Introduction

Thomas Hobbes 1588-1679  
John Locke 1632-1704  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau 1712-1778  
Immanuel Kant 1724-1804
Introduction

1. What do they mean by freedom?

2. What kind of value do they take freedom to have?

3. Why do they think that freedom has this kind of value?

4. What political arrangements do they think are necessary to achieve freedom?
Introduction


‘The Light of humane minds is Perspicuous Words.’

(*Leviathan*, Chapter 5, T 36)


‘This part of T.H.’s discourse hangs together like a sick man’s dreams.’

(Bishop Bramhall, *Defence of True Liberty*, C 58)
‘Liberty, or Freedome, signifieth (properly) the absence of Opposition; (by Opposition, I mean externall Impediments of motion;) and may be applied no lesse to Irrational, and Inanimate creatures.’

(*Leviathan*, Chapter 21, T 145)

X has the *freedom* to \( \varphi \) if and only if...

...there is no *external constraint* on X’s \( \varphi \)-ing.
‘…when the impediment of motion, is the constitution of the thing it selfe, we use not to say, it wants the Liberty; but the Power to move; as when a stone lyeth still, or a man is fastned to his bed by sicknesse.’

(Leviathan, Chapter 21, T 146)

X has the *power* to φ if and only if…

….there is no *internal constraint* on X’s φ-ing.
‘Liberty is the absence of all the impediments to action that are not contained in the nature and intrinsic quality of the agent.’

(Thomas Hobbes, *Of Liberty and Necessity*, C 38)
‘impediment’ or ‘hindrance’ signifies an opposition to endeavour.’

(Thomas Hobbes, *Questions Concerning Liberty etc.*, C 80).

…it is no impediment to him that the door [of the tennis-court] is shut till he have a will to play, which he has not till he has done deliberating whether he shall play or not.’

(Thomas Hobbes, *Questions Concerning Liberty etc.*, C 81).

There is a constraint on X’s φ-ing only if X intends to φ.
P1  X does not intend to φ.

P2  There is a constraint on X’s φ-ing only if X intends to φ.

C1  There is no constraint on X’s φ-ing.

P3  If there is no constraint on X’s φ-ing then there is no external constraint on X’s φ-ing.

P4  If there is no external constraint on X’s φ-ing, then X has the freedom to φ.

C2  X has the freedom to φ.
‘…of a voluntary agent it is all one to say he is free, and to say he has not made an end of deliberating.’

(Thomas Hobbes, Of Liberty and Necessity, C 38)

‘When in the mind of man, Appetites, and Aversions… arise alternately… the whole summe of Desires, Aversions… continued till the thing be either done, or thought impossible, is that we call Deliberation… And it is called Deliberation; because it is a putting an end to the Liberty we had of doing, or omitting, according to our own Appetite, or Aversion.’

(Leviathan, Chapter 6, T 44)

Freedom and intention

X is free to φ or not to φ if and only if X is still deliberating about whether to φ or not to φ.

If X is still deliberating about whether to φ or not to φ, then X does not intend to φ, and X does not intend not to φ.

If X is no longer deliberating about whether to φ or not to φ, then either X is φ-ing, X is not φ-ing.

‘this also, “liberty respecteth not future acts only, but present acts also”, is unintelligible. For how can a man have liberty to do or not to do that which is at the same instant already done.’

(Hobbes, Questions Concerning Liberty, etc.)
Freedom and rights

Freedom is entirely consistent with legal obligation.

‘...a man sometimes pays his debt, only for feare of Imprisonment, which because no body hindred him from detaining, was the action of a man at liberty. And generally all actions which men do in Common-wealths, for feare of the law, are actions, which the doers had liberty to omit.’

(Leviathan, Chapter 21, T 146)

But Hobbes also discusses a kind of freedom that is not consistent with legal obligation. He calls this kind of freedom ‘right’.

‘…Right and Law… ought to be distinguished; because Right, consisteth in liberty to do, or to forbeare; Whereas Law, determineth, and bindeth to one of them: so that Law, and Right, differ as much, as Obligation, and Liberty; which in one and the same matter are inconsistent.’

(Leviathan, Chapter 14, T 91)

X has a right to φ if and only if φ-ing is not against the law.
Freedom and rights

What rights do we have in the state of nature?

