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Germans, Greeks, and Genealogies

Reconciling the Old and New in the History of International Security

by
James Mortensen

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Section 1: Articles

Section 2: Notes

Section 3: Reviews

Germans, Greeks, and Genealogies

Reconciling the Old and New in the History of International Security

James Mortensen *

This note considers the genealogical inheritance of the term 'security' within the context of International Relations theory (IR), and uses historical and classical textual analysis to critique the validity of that assumed genealogy. Much existing IR literature operates under the assumption that 'security' as a politically relevant term is either timeless (a 'classical' view), or a result of US policy in the 1940s (a 'modern' view); obviously these positions are contradictory, at least on the surface. The note attempts to resolve this contradiction through the use of an interdisciplinary approach. It first does this by using textual analysis, political science and history to critique the historical and political genealogies influential in said disciplines on their own terms; of central issue is the assumption of continuity in the language of Thucydides and Hobbes. Secondly, it offers an alternative genealogy that better informs both the 'classical' and 'modern' claims, one that draws from the political pamphlets of the English Civil War. Lastly, the paper uses historical analysis of continental political mores in the early 20th century to demonstrate the value of this new genealogy to the IR discipline.

1. Introduction

Over the last 30 years, the quest to qualify, interpret or reinterpret the concept of security in International Relations and Political Science has taken a number of different guises, and in many cases yielded wildly different results. However, despite their differences, many theoretical approaches to security share an assumptive genealogy of security, one that is overwhelmingly grounded in

* National Security College, Australian National University (*james.mortensen @ anu.edu.au*).

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a white western inheritance. Both realist[1] and postmodern[2] security scholars have placed Greece as the origin of security as a political concept, and securitization theory has long been critiqued on the basis of its reliance on western political culture (or ignorance of others).[3]

There have been important critiques to this reliance from the perspective of subaltern groups—an important effort that must continue.[4] However, instead of taking part in this constructive work, this study is consciously *de-con*structive; in it, we will critically engage with this western, Anglo-centric genealogy of security and uncover some fundamental inconsistencies therein. In so doing, it is hoped that we can not only weaken resistance to the re-examination and reconstruction of security as a concept, but also demonstrate that even the most unashamedly western-centric approach to security requires considerable critique and refinement.

Because beyond the social and political critique of 'security' as a hegemonic concept within international relations, as we will see, even our most broad historical conceptions of this Anglo-western security are formed on erroneous assumptions. Put simply, this note will use the traditional literature of this western-centric foundation of security—authors such as Thucydides, Hobbes, and early 20th-century political theorists like Carl Schmitt—to deconstruct the

[1] Robert G. Gilpin, "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism", *International Organization* 38, no. 02 (March 1984): 287, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300026710; Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, reissued (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2010).

[2] Anthony Burke, "Aporias of Security", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 27, no. 1 (2002): 1–27; Michael Dillon, *Politics of Security: Towards a Political Philosophy of Continental Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1996); James Der Derian, "The Value of Security: Hobbes, Marx, Nietzsche, and Baudrillard", in *On Security*, ed. Ronnie Lipschutz (Columbia UP, 1995), 24–45.

[3] Pinar Bilgin, "The 'Western-Centrism' of Security Studies: 'Blind Spot' or Constitutive Practice?", *Security Dialogue* 41, no. 6 (2010): 615–22; Sarah Bertrand, "Can the Subaltern Securitize? Postcolonial Perspectives on Securitization Theory and Its Critics", *European Journal of International Security* 3, no. 3 (2018): 281–99.

[4] Mohammed Ayoob, "Inequality and Theorizing in International Relations: The Case for Subaltern Realism", *International Studies Review* 4, no. 3 (2002): 27–48; Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit, "Is Securitization Theory Racist? Civilizationism, Methodological Whiteness, and Antiblack Thought in the Copenhagen School", *Security Dialogue* 51, no. 1 (2020): 3–22, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010619862921; Bertrand, "Can the Subaltern Securitize?"; Alexandra Kent, "Reconfiguring Security: Buddhism and Moral Legitimacy in Cambodia", *Security Dialogue* 37, no. 3 (2006): 343–61.

often-repeated claim that security is a constant feature in western political theory. The paper will demonstrate that the historical-cultural basis of classically (i.e., western) construed security does not exist; at least not as it has been described in its 'classic' literature, nor the current works that rely on it. In order to demonstrate this, the paper will use an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on history, discourse analysis and political theory.

The paper will then offer a tentative, alternative genealogy for western political security that holds the possibility of enriching the critiques of western and Anglo-centric assumptions that underpin security studies. We will see that the prevalence of modern security in western liberal politics is not due to its ubiquity, but rather because the concept of security expressly emerged as a result of a specific Anglo construction, concretely tied to a particular time, place and set of interests. Such a genesis simultaneously justifies the western-centric focus of security theory just as it makes the uncritical application of that focus to other cultures, constructions and environments fundamentally groundless.

As a final consideration, it should be noted that this paper is specifically focussed on the use of Hobbes and 'security' in the context of the disciplines of International Relations and Political Science, rather than a study of Hobbes and security more broadly. It must be acknowledged that many influential studies of Hobbes, Thucydides and the political thought of both would normally be drawn upon.[1] However, given these studies are secondary (or in some cases, absent) from considerations in International Relations, they are similarly absent from this paper. It is hoped that by engaging with the genealogies of International Relations on their own terms will better demonstrate the issues inherent within. This hope is itself based on the limited uptake of Malcolm's criticism of Hobbes' significance to International Relations regarding inter-state behaviour.[2]

[1] For Hobbes especially, see for example Quentin Skinner or Noel Malcolm such as: Quentin Skinner, "Thomas Hobbes on the Proper Signification of Liberty: The Prothero Lecture", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 40 (1990): 121–51; Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2002).

[2] Noel Malcolm, "Hobbes's Theory of International Relations", in *Aspects of Hobbes*, 432–56.

2. Twentieth Century Novelty

During his post-war censure, Nazi jurist and political theorist Carl Schmitt maintained a *Glossarium*, a collection of philological and genealogical musings on words that had caught Schmitt's eye through his studies or the news at large. On August 3rd, 1948, the word for the day was 'Security":

> August 3, 1948. French: security [*sécurité*]; German (until recently): Cosiness [*Gemütlichkeit*]. The internalised, interiorised, but at the same time secularised certainty of grace, the end of fear and trembling at a good cup of coffee and a pipe of spiced tobacco. The renewal of well-veiled lust after Luther and the Moravian [Church] had raged so sternly against security as actual lust. "Where now is your lust?" the prophet asks the wretch thrown out from his security. "Where now is your trembling?" I ask this Quaker turned billionaire.[1]

This rather oblique entry belies a scathing political and theological critique of what we now know as 'security' in the political space. Mere weeks after the UN Security Council had for the first time attempted to enforce its powers in an international conflict, Schmitt makes plain that he saw the political notion of 'security' as a novel and foreign idea. As we will see in more detail below, Schmitt was not the only political theorist of the early 20th century that had misgivings regarding the novel and alien nature of the term.

Despite Schmitt's status as the 'godfather' of several International Relations schools,[2] there is little in Schmitt's view of security that has informed the discipline's view of the term. In fact, the novelty of 'security' as a political reality to Schmitt is indicative of a key tension within genealogies of security, as they are understood by International Relations scholars.

