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CONTEMPORARY CONTINUATIONS OF HOBBSIAN ANTHROPOLOGY AND THEOLOGY

There is a persisting problem with continuation in philosophy as there is too many philosophers and too few philosophies. Thus for every philosopher we can find a continuator by the way of elementary similarities, and the whole procedure soon turns into combinatorics. Hobbes is obviously no exception. His most known propositions: materialism, nominalism, unchangeable human nature, contractarianism all were preached well before him, so if someone was his continuator in this respect, he could belong to some other tradition as well.

On the other hand, Hobbes expressed his really original ideas tritely and vaguely, so again we cannot be sure who really was his continuator. We mean chiefly the epistemological directive demanding introspective verification of propositions concerning human nature, phenomenalism concerning bodies and space, computationism concerning the mechanism of thinking. The latter can be found in Leibniz and in 19th-century British logicians, finally maturing as the modern system of mathematical logic. No wonder that Fr. Bocheński labelled the Hobbesian idea as “rather the *jeu d’esprit* of a dilettante than a theory of mathematical logic”.¹ Bocheński was surely right, one can only ask whether (despite the developments of the logical and computing machinery), the contemporary computationism is much better, or at least more convincing than its Hobbesian version?

As for phenomenalism – we do not have a better term – we find in *De Corpore* an interesting transformation of the Cartesian identification of matter and extension. Namely, bodies are, as it were, generated on the border of the real and the perceived space. A contemporary author² even claimed that

¹ Józef Maria Bocheński *A History of Formal Logic*, tr. Ivo Thomas, Chelsea, New York 1970, §38.A.2.

² Gary Bruce Herbert *Thomas Hobbes. The Unity of Scientific & Moral Wisdom*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver 1989, p. 45–50.

Hobbes predated the Husserlian procedure of the phenomenological reduction of bodies by the way of double abstraction:³ from the specific location and the specific attributes. That is probably too much, nevertheless we can surely discern two kinds of space in Hobbes:⁴

- imaginary space being an abstraction from specific attributes of an object;
- real space being an abstraction from specific location but not from extension/magnitude.

The second kind of space can be understood as generated by movements of a two-dimensional surface which in fact anticipates modern mathematical concepts.⁵ Hobbes was thus a precursor of the modern problem of the nature and geometry of visual space. This problem is relatively independent of physics, and has been not finally solved.⁶

Finally, there are Hobbesian ideas which in fact had been developed after him and following him. These include monadism, i.e. the concept of reality as a net of irreducible, dynamic centres of force. Hobbes understood monadism anthropologically, however it was in fact a zoological understanding, as humans were animals for him. Leibniz generalised this concept for the whole Great Chain of Being.

The Malmesburian is routinely associated with the claim that the society results from a selfish mutual contract. It is a partial misunderstanding here, as a consistent contractarianism should assume a pre-contract state, a “state of nature”, *bellum omnium contra omnes*. The latter is a fiction, as Hobbes never seriously claimed that it actually occurred. It is a result of reduction of the social reality to interactions of human monads, directed by short-sighted selfishness, and not constrained by rules of reason called “laws of nature” in *Leviathan* (Ch. 14. and 15.). There is, by the way, one domain where the struggle of all against all takes place, namely international rela-

³ Hobbes does not use the term ‘abstraction’, speaking e.g. of “privation; that is (...) feigning the world to be annihilated” *De Corpore*, II.7.2 [EW1, 91]. **NB.** For all Hobbes’ works, we indicate the part, the chapter, and if needed the paragraph. The location in Molesworth’s edition (*The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. William Molesworth, John Bohn, London 1839–45) is given in square brackets, the Arabic number indicating the volume. A quote from his Latin works (LW) in note 22 below is given after *Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis Opera Philosophica...*, ed. William Molesworth, John Bohn, London 1839–1845.

⁴ *De Corpore*, II.7.2 [EW1, 108–110].

⁵ *Op. cit.*, II.8.2 [EW1, 119–120]; Herbert Thomas Hobbes, p. 49.

