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The Citizen (De Cive)

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Excerpts from *De Cive (The Citizen)*

By Thomas Hobbes

[Hobbes, Thomas. *De Cive (The Citizen)*. Translated from Latin into English by Thomas Hobbes. 1642. In *Thomas Hobbes, Man and Citizen*. Edited by Bernard Gert. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books. 1972. Reprint, Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing Company. 1991.]

The Citizen, Part I, Of Liberty:

I, 3: For if we look on men full grown, and consider how brittle the frame of our human body is ... and how easy a matter it is, even for the weakest man to kill the strongest: there is no reason why any man ... should conceive himself made by nature above others. ... All men therefore among themselves are by nature equal; the inequality we now discern, hath its spring from civil law.

I, 7: For every man is desirous of what is good for him, and shuns what is evil, but chiefly the chiefest of natural evils, which is death ... It is therefore [not] against the dictates of true reason, for a man to use all his endeavors to preserve and defend his body and the members thereof from death and sorrows. But that which is not contrary to right reason, that all men account to be done justly, and with right. Neither by the word *right* is anything signified, than that liberty which every man hath to make use of his natural faculties according to right reason. Therefore, the first foundation of natural right is this, *that every man as much as in him lies endeavor to protect his life and members*. (Hobbes's emphasis)

II, 1 - 2: Therefore the law of nature, that I may define it, is the dictate of right reason, conversant about those things which are either to be done or omitted for the constant preservation of life and members ... But the first and fundamental law of nature is, *that peace is to be sought after, where it may be found; and where not, there to provide ourselves for helps of war* ... the rest are derived from this, and they direct the ways to peace or self-defence. (Hobbes's emphasis)

II, 3: But one of the natural laws derived from this fundamental one is this: *that the right of all men to all things ought not to be retained; but that some certain rights ought to be transferred or relinquished*. (Hobbes's emphasis)

III, 1: Another of the laws of nature is to *perform contracts, or to keep trust*. (Hobbes' emphasis)

III, 29: *The laws of nature are immutable and eternal*: what they forbid, can never be lawful; what they command, can never be unlawful. For *pride, ingratitude, breach of contracts (or injury), inhumanity, contumely*, will never be lawful, nor the contrary virtues to these ever unlawful ... as they are considered in the court of conscience, where they oblige and are laws. (Hobbes's emphasis)

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The Citizen, Part II, Of Dominion:

XIV, 3: Now *natural liberty* is a right not constituted but allowed by the laws. For the *laws* being removed, our *liberty* is absolute. This is first restrained by the *natural* and *divine laws*; the residue is bounded by the *civil law*; and what remains, may again be restrained by the constitutions of particular towns and societies. There is a great difference between *law* and *right*. For law is a *fetter*, right is *freedom*; and they differ like contraries. (Hobbes's emphasis)

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