[1] Carl Schmitt and Eberhard Medem, *Glossarium: Aufzeichnungen der Jahre 1947-1951* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1991), 185.

[2] See for example Michael C Williams, "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics", *International Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (2003): 511–31; Hans-Karl Pichler, "The Godfathers of 'Truth': Max Weber and Carl Schmitt in Morgenthau's Theory of Power Politics", *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 2 (1998): 185–200; Martti Koskenniemi, "Carl Schmitt, Hans Morgenthau, and the Image of Law in International Relations", in *The Role of Law in International Politics: Essays in International Relations and International Law*, ed. Michael Byers (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2001), 17–34.

3. The 'Modern' Stream

Since the end of the Cold War, the political acts and categories represented by security have been subject to 'broadening', 'deepening' and increasingly, a rising level of historical accountability.[1] It is this latter consideration that concerns us most in the present paper; a consideration that can be broadly separated into two 'streams' of thought.

The first stream concerns security as a contemporary instrument—as a political concept that appeared in the US during the modern period, and was then exported around the world via the necessities of political events. In this stream of thought, security bursts to the fore of liberal governance due to its role in political rhetoric and policy; national and social security as it appeared in the 1930s and 40s especially (though not exclusively). For the most part, this 'modern' stream places the origin of the security project in the US state. Historians such as Curt Cardwell[2] and Ronald Krebs,[3] as well as critical theorists such as David Campbell[4] have concentrated on security as it was historically expressed in the Cold-War era United States. Similarly, critical theorists such as Mark Neocleous[5] and Eli Jelly Shapiro,[6] as well as historian Andrew Preston[7] have also placed the concept of security largely in the grasp of the modern American state, however as the result of a more substantive colonial and nation-building project.

To this list we can also add Schmitt. While the language Schmitt uses is strange, it is unambiguous. The 'Quaker turned billionaire', the 'prophet' who

[1] David A Baldwin, "The Concept of Security", *Review of International Studies* 23, no. 1 (1997): 5–26.
[2] Curt Cardwell, "NSC-68 and the National Security State", in *Blackwell Companions to American History: A Companion to Harry S. Truman*, ed. Daniel S. Margolies, vol. 67 (Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).
[3] Ronald R. Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of US National Security* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2015).
[4] David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
[5] Mark Neocleous, *Critique of Security* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008).
[6] Eli Jelly-Schapiro, *Security and Terror: American Culture and the Long History of Colonial Modernity* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018).
[7] Andrew Preston, "Monsters Everywhere: A Genealogy of National Security", *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 3 (June 1, 2014): 477–500, https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhu018.

has come to turn cosiness into security, is the United States; the wretch, by comparison, is likely Schmitt's overly romantic view of himself.[1] Being a close student of Max Weber, Schmitt's carefully selected language maps closely to Weber's famous work *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* thereby firmly placing his crosshairs on the sort of puritan capitalism typified by the writings of the American founding fathers that Weber had analysed.[2] As such, Schmitt positions the United States as caricature of protestant theology, a once austere spiritualist who in rejecting excess became rich. Not simply critiquing the theological however, Schmitt is more concerned with the 'secularised certainty of grace'—the shift from accepting comfort and rejecting 'security' as Luther had, to the 'end of fear and trembling'—the attempt to gain certainty and control where previously there was none. As we will see, Schmitt's entry is as much a reflection on the remaking of European politics along what he saw as American lines as it is a meditation on a word whose meaning he saw as shifting.

4. The 'Classic' Stream

Standing apart from (though not necessarily *against*) the 'modern' stream of security is what we might call the 'classic' stream. Here, security is an essentially timeless concept in Western politics. Present in a variety of different forms, such studies often reach back to classical Greece (especially the work of

[1] John T. Hamilton, *Security: Politics, Humanity, and the Philology of Care* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2013), 275.

[2] For an example of the language of Weber being used by Schmitt, see the discussion on comfort and security in Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism and Other Writings*, ed. Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 116.

Thucydides), flow through ancient Rome, and at some point marry up to the modern political era, often through the work of Thomas Hobbes. This story is retold (albeit with varying methods and details) by Michael Dillon,[1] Arenas,[2] Herrington,[3] Der Derian[4] and Burke,[5] as well as being greatly expanded upon by philologist John Hamilton.[6] The classic stream is also typified by the presumptive historical analysis given by realists of various stripes, not least Grahame Allison and John Mearsheimer.[7] While varied in certain smaller details, all of the above share a common foundational genealogy; the notion of 'security' (such as it is construed) begins in Western classical politics before transferring into the political language of the early modern period—especially that of Thomas Hobbes.[8]

However given Schmitt's concern over security as a jarring American export, it is interesting to note two things. Firstly, Schmitt himself was a keen study of Hobbes, even writing a book on the novelty and importance of Hobbes' political work;[9] that security could cause such indignation in Schmitt would suggest that Schmitt's reading of Hobbes departs substantially from the genealogies above. Secondly, those same genealogies—those such as that of Arenas, Hamilton and Herrington—are heavily indebted to a German genealogical tradition that be-

[1] Dillon, *Politics of Security*.

[2] J. Frederik M. Arenas, "From Homer to Hobbes and Beyond — Aspects of 'Security' in the European Tradition", in *Globalization and Environmental Challenges: Reconceptualizing Security in the 21st Century*, ed. Hans Günter Brauch et al., Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2008), 263–77, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-75977-5_17.

[3] Jonathan Herrington, "Philosophy: The Concepts of Security, Fear, Liberty, and the State", in *Security: Dialogue Across Disciplines* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015), 22–44.

[4] Derian, "The Value of Security".

[5] Burke, "Aporias of Security".

[6] Hamilton, *Security*.

[7] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Updated edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2014); Graham T. Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (Brunswick and London: Scribe Publications, 2017).

[8] Beyond many of the genealogies already referenced here, see also Jörg Spieker, "Foucault and Hobbes on Politics, Security, and War", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 36, no. 3 (2011): 187–99; Gilpin, "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism", 287.

[9] Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol*, trans. George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

gan before Schmitt's own entry.[1] Thus while there is a shared *lexical* tradition between the German and English words, by the 1940s the *political* inference of the German *Sicherheit* and the English 'security' are not one and the same—an issue that Schmitt's glossary makes apparent.

As we will see in more detail later, the role of each word within the context of early 20th century political action and policy is sufficiently different to cause confusion between Anglo speakers and their continental counterparts. In the meantime however, we must grasp at how this confusion has been allowed to stand; how the 'modern' and 'classic' streams of security could possibly coexist. If security as we understand it has been underwritten by a shared classical inheritance, how could it also be so firmly rooted in the modern political experience as many scholars—seemingly including Schmitt—claim? We will attempt to give a possible solution to this problem, first by deconstructing major elements of the 'classic' stream, then by constructing an alternative story that holds the potential to reconcile this tension.

5. Security Vs Asphaleia

It is through Latin that the English term 'security' comes, imported with the Norman Invasion and cemented by the Latin speaking church. Indeed, the Latin *securitas* gives us not only the English term, but also the German *Sicherheit*, French *sécurité,* Italian *sicurezza* and the Spanish *seguridad.* While this shared lexical tradition might initially give the impression that there is a shared political tradition to go with it, upon further reflection it in fact suggests the opposite; Schmitt's indignation at the billionaire Quaker comes despite this shared lingual tradition.