⁶ Cf. Tarow Indow *The Global Structure of Visual Space*, World Scientific, Singapore 2004; Mark Wagner *The Geometries of Visual Space*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ 2006. Since 1950s, the standard model of the space of binocular perception in the Lüneburg model, corresponding to hyperbolic geometry.

tions: all-in wrestling of Leviathans. The so-called Hobbesian paradigm is scholarly expression of a quite vernacular view that international relations are pure power play. The simplicity of this attitude does not mean that it can not be developed into an academic doctrine.⁷

Returning to the initial question of continuation, we emphasise that Anglo-Saxon thought in fact *does* include two traditions initiated by Hobbes. The first is the line of *possessive individualism*,⁸ being a source of both classical and contemporary liberalism. We already wrote about that,⁹ so we would not discuss again the paradoxical position of Hobbes – naturally the paradox occurs only if one accepts the routine labelling Hobbes as an “absolutist”. We shall not dwell into subsequent modifications of Hobbesian doctrine between Locke and Mill, reminding only how anachronistic and one-sided classical liberalism seems to be now, after two centuries from the period it finally took shape.

Hobbesian ‘absolutism’ – and the very metaphor of the grand beast called Leviathan – runs through “political theology”, the latter being a tradition of phraseology rather a genuine intellectual current. Its contemporary version is often associated with Carl Schmitt, who claimed that the main notions of political science were of theological origin.¹⁰ Quite possible, as sometimes the very topic calls for a specific kind of language. Perhaps even theological elements in Hobbes could supply an example. Almost a half of *Leviathan* is devoted to the Holy Scripture and religious matters.¹¹ We can-

⁷ From the recent literature: Michael C. Williams *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005.

⁸ The term was introduced by Canadian scholar Crawford Brough Macpherson (1911–1987) in his *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1962. – It was meant to denote a group of doctrines founded on the assumption that “a man’s energy and skill are his (...) possessions, the use and disposal of which he is free to hand over to others at a price” (p. 48). Macpherson compares postulates underlying two models: the customary/status society and the “market” one (Ch. II.3.). Following him we can attribute the following postulates to Hobbes: (1) freedom is independence of the will of others; (2) it is specified as independence of, or abolition of any relations except those freely entered into for one’s own gain; (3) individuals are sole possessors of their skills and owe nothing for them to the rest of society; (4) individuals are actually able to alienate their own possessions, especially own ability to work; (5) being human rests on freedom in such a sense; (6) society is the totality of exchange relations; (7) the state is a human invention guaranteeing ownership and exchange.

⁹ See ours “Physical Anthropology of Thomas Hobbes”, *Studies in Logic, Grammar and Rhetoric*, 15 (28) 2009, p. 189–197.

¹⁰ Carl Schmitt *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Soveränität*, Duncker & Humblot, Munich 1922 [*Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, tr. G. Schwab, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1985]; *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes*, Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, Hamburg 1938 [*The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol*, tr. G. Schwab & al., Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn. 1996].

¹¹ Ch. III.32–IV.47.

not elaborate on a related topic: whether Christian declarations of Hobbes were sincere and how to tell his undoubted anticlericalism from possible rejection of Christianity.¹²

Schmitt is sometimes called “Heidegger of political science” and sometimes “German Hobbes”, being equally difficult to pigeonhole. A Catholic (who was for 25 years excommunicated for bigamy), a Nazi supporter for some time, liberal and anti-Communist, supplied a doctrine of partisan warfare. As most commentators, we are not sure what really he has in common with Hobbes, except an inspiration, of course.^{13,14} The proper measure of power to be granted to the ruler was certainly a common problem for both. They likewise feared more a weak government than a strong one. Both also feared people calling for softening of government. Hobbes called them “servants of the Kingdom of Darkness”; Schmitt used the term ‘neutralisators’ (*die Neutralisierer*).¹⁵ Another common element is human nature as ethically neutral, however similar practical implications had different premises. For Schmitt, neutrality means that human nature lies *between* good and evil, somewhere around the ethical zero. For Hobbes, human nature is a basic fact *beyond* good and evil.

