

Rights in Hobbes

1 Euclid's *Elements* Book 1: Definitions

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| 1. A point is that which has no part. | lines falling upon it from one point among those lying within the figure equal one another. |
| 2. A line is breadthless length. | |
| 3. The ends of a line are points. | 20. Of trilateral figures, an equilateral triangle is that which has its three sides equal, an isosceles triangle that which has two of its sides alone equal, and a scalene triangle that which has its three sides unequal. |
| 4. A straight line is a line which lies evenly with the points on itself. | |
| 15. A circle is a plane figure contained by one line such that all the straight | |

2 Euclid's *Elements* Book 1: Postulates

Let the following be postulated:

1. To draw a straight line from any point to any point.
2. To produce a finite straight line continuously in a straight line.
3. To describe a circle with any center and radius.
4. That all right angles equal one another.
5. That, if a straight line falling on two straight lines makes the interior angles on the same side less than two right angles, the two straight lines, if produced indefinitely, meet on that side on which are the angles less than the two right angles.

3 Euclid's *Elements* Book 1: Proposition 1

To construct an equilateral triangle on a given finite straight line.

Let AB be the given finite straight line.

It is required to construct an equilateral triangle on the straight line AB.

Describe the circle BCD with center A and radius AB. Again describe the circle ACE with center B and radius BA. Join the straight lines CA and CB from the point C at which the circles cut one another to the points A and B. (Postulates 1 and 3)

Now, since the point A is the center of the circle CDB, therefore AC equals AB.

Again, since the point B is the center of the circle CAE, therefore BC equals BA. (Definition 15)

But AC was proved equal to AB, therefore each of the straight lines AC and BC equals AB. (Common notion 1)

And things which equal the same thing also equal one another, therefore AC also equals BC.

Therefore the three straight lines AC, AB, and BC equal one another.

Therefore the triangle ABC is equilateral, and it has been constructed on the given finite straight line AB. (Definition 20)

4 Justice as giving each his own

I was presently advertised from the very word *justice*, (which signifies a steady will of giving every one his own), that my first enquiry was to be, from whence it proceeded that any man should call anything rather his *own*, than *another man's*. And when I found that this proceeded not from nature, but consent; (for what nature at first laid forth in common, men did afterwards distribute into several *impropriations*); I was conducted from thence to another inquiry; namely, to what end and upon what impulsives, when all was equally every man's in common, men did rather think it fitting that every man should have his inclosure. (*De Cive* [1641], Epistle dedicatory, ¶ 9)

the ordinary definition of justice in the Schools [is -m]g] ... that *justice is the constant will of giving to every man his own*. And therefore where there is no *own*, that is, no propriety, there is no injustice; and where there is no coercive power erected, that is, where there is no commonwealth, there is no propriety; all men having right to all things: therefore where there is no commonwealth, there nothing is unjust. (*Leviathan*, [1651] 15.3)

5 What does "A has a right to X" mean?

1. Liberty: A has no obligation not to X.

Example: A has no duties that forbid her from entering the house.

2. Claim: Someone else, B, owes a duty to A concerning X.

Example: B has a duty not to interfere with A's entering her own house.

3. Power: A has the ability to do X.

Example: A is capable of selling the house, transferring the rights to someone else.

4. Immunity: Someone else, B, lacks the ability to do X to A.

Example: B is incapable of selling A's house. Any attempts to do so would be null and void.

6 The right to all things (*Leviathan* 14.4)

1. Suppose there is such a thing as justice in the state of nature. (We are supposing this in order to see if a contradiction follows; if it does, the supposition must be wrong.)
2. Then people in the state of nature would have things as their own. (The ordinary definition of "justice," see above)
3. Then people in the state of nature would have *exclusive claim rights* to some things. (From the meaning of having something as "one's own".)
4. Everyone has a right to use any thing that they think will help to preserve their lives. (The right of nature, *Leviathan* 14.1.)
5. The state of nature is so dangerous that several people will think they need to use any particular thing to preserve their lives, especially when the "thing" is someone's life. (*Leviathan* chapter 13.)
6. Therefore, in the state of nature, several people would have the same right to use any thing, meaning they would all be at liberty to use it. (This follows from points 4 and 5.)
7. Point 6 contradicts point 2. (2 says there would be *some* things that only one person is at liberty to use; 6 says there would be *no* things that only one person is at liberty to use.)
8. Since the original supposition leads to a contradiction, it must be false. Therefore, there is no such thing as justice in the state of nature. (Assuming that justice involves having things as one's own.)