbes was of course acquainted with the original Greek, specific verbal parallels or non-parallels between this passage and the one in *Leviathan* are not as significant as they might otherwise be. The parallels are seen much more clearly by looking at Thucydides' original Greek.⁹

⁶ Approximately twenty-three years elapsed between the publication of *Leviathan* (1651) and the translation of Thucydides.

⁷ *E.W.*, III, 113.

⁸ Thucydides uses some 65 Greek words, Hobbes some one hundred and seven English words. Hobbes is not alone in this expansion. All the translations checked were in a similar range: Rex Warner (Penguin edition: Baltimore, 1954): 112 words; C.F. Smith (Loeb Classics Library edition: Cambridge, Mass., 1919): 109 words; B. Jowett (Boston, 1883): 97 words; R. Crawley (used in Modern Library edition: New York, 1951): 96 words.

⁹ τῆς γὰρ ἐμπορίας οὐκ οὐσης οὐδ' ἐπιμειγνύντες ἀδεῶς ἀλλήλοις οὔτε κατὰ γῆν οὔτε διὰ θαλάσσης, νεμόμενοί τε τὰ αὐτῶν ἕκαστοι ὅσον ἀποξῆν καὶ περιουσίαν χρημάτων οὐκ ἔχοντες οὐδὲ γῆν φυτεύοντες, ἄδηλον ὃν ὁπότε τις ἐπελθὼν καὶ ἀτειχίστων ἅμα ὄντων ἄλλος ἀφαιρήσεται, τῆς τε καθ' ἡμέραν ἀναγκαίου τροφῆς πανταχοῦ ἂν ἠγούμενοι ἐπικρατεῖν οὐ χαλεπῶς ἀπανίσταντο, καὶ δι' αὐτὸ οὔτε μεγέθει πόλεων ἰσχυοῦν οὔτε τῇ ἄλλῃ παρασκευῇ

(T 1) For whilst traffic was not, (T 2) nor mutual intercourse but with fear, neither by sea nor land, (T 3) and every man so husbanded the ground as but barely to live upon it, (T 4) without any stock of riches, (T 5) and planted nothing; (T 6) (because it was uncertain when another should invade them and carry all away, especially not having the defence of walls); (T 7) but made account to be masters, in any place, of such necessary sustenance as might serve them from day to day: (T 8) they made little difficulty to change their habitations. (T 9) And for this cause were of no ability at all, either for greatness of cities (T 10) or other provision.¹⁰

We think it can be seen that the contents of the two passages are similar. Each describes the effects of overall social conditions upon a series of factors which can be distinguished: (A) work in general; (B) agriculture; (C) travel and trade; (D) construction of buildings; (E) related powers. There is also a sixth factor, (F) a brief causal explanation. These six items are taken up in the two passages respectively as follows.

(A) is cited in (H 1). The sense of 'industry' here seems to be either 'systematic work or labor', the fourth definition found in the O.E.D. at least since 1611, or simply connoting application and exertion, which is the O.E.D.'s third definition, examples of which usage can be found as far back as 1531. If 'industry' is used with either sense (or with something of both senses), the thrust of (H 1) is similar to a combination of (T 3) and (T 4), i.e. that the early Hellenes scratched out a subsistence existence, and nothing more.

(B), that Hobbes's natural men and Thucydides' early Greeks did not plant crops is stated in (H 3) and (T 5).

(F), similar causal explanations for (A) and (B) are found in (H 2) and (T 6). In both cases general insecurity is to blame. Apparently, Hobbes also directly attributes all other features to this insecurity.

(C), a lack of navigation and trade, is cited in (H 4) and (T 1) and (T 2), though it should be noted that Thucydides' account is more inclusive, as there is no traffic or trade by land or sea.

(D), the lack of commodious buildings, is cited in (H 5) and (T 9), though the latter speaks of great cities rather than buildings.

The parallel in regard to (E) is a bit looser than these others. In (H 6) Hobbes speaks of a specific weakness, the inability to move and remove objects. What Thucydides has in mind in (T 10) is not clear, but the weakness is not specific. Thucydides seems to mean that, as the early Hellenes were

¹⁰ Thucydides, I, 2; Hobbes, *E.W.*, VIII, 2.

unable to create great cities, they could not create anything else great either. C.F. Smith's translation more clearly captures the sense of the Greek: the Hellenes 'were not strong as regards either the size of their cities or their resources in general (*oute megethei poleon ischuon oute te alle paraskeue*)'. But however the clause is translated, the parallel is not exact.

Let us review the evidence. It seems that there are strong similarities between two passages in regard to (A), (B), (C), (D), and (F). And while the parallel concerning (E) is less strong, the two passages are similar in referring to an additional inability related to construction. In addition to this series of parallels, (F) is particularly striking, in that both Hobbes and Thucydides explain *both* a lack of economic effort in general and of agriculture in particular because of insecurity. Also in regard to (C), both thinkers mention an absence of *both* traffic and trade. Though the overall insecurity mentioned by Thucydides in (T 7) and (T 8) is not taken up by Hobbes, it seems that the rest of his description generally is. Thus, given the overall similarity of the two passages and the two striking parallels mentioned in this paragraph, it seems reasonable to conclude that Hobbes based this classic description of man in the state of nature upon this passage in Thucydides.¹¹

And so we have additional evidence that, as Schlatter says, Hobbes's reading of Thucydides helped to shape 'the broad outlines and many of the

¹¹ In both *The Elements of Law* (1640) and *De Cive* (1642), there are passages that anticipate the description of the state of nature in *Leviathan*. We reproduce these: 'The estate of hostility and war being such, as thereby nature itself is destroyed, and men kill one another, (as we know also that it is, both by the experience of savage nations that live at this day, and by the histories of our ancestors the old inhabitants of Germany, and other now civil countries, where we find the people few, and short lived, and without the ornaments and comforts of life, which by peace and society are usually invented and procured) . . .' (*The Elements of Law*, I, 1, 12; *E.W.*, IV, 84-5); 'But it is easily judged how disagreeable a thing to the preservation either of mankind, or of each single man, a perpetual war is. But it is perpetual in its own nature; because in regard of the equality of those that strive, it cannot be ended by victory. For in this state the conqueror is subject to so much danger, as it were to be accounted a miracle, if any, even the most strong, should close up his life with many years and old age. They of America are examples hereof, even in this present age: other nations have been in former ages; which now indeed are become civil and flourishing, but were then few, fierce, short-lived, poor, nasty, and deprived of all that pleasure and beauty of life, which peace and society are wont to bring with them.' (*De Cive*, I, 13; *E.W.*, II, 12). The second passage clearly prefigures the description of the state of nature in *Leviathan*.

It is notable that, although Hobbes cites the experiences of various peoples in both passages, he does not mention the early Greeks. It appears, then, that in writing *Leviathan* he returned to Thucydides, in order to flesh out the brief accounts in his earlier works.

We are grateful to Maurice Goldsmith for calling our attention to these passages.

details of his own thought'.¹² To the list of details brought forward by previous scholars, we would add Hobbes's view of what life would be like under conditions of extreme vulnerability, subject to invasion at any time.

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¹² Schlatter, 'Thomas Hobbes and Thucydides', p. 362. Leo Strauss should be mentioned as a scholar who devotes significant attention to the relationship between Hobbes and Thucydides: *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (Oxford, 1936), while Peter Pouncey discusses it in some detail in his recent work, *The Necessities of War* (New York, 1980), though without noting the parallels in their descriptions of the state of nature (see esp. the Appendix, 'Human Nature in Hobbes').

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