The Malmesburian clearly expressed bipolarity of man torn between the extremes of possessive and insatiable selfishness and of the fear of annihilation. It was certainly continued first by Darwinians and then by sociobiologists. There is an interesting analogy between Darwinism and the metaphor of universal war. As we noticed, *bellum omnium contra omnes* is a fiction. The same is valid for the Darwinian fight tooth and nail.¹⁶ Contemporary biology assures us that nothing like that takes place in nature.

¹² See: Patricia Springborg “Hobbes on Religion”, (in:) Tom Sorell (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996, p. 346–380.

¹³ There was surely a biographical analogy between them, nonetheless a perverted one. The Malmesburian fled to the Continent on the eve of the Civil War, then returned and put himself at Cromwell’s mercy. Nothing happened to him after the Stuart Restoration. Schmitt greeted the Nazi revolution with hope, soon fell into disfavour with the new government, reprisals against him being halted only by Göring. After 1945 he was interned for a year and even became a “possible defendant” in a planned trial in Nurnberg.

¹⁴ Cf. Michael Hollerich “Carl Schmitt”, (in:) Peter Scott & al. (ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, Blackwell, Oxford 2004, p. 109–122.

¹⁵ He declared that the secret keyword of his spiritual and journalistic existence is “the struggle for properly Catholic intensification (*das Ringen um die eigentlich katholische Verschärfung*) against neutralisers, aesthetic sluggards (*ästhetischen Schlaraffen*), against aborters, cremators and pacifists”; Schmitt Glossarium, *Aufzeichnungen der Jahre 1947–1951*, ed. E. von Medem, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin 1991, entry from 16 June 1948.

¹⁶ “Who trusted God was love indeed / And love Creation’s final law / Tho’ Nature, red in tooth and claw / With ravine, shriek’d against his creed.” – Alfred Tennyson *In Memoriam A.H.H.*, Canto 56 (a 1849 poem, predating Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*).

A possibility of a direct relation between Hobbes and Darwin is quite another point. The latter nowhere mentions the former.¹⁷ However, critics and supporters of Darwin quickly noted the similarity between them, as did Asa Gray:¹⁸

Curiously enough, Mr. Darwin's theory is grounded upon the doctrine of Malthus and the doctrine of Hobbes. The elder DeCandolle¹⁹ had conceived the idea of the struggle for existence, and, in a passage which would have delighted the cynical philosopher of Malmesbury, had declared that all Nature is at war, one organism with another or with external Nature; and Lyell²⁰ and Herbert²¹ had made considerable use of it. But Hobbes in his theory of society, and Darwin in his theory of natural history, alone have built their systems upon it. However moralists and political economists may regard these doctrines in their original application to human society and the relation of population to subsistence, their thorough applicability to the great society of the organic world in general is now undeniable.²²

Historians of evolutionism notice something analogous to the fact noticed by Macpherson in the history of political doctrines: the Enlightenment which gave rise to the classical evolutionism (of course pre-Darwinian), liked the idea of unchangeable human nature, however in its Lockean, and not Hobbesian version.²³

Let us remember that Hobbes was not an evolutionist, and displayed little interest in ancient evolutionism which was certainly well known to him. In a much quoted passage from *De Homine*,²⁴ supports the eternity of the human race, prudently invoking the Bible. In *De Cive* he gave the famous mushroom analogy: "Let us return again to the state of nature, and consi-

¹⁷ Electronic search in the database of Darwin's writings.

¹⁸ Asa Gray (1810–1888) – American botanist.

¹⁹ Augustin Pyrame de Candolle (1778–1841) – Swiss botanist.

²⁰ Charles Lyell (1797–1875) – English geologist.

²¹ William Herbert (1778 – 1847) – English botanist and Anglican clergyman.

²² Gray [Review of Darwin's] "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection", *American Journal of Science and Arts*, vol. 29, series 2, no. 86 (March 1860), p. 170. Reprinted in: *Darwiniana: Essays and Reviews Pertaining to Darwinism*, D. Appleton & Co., New York 1884, p. 37.

²³ Peter J. Bowler *Evolution: The History of an Idea*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1989, p. 96.