The reason for this is to be found in the import of *securitas* itself. In one of its earliest known appearances, Cicero uses the term to describe not a political

[1] Emil Winkler, *Sécurité*, Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, 10 (Berlin: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1939); Andrea Schrimm-Heins, "Gewissheit und Sicherheit: Geschichte und Bedeutungswandel der Begriffe Certitudo und Securitas (Teil II)", *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 35 (1992): 100; Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, *Sicherheit als soziologisches und sozialpolitisches Problem: Untersuchungen zu einer Wertidee hochdifferenzierter Gesellschaften*, vol. 31, 2 (Stuttgart: Enke, 1973), https://pub.uni-bielefeld.de/record/2486497.

reality, but a personal state of mind.[1] *Securitas* describes an emotive state in which one is 'without care'; created by the compounding of *sine* (without) and *curas* (care), the term indicated a peaceful mental state throughout Republican and Imperial Rome.[2]

This freedom from concern is carried through in later Latin usage, as well as into early modern English—indeed we can use Hobbes himself to demonstrate this point. As was common at the time, Hobbes' political philosophy was published not only in English but also Latin, with security glossing for *securitas* across both the *Leviathan* and *De Cive*.[3] Decades before Hobbes, we see 'security' as an entry in what is generally considered to be the first English dictionary in which it is defined as "…carelessenes, feare of nothing", as well as a number of uses in the context of a deposit or guarantee designed to bring 'freedom from cares' in a transaction (much as we would still ask for a *security deposit* today).[4]

Moving past Imperial Rome, *securitas* retained this emotive import, being kept alive by its relevance to the Christian church. In the works of theologians such as Augustine of Hippo,[5] Martin Luther[6] and Jean Calvin,[7] *securitas* remains indicative of a carefree attitude—one that often held the opportunity for sinfulness through negligence and earthly excess. It is this emotive calm that Schmitt invokes with his "end of fear and trembling at a good cup of coffee and a pipe

[1] Cic. *Off.* 1.69. Taken from Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. Walter Miller (London and New York: William Heinemann and The Macmillan Co., 1913).

[2] See for example Valerius Maximus, Seneca the Younger, and the use of iconography of provision and leisure in the depiction of *securitas* on imperial coinage. V. Max. 6.4, 7.1, 8.11; Sen. *Ep.* 70.16, Sen. *Cl.* 1.1.7-8; Carlos F. Noreña, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 130.

[3] Such glosses are extensive across both texts, and as such an exhaustive list would be unfeasible. See by way of example, however *Leviathan* 1.13.20-30, 2.17, as well as *De Cive* chapter 6, especially 6.2, 6.3.

[4] A sense that can also be found in Ancient Roman usage. See Sen. *Ben.* 7.15.

[5] "Christus … tollit tibi malam securitatem, viserit utilem timorem" (Augustine of Hippo, *Homilies on the Gospel According to St. John: And His First Epistle*, trans. Henry Browne [London: Oxford: John Henry Parker, F. and J. Rivington, 1848]).

[6] Luther WA 39.1: 356; Martin Luther, Helmut T Lehmann, and Jaroslav Pelikan, *Luther's Works (American Edition)*, 75 Vols (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1995).

[7] Calvin *Inst.* 2.11; Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Anne Mckee (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009).

of spiced tobacco"; a once fearful calm that has been replaced by the foreign notion of security as some sort of forceful earthly guarantee.

However *securitas*' 'carelessness' stands at conceptual odds with the other purported ancestor of security, the Greek *asphaleia*. It is in the contests of the wrestling arena that we best understand the Greek 'security'. Coming from σφάλλω ('*sphallo*'), meaning to throw or to cause to fall, in this context, *asphalos* (ἀσφαλής, made by attaching the negative prefix ἀ) became an adjective that described one that had successfully defended against an opponent's efforts, and the noun *asphaleia* (ἀσφάλεια) denoting a state in which the combative efforts of an opponent could be or had been resisted.

These words held within them the inherent tension of the situation—it was to throw in the sense that it was to upend that which was otherwise stable; it was to fall despite the best efforts of stability. In sum, *asphaleia* was a term of opposition and conflict—it signified antithetical forces, and the stability of one against the other.

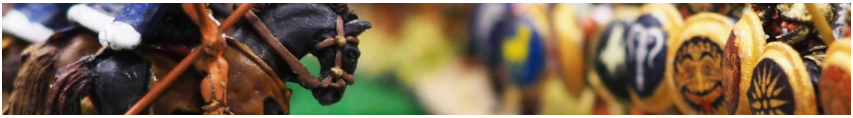
Operating on a metaphor of maintenance against an antithetical effort, *asphaleia* found its way into the social and political lexicon of classical Athens, especially where antithetical forces were in play. By the time of the Peloponnesian War, *asphaleia* had come to serve three main lingual purposes. Firstly, it retained its literal meaning—to avoid falling over despite the best efforts of an opposing force. Secondly, it was a descriptor of truth, or being correct in the face of doubt; it described a state in which a person had avoided believing a falsehood or making an incorrect estimation. Finally, it was a descriptor of what we now broadly consider political security; it described a state in which a polity was stable against the vicissitudes of some threat, namely war and political unrest.

Thus in Thucydides' history *asphaleia* is used to speak of a wide variety of events in the context of war and political struggle; success in a military or political struggle,[1] surefootedness or physical stability,[2] the personal safety of

[1] These, as well as subsequent quotes are taken from Thucydides and Richard Crawley, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, A Newly Revised Edition of the Richard Crawley Translation with Maps, Annotations, Appendices, and Encyclopedic Index (New York: Free Press, 2008). Thuc. 3.105, 7.24, 7.38, 7.77.

[2] Thuc. 3.22.

agents,[1] the certainty of plots and plans,[2] and to speak of political unrest and violence within a state.[3] Indeed, within Thucydides' text we can even see evidence of what we might reasonably call 'securitization'.[4] In stark contrast to the *securitas* of Cicero, Augustine and Calvin, *asphaleia* is a concept that spans political events and military concerns, coming far closer to congruity with modern notions of security than its Latin counterpart. For this reason, how Hobbes chose to translate the Greek term is all the more important—as we will see, 'security' was for Hobbes not applicable to such political events, instead remaining an expression of a personal, emotive tranquillity.



6. Hobbes and Security

Despite the chronological and thematic difference between *securitas* and its supposed ancient Greek and modern English counterparts, there is a staple assumption of English genealogies of security that provides a bridge between the classical romance language and politics of the ancient world, and the modern English use of the term, and that assumption can be summed up as thus; when Hobbes described a life without security was poor brutish and short, he had Thucydides in mind.

The idea that Hobbes had appropriated *asphaleia* is proffered in the context of an English genealogy of security by J.F.M Arenas as late as 2008, but has since stuck fast.[5] John Hamilton follows suit, claiming that "…Hobbes deploys

[1] Thuc. 8.39, 8.41.
[2] Thuc. 8.66.
[3] Thuc. 4.68, 4.71, 6.56, 8.24.
[4] Thuc. 3.82.
[5] See footnote 38 in Arenas, "From Homer to Hobbes".