‘The Right of Nature… is the Liberty each man hath, to use his own power… for the preservation of… his own Life… A Law of Nature… is a Precept, or generall Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive of his life… and to omit, that, by which he thinketh it may be best preserved.

(Leviathan, Chapter 14, T 91)

X has a natural right to φ if and only if φ-ing is not self-destructive.
‘because the condition of Man… is a condition of Warre of every one against every one… and there is nothing he can make use of, that may not be a help unto him in preserving his life against enemyes; It followeth, that in such a condition, every man has a Right to every thing; even to another’s body. And, therefore, as long as this naturall Right of every man to every thing endureth, there can be no security to any man… of living out the time, which Nature ordinarily alloweth men to live.’

(Leviathan, Chapter 14, T 91)
Rights can be transferred. If X *transfers* her right to φ to Y, then X has an obligation not to interfere with Y’s φ-ing.

‘he that...passeth a way his Right, giveth not to any other man a Right which he had not before; because there is nothing to which every man had no Right by Nature: but only standeth out of his way, that he may enjoy his own original Right, without hindrance from him.’

*(Leviathan*, Chapter 14, T 92)

X has a liberty-right to φ if and only if X has no obligation not to φ.

X has a claim-right that Y not φ if and only if Y has an obligation to X not to φ.
‘The only way to erect such a Common Power, as may be able to defend [men] from… the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them in such sort, as that… they may nourish themselves and live contentedly; is, to conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men… [It] is… as if every man should say to every man, I Authorise and give up my Right of Governing my selfe, to this Man, or to this Assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy Right to him… This done, the Multitude so united in one Person, is called a Common-wealth.’

(Leviathan, Chapter 18, T 120)
‘…seeing there is no Common-wealth in the world, wherein there be Rules enough set down, for the regulating of all the actions, and words of men… it followeth necessarily, that in all kinds of actions, by the laws pretermitted, men have the Liberty, of doing what their own reasons shall suggest, for the most profitable to themselves.’

(Leviathan, Chapter 21, T 147)

X has a *civil right* to φ if and only if not φ-ing is not against the civil law.

‘As for other Lyberties, they depend upon the Silence of the Law.’

(Leviathan, Chapter 21, T 152)
Republican freedom

‘...if wee take Liberty in the proper sense, for corporall Liberty; that is to say, freedome from chains, and prison, it were very absurd for men to clamor as they doe, for the Liberty they so manifestly enjoy. Againe, if we take Liberty, for an exemption from Lawes, it is no lesse absurd, for men to demand as they doe, that Liberty, by which all other men may be masters of their lives.’

(Leviathan, Chapter 21, T 147)
Republican freedom

P1 Reclaiming our natural rights from the sovereign will result in our lives being ‘solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short’ (T 89).
(because of scarcity, rough equality of ability, hunger for power, etc.)

P2 If \( \varphi \)-ing will result in our lives being ‘solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short’ (T 89), then it is absurd to want to \( \varphi \).
(by the first Fundamental Law of Nature)

C It is absurd to want to reclaim our natural rights from the sovereign.
Republican freedom

‘A man may here object, that the Condition of Subjects is very miserable; as being obnoxious to the lusts, and other irregular passions of him, or them that have so unlimited a Power in their hands… not considering that the estate of Man can never be without some incommmodity or other; and that the greatest… is scarce sensible with respect of the miseries, and horrible calamities, that accompany a Civill Warre; or that dissolute condition of masterlesse men…’

(Leviathan, Chapter 18, T 128)
Republican freedom

‘The Libertie, whereof there is so frequent, and honourable mention, in the Histories, and Philosophy of the Antient Greeks, and Romans… is… the Libertie of the Common-wealth: which is the same with that, which every man then should have, if there were no… Common-wealth at all… And by the reading of these… Authors, men from their childhood have gotten a habit… of favouring tumults… with the effusion of so much blood; as I think I may truly say, there was never anything as deerly bought, as these Western parts have bought the learning of the Greek and Latine tongues…’

(Leviathan, Chapter 21, T 150)
1. What does Hobbes mean by freedom?

2. What kind of value does Hobbes take freedom to have?

3. Why does Hobbes think that freedom has this kind of value?

4. What political arrangements does Hobbes think are necessary to achieve freedom?