²⁴ "De origine generis humani sententias philosophorum antiquissimorum fuisse celeberrimas duas (...). Alteram eorum, qui, cum mundum eternum, esse statuissent, necesse habebant etiam hominum genus ab aeterno existisse dicere. Alteram eorum qui mundum definito tempore incepisse existimabant (...) Qua mollitie telluris, in locis soli subjectioribus, factum esse ajunt, ut in locis paludosis tumores sive pustulae quaedam enascerentur, membranulas habentes ex quibus post perustis perfractisque omne genus animalium, etiam homines, excluderentur. Propinqua quidem haec sunt iis quae traduntur in capite primo Geneseos, sed non eadem." – *De Homine* I.1 [LW2, 3–4].

der men as if but even now sprung from the earth, and suddainly (*like* Mushromes) come to full maturity without all kind of engagement to each other (...).²⁵ It again serves as a thought experiment demonstrating the essence of human relations.

Hobbes did much for deconstruction of the Scholastic psychology including abolition of the will as one of the two main mental faculties. Will was for him a resultant of desires.²⁶ Today, will is rarely mentioned in textbooks of psychology, if so, rather as a historical term. English Jesuit Joseph Rickaby²⁷ (who really read Hobbes, unlike many of his critics) placed the Malmesburian, together with Locke, Hume, and Mill, as a main figure of British determinism which is the second tradition we wanted to mention here.

The problem of *will*, understood as an independent faculty of the soul and placed in a theoretical framework of human psyche is now completely separated with the problem of *free will*, a supposed ability to decide one's own actions. It is almost needless to remind that we have four positions here:

1. Free will ("libertarianism").
2. No free will (coercionism).
3. Universal determinism.
4. Universal indeterminism.

Hobbesian compatibilism joins positions 1. and 3., as we know from his polemics with Archbishop Bramhall. Not many of us are interested in how Hobbes personally reconciled both elements of compatibilism. It is important that it corresponds with some common intuitions – as the opposing view presented by Bramhall:

Either I am free to write this discourse for liberty against necessity, or I am not free. If I be free, then I have obtainde the cause, and not to suffer for the truth. If I be not free, yet I ought not to be blamed, since I do it not out of any voluntary election, but out of an inevitable necessity.²⁸

²⁵ *De Cive* VIII.I., p. 117 [EW2, 108–109] [*De Cive* is quoted after the Clarendon edition: *De Cive: The English Version*, ed. Howard Warrender, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1983].

²⁶ Or "the last appetite in deliberation"– *Leviathan* I.6., p. 44 [*Leviathan* is quoted after: *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1991]; *De Corpore*, IV.25.13 [EW1, 409].

²⁷ Rickaby *Free Will and Four English Philosophers (Hobbes, Locke, Hume and Mill)*, Burns & Oates, London 1906. The author first declares concern "that my reader should not be determinist" (s. VIII), however in the final section he writes "The determinist, in England at least, shuts his determinism up with his books; and, in active life, uses his free will vigorously" (s. 234).

²⁸ *Vindication of True Liberty from Antecedent and Extrinsic Necessity*, (in:) *The Works of the Most Reverend Father in God John Bramhall, D.D.*, vol. IV, J. H. Parker,

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We prefer not to discuss here whether the four listed positions actually include all theoretically important elements of the free will controversy. Surely, the controversy still focuses on them, shifting from one point to another.²⁹

Recently, the claim that we *lack* free will became fashionable again, often associated with vague claims of so-called “genetic determinism”:

In recent decades, with advances in psychology, sociology, and neuroscience, the notion that certain patterns of human behavior may ultimately be due to factors beyond our control has become a serious cultural concern. In our society, the possibility that criminal behavior, for example, may be caused by influences in upbringing or by abnormal features of the brain is very much a live hypothesis. Furthermore, many people agree that criminals cannot be blameworthy for actions and tendencies produced in this way. At the same time, most assume that even if criminal actions frequently have this sort of causal history, ordinary actions are not similarly generated, but rather are freely chosen, and we can be praiseworthy or blameworthy for them.³⁰

Apart from the scope of the controversy, three things remain unchanged since Hobbes. First, the Hobbesian solution of the paradox of compatibility by combining determinism with restricting liberty to the lack of *external* constraints³¹ still has supporters.³² Second, both compatibilism and incompatibilism focus not on reconciling liberty with *ontological* freedom of the will, but on reconciling liberty with ethical counterpart of the latter, namely responsibility. Third, self-confidence of adherents of positions 3. and 4. remains unchanged. As we still do not have a physical theory of everything, so both the universal determinism and indeterminism remain doubtful generalisations of our actual knowledge.