'security' in the sense of Thucydides' *asphaleia*—namely, as the stability that follows removal from the worrisome state of nature".[1] Later, Jonathan Herington largely followed in Arenas' footsteps, claiming that "….for Hobbes 'security' (and *securitas*) refer to the Thucydidean concept rather than the Epicurean affect".[2] Beyond these examples, Hobbes as the carrier for Thucydean 'security' has been enshrined in the wider genealogy of security by many others.[3]

On the surface, there is good reason to believe such is the case. Hobbes' first major written work was the translation of Thucydides' *History* into English, an endeavour he started not simply so that the English people might appreciate the text itself, but also so that they might share in the political lessons Hobbes felt were instilled in the *History*. Writing on the profound effect Thucydides had on his philosophy in his later autobiography, Hobbes exclaimed that Thucydides:

> …Showed me how inept a thing democracy is, and how much more wisdom has one man than a crowd. I translated this writer so that he might speak to the English and make them shun the rhetoricians they were about to consult.[4]

However while Hobbes might well have seen himself operating in the tradition of Thucydides, this inheritance did not extend to 'security'; something that has failed to make an impact on much modern scholarship. This is especially apparent in the case of Hamilton, who claims that Hobbes' translation of Thucydides "…consistently renders *asphaleia* as security"—albeit with no examination of where such rendering occurs.[5]

Indeed when the translation of *asphaleia* and the uses of 'security' by Hobbes are compared, we find that neither Arenas, Hamilton nor Herington are justified in their claims; there is no evidence that Hobbes appropriated *asphaleia*

[1] Hamilton, *Security*, 64.

[2] Herrington, "Philosophy", 26.

[3] Gilpin, "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism", 287–308; Derian, "The Value of Security"; Burke, "Aporias of Security", 1–27; Robin Sowerby, "Thomas Hobbes's Translation of Thucydides", *Translation and Literature* 7, no. 2 (1998): 147–69; Arenas, "From Homer to Hobbes".

[4] Verse 80 of Hobbes' autobiography—printed text of this particular work is not readily accessible, however a digital source that includes English translation and a commmentary can be found in *Tomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis Vita carmine expressa, authore seipso, scripta anno MDCLXXIII*, ed. Karl Maurer (Irving: The University of Dallas, s.d.), accessed June 30, 2025, `http://udallasclassics.org/wp-content/uploads/maurer_files/Hobbes.pdf`.

[5] Hamilton, *Security*, 59.

in his translation either lexically or conceptually. As to Hamilton's claim that the Greek is consistently rendered as 'security' there stands overwhelming evidence to the contrary. *Asphaleia* and its declensions appear 29 times in Thucydides' text, however Hobbes only uses 'security' as a translation for *six* of those cases.[1] When it comes to the Greek 'secure' (*asphales)*, of the 53 uses by Thucydides, one is given as 'security',[2] and four are rendered as 'secure' by Hobbes—the rest are given as other terms.[3]

The picture is further complicated when we examine the times Hobbes used the word 'security' in his English translation, but to gloss for a term *other than asphaleia*. 'Security' appears 24 times in Hobbes' translation but as stated above, only six of those uses correspond to *asphaleia* and two to *asphales*. Essentially, Hobbes rendered *asphales/ia* as security less than 10% of the time.

Of course, given our awareness of the several meanings *asphaleia* could carry, we have good reason to expect Hobbes' poor strike rate in translating asphaleia to security. Where 'security' has an emotional inference of calm or assurance, asphaleia has three key senses, two of which are quite practically focussed. It should come as no surprise then that for the instances of *asphaleia* Hobbes does not translate as 'security', he instead most often uses 'safe', 'safety' or a similar term.

The notion of being 'safe' from physical harm is given in sixteen passages, making it far and away the most 'consistent rendering' of the term.[4] Also common is 'assurance', 'assure' and 'to make sure',[5] as well as a smattering of other uses, such as 'steadfast'[6] and 'strong'.[7] Between these two avenues of translation we can therefore see the three main senses of asphaleia—safety for the polity, assurance against falsehoods or mistakes, and steadfast in the very literal sense

[1] The following were found using Tufts University online classics tool (`https://perseus.tufts.edu.au`), which has searchable texts for both the original Greek and Hobbes' translation (in its 1843 printing). The passages in question are Thuc. 3.12, 3.82, 6.55, 6.56, 6.59, 6.87, 8.66.

[2] Thuc. 6.24.

[3] Thuc. 5.7, 6.23, 7.777, 8.2.

[4] 'Safe', 'safety', or 'save' (the latter in the context of 'saving' from harm) is used in Thuc. 1.75, 1.120, 1.137, 3.13, 3.56, 4.57, 4.68, 4.128, 5.107, 5.111, 6.78, 6.83 and 8.46; 'kept from danger' or similar is used in 2.75 and 6.24, and 'protection' in 1.40.

[5] Thuc. 2.11, 5.97, 5.98, 8.1.

[6] Thuc. 3.22.

[7] Thuc. 2.44.

of not falling over. Indeed Hobbes' translation is testament to his careful appreciation of the Greek language far more to his appropriation of any Thucydean 'security'.

Given the above, we can start to see more clearly the limited overlap security and *asphaleia* had at the time of Hobbes. Beyond the notion of certainty and assurance, *asphaleia* stood quite apart from the scope of the security, and while in the present day the difference may be less pronounced, at the time of Hobbes' translation such was far from the case. In fact, all of Hobbes' employments of 'security'—both when rendered for *asphales/ia* or rendered for other words—express a notion of assurance in a practical context; where 'assurance' suffices for issues of rhetoric or prediction, Hobbes uses security in regards to the confidence one can have in an event or activity.

When used for *asphaleia*, security is often found in regards to plots and plans—indeed *half* of Hobbes' glosses between security and *asphaleia* appear in a single chapter in which the narrator tells the story of the assassination plot of Aristogaton and Harmodius in book six.[1] As well as this, 'security' is used when speaking of Nicias' expedition to Syracuse,[2] when talking of the chance of victory in Syracuse,[3] and the greater degree of certainty the oligarchs had in the revolution at Samos.[4] In all these cases, the employment of 'security' does not speak to the political realities of the actions, but rather the 'certainty' one could have in their success—it spoke of risks and doubts, not policies and outcomes.

This leaves us with a role for security in filling a gap between the 'safety' and 'assurance' of *asphaleia* in which it is demarcated by the assurance of practical or physical concerns. Aware of both its physical and rhetorical applications, its seems reasonable that Hobbes would see room between the two and seek to render it into an English term that might bridge that gap; safety being the practical issues of harm, but security the resultant frame of mind—the 'assurance' that comes with or from a practical or tangible outcome.

The role of 'security' in illustrating a concern (or lack thereof) for a practical outcome is highlighted by the way Hobbes uses security for words *other* than

[1] Thuc. 6.55, 6.56, 6.59.
[2] Thuc. 6.24.
[3] Thuc. 6.87.
[4] Thuc. 8.66.

asphaleia. Counter to what is put forward by Arenas and Hamilton, not only was 'security' not the most common rendering of *asphaleia* in Hobbes' translation, but it was more often employed to render an entirely different word than either *asphaleia* or *asphales* in Hobbes' translation. Out of Hobbes' sixteeen remaining uses of 'security' in his translation, the vast majority refer to terms of trust and assurance, especially in regards to treaties, agreements or plans. Five uses are rendered for ἄδειαν (freedom from fear), especially in the context of an agreement[1] Three uses are rendered for πιστὰ (trust, to be trusted or believed), once again in the context of an agreement,[2] and three used for moments of 'strong' (ἐχυρόν) 'firm' or 'assured' (βεβαιότητα) confidence.[3]

Finally, there are a number of uses rendered for more formal expressions of such agreements; three for being under terms of truce (ὑπόσπονδοι),[4] one for διηγγυημένοι (to post bail),[5] and one for being 'without plots' (ἀνεπιβούλευτον).[6] This leaves us with the overwhelming sense that for Hobbes' translation, 'security' stands far more as an indicator of certainty than it does as physical safety or as some specific political instrument or concept. Far from being appropriated from Thucydides' own notion of *asphaleia*, Hobbes instead does what any good translator should—tries to give *asphaleia* the full breadth of its meaning using the common words at his disposal, instead of simply glossing a single term across contexts.

