Hobbes
Objections

Today we're going to consider several objections to Hobbes claim that the state of nature is a state of war.
Objections

Today we're going to consider several objections to Hobbes claim that the state of nature is a state of war.

First Objection:

Why can't people simply choose solitude?
Objections

Today we're going to consider several objections to Hobbes claim that the state of nature is a state of war.

First Objection:

Why can't people simply choose solitude?

Answer:

War consists not only in battle but in the lack of security, without which a person can have none of the good things of civil society.
Contracts?

What's wrong with making contracts in the state of nature and why can't you and I make a contract that ensures our protection?
Contracts?

What's wrong with making contracts in the state of nature and why can't you and I make a contract that ensures our protection?

- Glory Seeking
- Power-lust
- Extreme Scarcity
- No Enforcement
"For he that performs [his end of the contract] first has no assurance the other will perform after, because the bonds of words are too weak to bridle men’s ambition, avarice, anger, and other passions, without the fear of some coercive power; which in the condition of mere nature cannot possibly be supposed."
Prisoner's Dilemma

A lot of people have thought that Hobbes view of the state of nature is that it is a kind of prisoner's dilemma.

In a prisoner's dilemma a pair of criminals, partners, are captured by the police and offered a bargain. The bargain goes like this...
Prisoner's Dilemma

- If you confess and your partner does not, you will walk and your partner will go to prison 20 years.
- If your partner confesses and you do not, you will go to prison for 20 years and your partner will walk.
- If you and your partner both confess, you will each do just 5 years.
- If neither of you confess, you will each do just 1 year.
**Prisoners' dilemma**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>prisoner A</th>
<th>prisoner B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>confess</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>0 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remain silent</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2006 Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.
Prisoner's Dilemma

- If you confess and your partner does not, you will walk and your partner will go to prison 20 years.
- If your partner confesses and you do not, you will go to prison for 20 years and your partner will walk.
- If you and your partner both confess, you will each do just 5 years.
- If neither of you confess, you will each do just 1 year.

What does a selfish criminal care about?

So: what does a selfish criminal do, confess or not?
Prisoner's Dilemma

Notice that there's a mutually preferable outcome that you can't achieve unilaterally, i.e. you have to get someone to cooperate with you, but they never have reason to do it (and you don't either.)
Defense Aliances

Why don't people form defense alliances?
Defense Alliances

Why don't people form defense alliances?

- Small groups will be destroyed by larger ones.
- Large groups, once they have destroyed the groups enemies, will fall apart from internal conflict.
Okay Hobbes, look: you say we're screwed in the state of nature, but ants--ants!--and bees manage to get along in the state of nature and form well functioning social groups for mutual benefit. How can we take seriously your claim that people can't?

What's Hobbes answer, in a nutshell?
Okay Hobbes, look: you say we're screwed in the state of nature, but ants--ants!--and bees manage to get along in the state of nature and form well functioning social groups for mutual benefit. How can we take seriously your claim that people can't?

What's Hobbes answer, in a nutshell?

People aren't like ants and bees.
People vs. Ants

People aren't like ants and bees.

- We care about glory and dignity
- We see a difference between our own good and public good.
- Reason leads us to question the decisions of others and to believe our own decisions are superior.
- We distinguish injuries from damage.