Much was written about philosophy, especially bad philosophy invading the domain of natural sciences and depraving innocent souls of scientists. Perhaps it is time to say something about the reverse phenomenon. Hobbes

Oxford 1844, p. 23. Reprint: *Bramhall's discourse of liberty and necessity*, (in:) *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity*, ed. Vere Chapell, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999, p. 1.

²⁹ A review of contemporary positions: Robert Kane (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2003.

³⁰ Derek Pereboom *Living Without Free Will*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001, p. XIII.

³¹ *Leviathan* I.6, p. 45 [EW3, 48–49].

³² In Poland Bogusław Wolniewicz, see “Determinizm i odpowiedzialność” [Determinism and responsibility], (in:) *Filozofia i wartości* III, WFiS UW, Warsaw 2003, p. 113–119.

describes man “from inside” and “from outside”.³³ His archaic – and precursory – “internal physics” contrasts with his picture of social interactions, much resembling contemporary econophysics and social physics. Econophysics links physics and economy, focusing now on financial markets and using a variety of tool taken from the arsenal of statistical physics.³⁴ Despite a new name (coined in the 1990s), if considered as a research tradition it can be traced back at least to Vilfredo Pareto at the turn of 19th century. Social physics is broader in scope and ambitions, aiming at extending physical methods not only on the whole economy, but on other social disciplines as well.³⁵ Social physics refuses to “look inside the man”, settling for a description of interactions of social atoms and their aggregates. Nevertheless, some tacit assumptions concerning the construction of human being must be made. As in the case of sociobiology,³⁶ they have much in common with the bipolar Hobbesian model of man. All seemingly altruistic actions should result from combinations of desire and fear.³⁷ Statistical simplifications inevitably made in sociophysics resemble another Hobbesian premise: the basic equality of men.³⁸

In geometry two vectors span a plane, and not a three-dimensional space. Something analogous is valid in ethics, too. We doubt that non-selfish attitudes can result even from the most clever summation of selfishness and the self-preservation instinct. The same concerns other ideas still pertaining to the liberal ideology as the infamous Benthamian calculus, reportedly enabling summation of “happiness and misery”. Their persistence is another problem, calling not for explanation but for a practical solution.

³³ Piotrowski “Physical Anthropology of Thomas Hobbes”, p. 180.

³⁴ Rosario N. Mantegna & al., *An Introduction to Econophysics: Correlations and Complexity in Finance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999; Arnab Chatterjee *Econophysics of Markets and Business Networks: Proceedings of the Econophys-Kolkata III*, Springer, Milan 2007. The mentioned physical methods include among others: power laws and scaling, generalised statistical correlation, stochastic processes; see Mantegna, *op. cit.*, Ch. 1.

³⁵ Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1971; Philip Mirowski *More Heat Than Light: Economics as Social Physics, Physics as Nature’s Economics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1989; B. K. Chakrabarti & al. *Econophysics and Sociophysics: Trends and Perspectives*, Wiley-VCH, Berlin 2006.

³⁶ On analogies between Hobbesian anthropology and sociobiology, see e.g.: Johan M. G. van der Dennen “Human Evolution and the Origin of War: A Darwinian Heritage”, (in:) *idem & al. (eds.) The Darwinian Heritage and Sociobiology*, Praeger, Westport, Conn. 1999, p. 163–164.

³⁷ See the story of Hobbes and a beggar from Strand: John Aubrey *Aubrey’s Brief Lives*, vol. 1, ed. Andrew Clark, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1898, p. 352.

³⁸ *Leviathan* I.13., p. 87 [EW3, 110].

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S U M M A R Y

Modern continuations of anthropology and so called “theology” of Hobbes are reviewed, including his phenomenalist theory of space, anthropological monadology, theory of international relations, relation to evolutionism, and compatibilist account of free will. Further analogies with modern doctrines, as econophysics are also considered.

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