Hobbes therefore uses his English vocabulary in a way familiar to the audience he hoped would be reading Thucydides for the first time, sometimes giving *asphaleia* as safety from physical attack, sometimes as assurance of a fact or idea, and sometimes as security—the peace of mind that comes from a provision against risk. Contra to the claims of Arenas, Hamilton and others, 'Security' in the text is employed not as a neologism, nor as a specific term with political or philosophical grounding coming either from Thucydides or Hobbes himself. Instead it was used in the same terms as Shakespeare some 40 years before ("He saide sir, you should procure him better assurance then Bardolfe,

[1] Thuc. 4.14, 4.92, 7.29, 8.76, 8.81.
[2] Thuc. 3.46, 3.60, 3.112.
[3] Thuc. 2.7, 4.51, 5.109.
[4] Thuc. 1.103, 6.88, 8.98.
[5] Thuc. 3.70.
[6] Thuc. 3.37.

he would not take his band and yours, he liked not the securitie")[1] or the sense still imperfectly preserved by stock exchanges, alarm systems and deposits demanded by rental car agencies—something that brings confidence or assurance to a situation filled with doubt.

Not simply challenging the notion that Hobbes provides a link between the classic and modern notions of security, the examination into Hobbes' translation of Thucydides highlights the distance between Hobbes' security and more modern uses. Most pronounced in this regard is that where security might today be taken as a reasonable analogue for issues of physical safety (especially in the context of political or military matters), security for Hobbes remains attached to *feelings*—feelings of certainty and confidence, with safety remaining a separate—albeit allied—concept.

As well as being highlighted by Hobbes' selectivity in translating *asphaleia* outlined above, this separation between physical safety and feeling secure is evident in Hobbes' own political philosophy. Chapter 6, article 3 of *De Cive* gives us the clearest conception not only of the basis of fear and assurance that sits at the heart of Hobbes' security, but also the specific relationship said security has to physical safety and defence.[2] Security for Hobbes is related to physical protection, however it is fundamentally distinct from it; provision should be made for the physical protection of citizens to ensure security,[3] however it is not the provision itself that brings security, nor is security a state in which the citizen is free from harm.

Therefore, following the dominant English meaning of the word in Hobbes' day, security is a guarantee against a risk—in this case, the guarantee of state power against the risk of individual desires. Such a reading conforms to Schmitt's own notion of Hobbes' security. For Schmitt, "the starting point of Hobbes' construction of the state is fear", however through the "mortal god" of the leviathan, citizens are made to feel "secure in their physical existence" from the war of all

[1] See 2.2.33 in William Shakespeare, *The Second Part of Henrie the Fourth Continuing to His Death, and Coronation of Henrie the Fift. VVith the Humours of Sir Iohn Falstaffe, and Swaggering Pistoll. As It Hath Been Sundrie Times Publikely Acted by the Right Honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine His Seruants.* (London, 1600), accessed June 30, 2025, `http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A11974.0001.001`.

[2] *De Cive* 6.3. All subsequent quotations will be taken from Thomas Hobbes, *Thomas Hobbes: Collected Works*, vol. 9–10 (United Kingdom: Delphi Classics, 2019).

[3] *De Cive* 5.6, 6.3.

against all.[1] We can also see the distance between the physical and emotional in Hobbes conception of security in the famous passage in Hobbes' *Leviathan* in which life without security is described:

> Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such condition, there is… continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.[2]

'Security' in this context has as its prime consideration the absence not of physical threat, but of fear. Put simply, security is for Hobbes the assurance or certainty that accompanies the absence of fear, not the practical considerations of immediate safety, whether it be the safety of an individual or the nation.

Thus beyond the differing *lexical* inheritance of Hobbes and Thucydides, Hobbes' notion of security also demonstrates an incongruous intent that undermines any notion of a shared political tradition of security. Where Hobbes famously ascribes security (a lack of fear) as part and parcel of the Leviathan, Thucydides postulates in no uncertain terms that fear of death or violence is not efficacious—and indeed can be prejudicial—to limiting violent or antisocial action. In Thucydides' work, people who no longer fear death are volatile, prone to extremes and subversive to common interests and reason,[3] and in cases of self-determination, insurmountable force is ignored.[4] As Peter Ahrensdorf explains:

[1] Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 91–92.
[2] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1.13.20-30. All quotations will be taken from Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Noel Malcolm, vol. 3–5 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2014), 192.
[3] Thuc. 3.82.
[4] Famously so in the Melian dialogue (see Thuc. 5.112 for example).

Thucydides does not share Hobbes' hope that the fear of violent death can lead to humans to master their destabilizing hopes. Thucydides argues instead that human hopes, especially for immortality, tend to overwhelm human fears, even of violent death. Hobbes is hopeful precisely because he believes that the power of hope can be tamed by fear, whereas Thucydides is not hopeful precisely because he believes hope is invisible.[1]

Not simply a difference in ideas of hope, fear or human nature, this discrepancy between Hobbes and Thucydides has a huge impact on how each construe political organisation—and thus the security a polity may enjoy. Where both men see hopes and desires as destabilising politics, their differing securities seek to deal with this destabilisation differently; where Thucydides sees *asphaleia* as a balance of competing wills, Hobbes argues for a security that is only achieved when will is subjugated altogether.

As we have seen, Hobbes gives us no basis on which to effectively reconcile the 'classic' and 'modern' streams of security. However in his stead we can examine a recorded use of the term roughly contemporaneous with Hobbes that better satisfies the challenges raised by established genealogies; one that more effectively bridges the notions of balance and assurance, as well as having a more distinctly 'quaker turned billionaire' flavour. We will find this usage upon the lips, quills and printing presses of the 'Levellers'[2]—radical puritan democrats of the English Civil War, of the same theological stock of Schmitt's quaker.

7. Levellers and Agitators

In June 1647, the English nation was bloodied and broken from five years of civil war. After relations between King and Parliament had broken down in 1642, the country had descended into chaos; however hope of reprieve had

[1] Peter J. Ahrensdorf, "The Fear of Death and the Longing for Immortality: Hobbes and Thucydides on Human Nature and the Problem of Anarchy", *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 03 (September 2000): 580, https://doi.org/10.2307/2585832.

[2] As with many terms of political identity, 'Leveller' is not clearly defined, nor was not one readily chosen by those to whom the label was applied. While the history and specificity of the term is complex, for our purposes here 'Leveller' will be used as a broad term for those 'radical' democrats that believed in universal or near universal male suffrage, and in the supremacy of popularly elected sovereignty (rather than the supremacy of king or lords.)

come when the leaders of the parliamentary army—colloquially known as the 'Grandees'—turned their attention to two important negotiations in an effort to reconstitute the English nation.

The first of these negotiations was with the King; while they had fought to hold the monarch to account, the Grandees had no intention of ending the monarchy, and as such, they negotiated with the king to find terms under which to reform the existing system of government. Secondly, the Army leadership sought to convince the parliament that the soldier's pay, now terribly in arrears, be delivered so that the soldiers may return home. Lacking guarantees from parliament that they would receive their pay, or be legally indemnified of their actions in the war, the soldiers refused to disband.

It is in regard to the second issue that we see security in the public forum, with an open letter from the Grandees to parliament exhorting them to pay the soldiers saying: "We shall, before disbanding, proceed, in our own and the Kingdoms behalf, to propound, and plead, for some provision, for our, and the Kingdoms satisfaction, and future security'.[1]

This usage in itself was not politically expressive, however its use by the army leadership was ominous. Not long after the publication of the above, the Grandees' secret negotiations with the King became known to the common soldiers. Upon learning that their leaders were seeking to reinstall the monarch they had deposed, the common soldiery were awash with indignation and fear; no longer satisfied the Grandees' represented their interests, they devised their own pamphlet in order to advertise their requests to parliament and the common people.

In an open letter entitled *The Case of the Armie Truly stated*, we see a similar concern for 'securitie' for indemnity and pay in arrears, however additionally that extends also to political rights:

No such Indempnitie, as provideth security, for the quiet, ease, or safety of the Soldiers, disbanded or to be disbanded. No securitie for our Arreers, or provision for present

[1] This and the following quotes come from The British Library, "Thomason Tracts", s.d., `https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/thomason-tracts` (currently unavailable; archived at `https://web.archive.org/web/20230326204434/https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/thomason-tracts`, accessed June 30, 2025). Here from 4.8 [Signed by John Rushworth, attributed to Henry Ireton], [Declaration of the Army], *A Declaration, or, Representation From his Excellency, Sir Thomas Fairfax, And the Army under his command, Humbly tendred to the parliament* (14 June 1647).

pay, to inable the Army to subsist, without burthening the distressed Country. And in respect to the rights and freedomes of our selves and the people, that we declared we would insist upon, we conceive there is no kind or degree of satisfaction given[1]

This addition of political rights into the concerns that might be made 'secure' would quickly take hold in radical democratic literature; indeed in a later passage, we can already see security used not simply in regards to the dispute between the army and parliament, but rather as a blanket attribute of the nation as a whole:

> We never did, nor doe regard the worst of evills or mischiefes that can befall our selves in comparison to the consequence of them to the poore Nation, or to the security of common right and freedom.

Here right and freedom is at risk, however not in the context of the army's settlement. Instead, right and freedom is at risk in a general, national sense, its threat a function of unspecified 'evils and mischiefs' of parliament. Security is therefore still a guarantee of sorts, but it is decoupled from the necessity of an immediate arrangement or transaction—like the pay dispute—and instead seen as an attribute or possession of the nation that can be destabilised by said mischiefs. This use gives us a window into how security could make the jump from being a function of a specific agreement (as in the Grandees' text), or as an emotive attribute of being 'free from cares' (such as in Hobbes' work) to being a political instrument in its own right; it is here incomplete, but the makings of the shift have begun.

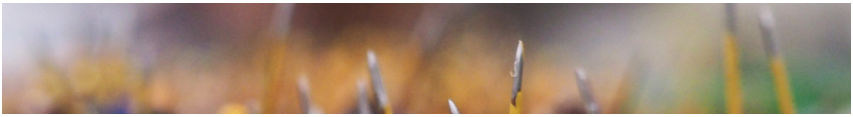
Within a month of the Soldier's letter, civilian radicals had met with the soldiers and put forward *An Agreement of the People*, a text that sought to lay out in practical terms what sort of polity post-monarchic England should be, and how the 'security' of rights and freedoms was to be practically achieved. Essentially a proto-constitution written on the basis of near-universal male suffrage, sovereignty based on popular election, and set terms for parliaments, the *Agreement* would have security as a central concept.

The realisation of that security saturated the various political levels on which the *Agreement* sought to operate. The *Agreement* did not simply seek to offer

[1] Ibid., 4.12 [Signed by Several People, but attributed to John Wildman], *The Case of the Armie Truly stated* (15 October 1647).

"security, to save you or us harmlesse, from what another Parliament may determine",[1] but also made clear that such security was to be practically realised as the role of government through the drafting and maintenance of such an agreement:

> Therefore both necessity for your security in these freedomes, that are essentiall to your well-being, and wofull experience of the manifold miseries and distractions that have been lengthened out since the war ended, through want of such a settlement, requires this Agreement[2]



Thus security is not simply the guarantee of governance, but is also realised through the governance itself; the *agreement* grants security, and *is* security. Where for Hobbes security was the outcome of the leviathan, here security is both outcome and instrument—it is the agreement, and what the agreement delivers. Operating in a world in which political power was justified either through force or divinely ordained kingship, the radical democrats of the civil war instead sought to reconstruct politics on the basis of agreement and consent. With this new political construction came the need for a different type of security than was offered by authoritarians such as Hobbes. Security would no longer be the gift given to each individual by an absolute power, but instead a practical force that not only underwrote individuals, but also created and maintained the common political space. It is this 'corporate' element of the Levellers' security that is of the most important to us here; where the security of Hobbes was to be found in the fears and hopes of the individual, with the Levellers we can see a security approaching that of our own today. Against the *securitas* that came before, the Leveller texts hold a security that might be called truly

[1] Ibid., T.115; [Several Hands], *An Agreement of the People for a firme and present Peace, upon grounds of common-right and freedome* (3 November 1647).
[2] Ibid.

'national'—a security that stood apart from an individual effort or event, and instead determined and was determined by a polity as a whole.

However the security of the theologically and politically radical Levellers was not to survive long in England; in both politics and religion, they were of the ilk would remain oppressed in the old world and would thus seek freedom in the new. However the invocation of security by the Levellers was so effective at the time that there is good evidence to suggest that the term was first co-opted, then attacked, by Cromwell and the dictatorship that followed.[1]

Not long after the Commonwealth's creation, Cromwell engaged noted propagandist Marchmont Nedham—previously employed by the royalists—to work for the newly formed Commonwealth. In one of the first texts produced under this new arrangement, security is repeatedly placed in antithesis to the Leveller project. Security comes from the protection offered by an absolute state, not "the ambition of others".[2] As quick as it arrived, the political security championed by the radicals is removed, and those who constitute the leviathan receive "a liberty unto all that are in power to provide for their owne security"—specifically their security against those who "may be handled as Publique Enemies".[3]

Even more emphatic is Nedham's invocation of what security means for the common people:

> Every man would be content with things as they are; for, the Common people (as the *Poet* saith);—*Duas tantum res anxius optat, Panem, & Circenses*[4]—will be satisfied with Bread and Quietnesse, rather than hazard their Ease and Security, to serve the Ambition of others.[5]

Against the hard fought 'common' security of the Levellers, Nedham invokes the classical *securitas*, replete with verse from the Roman poet Juvenal; security here is the peaceful and carefree life enjoyed by subjects of benevolent rule—it is

[1] Ibid., 4.18 John Wildman (with William Walwyn), *Putney Projects. Or the Old Serpent in a new Forme* (30 December 1647).
[2] Ibid., 7.3 Marchamont Nedham, *The Case of the Common-wealth of England stated* (8 May, 1650).
[3] Ibid.
[4] From Juvenal: "Only two things will [the common man] worry about: bread and circus games".
[5] "Thomason Tracts", T.220; Marchamont Nedham, *The Case of the Common-wealth of England stated* (8 May, 1650).

not agreements and public reason, but is instead quite literally 'bread and circus games'. More poignantly, however, the 'common' security Nedham advertised was not the result of a national effort or political agreement, nor was it an attribute of a distinctly political act or concern; rather, it had returned to the emotive, personal frame of the security of old.

We can see therefore that 'security' as a practical political outcome—the security of a nation, borne from policy—comes much more readily from the democratic Levellers much more readily than the monarchic and authoritarian Hobbes. The question then becomes; why is it that 20th and 21st century political theorists, often operating in liberal democratic schemas, so readily accept Hobbes as the vehicle by which security is conveyed into modern political theory? In order to propose one possible answer, we will consider how the Leveller's security endured in the form that it did, before 'restitching' the genealogy through the wars (both cultural and military) of the early 20th century.

8. Reconciling the Classic and the Modern

In England, the Levellers and the security they sought were ultimately unsuccessful; however such concepts were much more readily embraced in the United States. Even later English political theorists who furthered popular franchise, legal equality and 'security' would be far more immediately influential in the US than England; writers such as John Locke and Thomas Paine were influential in the formulation of the US constitution, while truly popular franchise in England would remain unrealised for years to follow.

In both the colonies and the early United States the language of political security could be found in laws, policies and institutions, as well as in the writings of political leaders and intellectuals.[1] A prime example of this continuation is

[1] National Archives, "Declaration of Independence: A Transcription", 2015, `https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript`; *The Security of the Rights of Citizens in the State of Connecticut Considered* (Hartford: Barzillai Hudson and George Goodwin, 1792); Delaware, *Anno Millesimo Septingentesimo et Septuagesime Octavo. An Act for the Further Security of the Government* (Lancaster: Francis Bailey, 1778); John Henry Hobart, *The Security of a Nation. A Sermon, Preached in Trinity Church, in the City of New-York, on Thursday, April 13, A.D. 1815; Being the Day Appointed by the President of the United States, and the Governor of the State of New-York, as a Day of Thanksgiving*

Thomas Paine, who when speaking to English audiences regarding governance in the American colonies said that their success showed that "The instant formal government is abolished, society begins to act: a general association takes place, and common interest produces common security".[1]

The work of Locke, Paine, and the political thought of men like Jefferson, Franklin, Hamilton and Washington would go to define the political environment of the United States; as such, the security first championed by the Levellers in the chaos of the English Civil War would become part of the American political psyche; in the laws and legislatures of various colonial governments,[2] and in the language of politics.[3]

Thus we can see then a tentative route through which we can both acknowledge the broader truths in both the 'classical' and 'modern' genealogies of security, whilst also reconciling them more effectively. By considering earlier English political usage of the term more carefully, we can see the route through which the more classically loaded term 'security' became a politically valuable concept in the United States, yet retained a novelty and distance to continental statesmen and political philosophers until the early 20th century. To complete the operation, we can stitch the two streams of genealogy back up; by demonstrating how the early emergence of security in the 1930s marries to both an American origin and a use that in congruous with the sort of security of the Levellers, we can better account for the inconsistencies that currently exist between these two streams of thought.

to Almightly God for the Various Public Mercies of His Providence, and Especially for the Restoration of the Blessings of Peace (New York: T. and J. Swords, 1815).

[1] Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 186.

[2] Delaware, *Anno Millesimo Septingentesimo et Septuagesime Octavo.*

[3] The American Presidency Project, "Thomas Jefferson: Eighth Annual Message", 2017, `http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29450`.

9. Trouble in the League

While we have furnished ourselves with a more cogent account of how security took on a distinct political flavour in certain Anglo polities, we must also restitch the term to its modern ubiquity; for that we can rely on a more conventional event that is already established within existing literature; the term's re-emergence in England and Europe as a result of Woodrow Wilson's efforts for peace following the First World War.[1]

Wilson's notion of security was encapsulated in his championing of the League of Nations and the 'collective security' it sought to bring to the world stage. On a fundamental level, the term sought to "…fulfil the same functions for the competing and conflicting ambitions beyond national frontiers as national government does for those within them".[2]

However such 'security' was a novelty to many others plying the world stage at the time; an issue that is on full display in the compendium of the 1934 and 1935 International Studies Conference, an academic outlet of the League of Nations. The focus of proceedings was consideration of 'collective security'; the exploration of "…what that idea consists and what is its historical and scientific value…"[3] That the peak international body of the day asked the question is itself telling; that they received such a wide variety of answers from the various member states is instructive.

Faced with the direct question of what the idea of security meant in such a political context, the responses of the participants are given nation by nation—the delegates representing each country providing their response as a group. As such, we are given an insight into each government's sentiment on the issue, as their statesmen and sanctioned academics respond to the question at hand.

While not being members of the League, the US still sent a delegation to the discussion—though they do not discuss the nature of security. Instead, the US

[1] Michael Sheehan, *International Security: An Analytical Survey* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), 6; Lloyd E. Ambrosius, "Wilson's League of Nations: Collective Security and National Independence", in *Wilsonianism: Woodrow Wilson and His Legacy in American Foreign Relations*, ed. Lloyd E. Ambrosius (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 51–64.

[2] Arthur Salter, *Security: Can We Retrieve It?* (London: Macmillan, 1939), 100.

[3] International Studies Conference, *Collective Security: a Record of the Seventh and Eighth International Studies Conferences, Paris 1934-London 1935*, ed. Maurice Bourquin (Paris: International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, 1936), 144.

delegation simply speaks of their strategic position, their rights and responsibilities, and their desires for co-operation on the world stage.[1] Similarly, Canada provides no explanation as to what security is (either as an objective fact or as a matter of their own perspective), and instead speaks of similarly practical matters, all of which are congruous with contemporary expectations of the term.[2]

However for the nations of the Old World—including the UK—It seems that 'security' was nebulous enough of a concept that it required explanation—or in some cases, pre-emptive deconstruction. The responses of England and the continental powers suggests a struggle with and against this new conception of security; with varying levels of interest, each nation seems to start from the basis of security as an individual, emotive idea, and attempts to stretch it to fit the new political concept. For France, security was "…the widespread feeling in the public opinion of a people that it has no reason to fear a foreign aggression, or at least that such an aggression is improbable or has little likelihood of success".[3] For the delegate of republican Spain, while they maintained security in the traditional sense spoke of individual hopes (tranquillity, absence of fear), political security must deal with collective human conduct; as such, social norms undergird the appearance of security, but security also becomes the "*guarantee of social normality*".[4]

It is the response of the Italian delegation, however, that is the most emphatic rejection of this 'security', with the reply highlighting how foreign the concept was to some on the continent. Led by Francesco Coppola, a long-time fascist and personal academic appointee of Mussolini, the Italian response is a damning indictment of the transposition of security onto a Europe that, in Coppola's conception at least, found the idea alien and unhelpful. Since the end of the World War and the establishment of the League, says Coppola, the "vaguely-outlined nightmare" of security has "…disturbed and distorted political intelligence" across Europe. While Coppola stops short of blaming the US by name, he is clear that this 'security' that Europe has become beholden to is

[1] Ibid., 100–127.
[2] Ibid., 49–66.
[3] Ibid., 66.
[4] Ibid., 159.

not the political reality of the continent, but an idea brought in from elsewhere and imposed upon an unwitting European community. For Coppola, security is not a fact of political life, but a 'sentiment', and the assumption that it could provide any 'guarantee' to politics absurd:

> Security, as it has been conceived and proposed thus far, that is to say, security thought of as an objective, absolute, automatic, universal, or at least guaranteed by everybody, by virtue of universal international texts, is a false idea. In the first place, security is not an objective fact; indeed, it is a sentiment.[1]

While the Italians are the only delegation actively standing against what the League's notion of security represents, they are not the only ones who take a stab at what they see as the etymological gymnastics required to convert this individual 'sentiment' into a political reality. Indeed despite the lingual proximity, it is England's definition that refuses to close the conceptual gap. For the English delegation, while they support in broad terms the aim of this new security, they evidently are not enamoured with the term used to describe it. To the request for an account of what the concept consists, the English respond that security, "In defiance as it were of etymology, will be taken here to be sufficiently defined as "freedom from insecurity".[2]

The English distance from the use of security in this context can be further explored in the attempts made by British MP Arthur Salter to explain the concept to a domestic audience. Salter, a public servant, politician and long-time supporter of pan-European government had spent time working in the US on behalf of the British government, as well as in Geneva working in the League of Nations Secretariat. In his 1939 book *Security: Can we Retrieve It?* Salter argues that the British nation adopts a series of measures in order to allay or mitigate the coming conflict—that it seeks to 'retrieve' security.

Importantly for our purposes, however, Salter feels it necessary to make plain what this 'security' is, explaining the concept to what he must presume is a largely uninitiated audience. Salter's security was specifically political; it described a state of affairs in which nations would reconcile "competing and conflicting ambitions" through agreement, law and mutual responsibility—essentially

[1] Ibid., 144.
[2] Ibid., 134.

to bring the same sort of domestic security advocated by the democratic tradition to the international stage.[1]

Further to the hypothesis that this politicised notion of security had a particular source, rather than being a broadly available concept is the fact that the concept that Salter is seeking to explain to his English audience is one that he identifies as having an essentially American origin. The League, as well as the notion of security it championed was according to Salter "mainly due" to Woodrow Wilson and his political position.[2]

Indeed Salter goes further to suggest that the security endeavour is one that is defined by the American psyche, a psyche that stands at odds with traditional British politics. For Salter's conception of the American outlook, the 'colonists' (as he calls them) desire to remove themselves from monarchy and aristocracy in order to found a new political order; a desire that presented a challenge to the international relationship between the US and Great Britain.[3]

Of course, this new political order was also at odds with the political conceptions of the fascist states of the time, such as Italy and Germany. Created as it was by agreement and acceptance, notions of absolute sovereignty and predetermined cultural necessities were at odds with the conciliatory aspect required to realise such security. As such, Salter argued, it would be foolish to assume that all nations would accept such 'security'.[4]

Ultimately Salter's view against the viability of fascist governments as maintainers of security can be seen not simply a practical one, but rather as a statement on the underlying differences in the 'security' of Thucydides and Hobbes, or of the Levellers and Cromwell. For Salter security was in essence the expansion of the 'agreement of the people' onto the global stage.[5] Thus nations that refused to be led by the apparatus of collective security could not meaningfully take part in that security, nor would they be interested in maintaining it; indeed Salter argues that the unqualified acceptance of nations that were not democracies was one of the major contributors to the League's failure.[6] For Salter and

[1] Salter, *Security*, 100.
[2] Ibid., 111.
[3] Ibid., 26.
[4] Ibid., 99.
[5] Ibid., 106, 382.
[6] Ibid., 135–40.

the politics he argued for, security was a condition enjoyed when constituent actors came together in self-regulation; for the likes of Coppola, security was not a state that could be realised, but 'a sentiment'. Security as a social contract, a balancing act, a political agreement on one hand, and security as being individual, emotive, 'without care' on the other.

10. Conclusion

The reconciliation of classic and modern genealogies of security is not simply desirable from the perspective of academic novelty, it is an important step in further clarifying what security is in modern polities today. As we have seen, the assumption that security has a clear value throughout the entirety of the western tradition is problematic—however neither is security disjointed from the political past. That the contours of this journey are defined by issues of political participation and authority, of emotive concerns against practical outcomes, should give us some indication of the importance of clarity in regards to the inheritance of security within English speaking polities.

There is certainly more work to be done to properly interrogate security as a political concept in the wider English-speaking tradition (the absence of any Anglo-Saxon inheritance in the consideration of Anglo political tradition is a major issue, for example). However the deconstruction of the Hobbes-Thucydides relationship is an important first step to creating space in which a more complete understanding of the genealogy of security can be formed. As we have seen, there is little to justify the claim that Hobbes is speaking in a grand tradition of classical security, and indeed much to suggest that he is specifically avoiding such speech.

By decoupling the presumed interface between Hobbes and Thucydides, we are forced to refocus on the novel aspects of security in the early modern period—a task that brings more clarity to how the term we use today has reached its powerful position. Further, this decoupling has ramifications for accounts of certain Security Studies methodologies, most notably the various strains of realism and many postmodern accounts as well. The removal of a 'direct' translational link does not (nor should not) remove the possibility of a classically inherited position of 'security', however the removal of said link should encourage a more

cogent appreciation of exactly what is being tracked. The presumption of the Hobbes-Thucydides connection seems to have largely rested on an assumed lexical link; this link may need replacement, or at least bolstering.

The constructive effect of this effort however, has been the sketching of a more coherent model for the movement of 'security' through its various modes of political relevance. The tension between 'classical' and 'modern' accounts of security's genealogy can be more effectively reconciled. The pamphlets and speeches of the Levellers are not the only piece of this puzzle, however their integration into the story can relieve some of the more acute tensions within existing literature.

Lastly, given the ubiquity and power of security within both theory and political practice, the appreciation of its foundation in identity gives an opportunity to better guard ourselves against an unwitting conceptual violence. Whether in the context of methodological debates between realism and its detractors, between liberal and authoritarian governance, or between dominant and subaltern cultures, the historical and cultural inheritance of security holds the capacity to shape and reshape how that 'security' is felt. We must therefore pay close attention to how security has been constituted—we must resist the urge to take it for granted, and instead be open to appreciate the concrete events and issues that constitute its inheritance.

Beyond being more historically rigorous, the alternative genealogical path plotted here also holds a richer line of enquiry in regards to the examination of the hegemony of security. Instead of being a broad, monolithic constant in western thought, security could well be seen as the creation of a specific cultural group. By more adequately engaging with that point, we can more easily appreciate how the concept may have followed power structures, been imposed on others, and be reified by particular notions of order throughout our shared history.

Most of all, a more critical examination of where security has come from encourages a more critical examination of how the term has been forced upon, into and against peoples, politics and societies miles away from the Anglo-liberal society from which it was created. Post-colonial critiques of security and its various schools and theories have come with increasing regularity, and it is hoped that this effort in examining the concept itself might assist this process. Through historical consideration, we can better identify what we have taken

for granted, and what we are yet to appreciate. Losing sight of this history runs the risk of needless abstraction, reification, and theoretical colonisation.[1]

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[1] Kent, "Reconfiguring Security", 343–61.

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