# Hobbes NC

#### Morality is impossible; the state of nature allows people to create meaning to individual appetite and varies from each person. Parrish 05

Parrish, Rick. “Derrida's Economy of Violence in Hobbes' Social Contract.” African Studies Review, Cambridge University Press, 1 Jan. 2005, muse.jhu.edu/article/244119.

Perhaps the single most telling quote from Hobbes on this point comes from The Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society(usually known by its Latin name, De Cive), in which he states that “to know truth, is the same thing as to rememberthat it was made by ourselves by the very usurpation of the words.”[24](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f24) “For Hobbes **truth is a function of logic and language, not of** the relation between language and **some extralinguistic reality**,”[25](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f25) so the “**connections** between names and objects are not natural.”[26](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f26) They **are artificially constructed by persons,** based on individual psychologies and desires. **These** individual desires **are** for Hobbes **the only measure of good and bad**, because value terms “are ever used with relation to the person that useth them, there being nothing simply and absolutely so, nor any common rule of good and evil to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves.”[27](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f27) Since “there are no authentical doctrines concerning right and wrong, good and evil,”[28](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f28) these **labels are placed upon things by humans in acts of creation rather than discovered as extrinsic facts**. Elaborating on this, Hobbes writes that “the nature, disposition, and interest of the speaker, such as are the names of virtues and vices; for one man calleth wisdom, what another calleth fear; and one crueltywhat another justice.”[29](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f29) A more simplistic understanding of the brutality of the state of nature, which David Gauthier calls the “simple rationality account,”[30](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f30) has it that mere materialistic competition for goods is the cause of the war of all against all, but such rivalry is a secondary manifestation of the more fundamental competition among all persons to be the dominant creator of meaning. Certainly, Hobbes writes that persons most frequently “desire to hurt each other” because “many men at the same time have an appetite to the same thing; which yet very often they can neither enjoy in common, nor yet divide it; whence it follows that the strongest must have it, and who is strongest must be decided by the sword.”[31](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f31) But this competition for goods only arises as the result of the more primary struggle that is inherent in the nature of persons of meaning creators. In the state of nature, “where every man is his own judge,”[32](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f32) **persons will** “mete good and evil by diverse measures,”[33](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f33) **create labels for things as they see fit**, based on individual appetites.

#### State of Nature is perpetual violence and a state of war, makes all impacts unevaluable and meaning isn’t unified. Parrish 2

Those who prefer a more directly materialistic reading of Hobbes may attempt to bolster their position by pointing to his comment that “the most frequent reason why men desire to hurt each other, ariseth hence, that **many** men at the same time **have an appetite to the same thing; which yet very often they can neither enjoy in common**, nor yet divide it; **whence it follows that the strongest must have it,** and who is strongest must be decided by the sword.”[42](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f42) This quote also supports my reading of Hobbes, because quite simply the primary thing all persons want but can never have in common is the status of the ultimate creator of meaning, the primary personhood, from which all other goods flow. **Everyone**, by their natures as creators of meaning whose “desire of power after power . . . **cease**th **only in death**,”[43](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f43) tries to subsume others beneath their personhood in order to control these others and glorify themselves. As Piotr Hoffman puts it, “**every individual acting under the right of nature views self as the center of the universe;** his aim is, quite simply and quite closely, to become a small “god among men,” to use Plato’s phrase.”[44](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f44) Hobbes argues that this discursive struggle rapidly becomes physical by writing that “every man thinking well of himself, and hating to see the same in others, they must needs provoke one another by words, and other signs of contempt and hatred, which are incident to all comparison, till at last they must determine the pre-eminence by strength and force of body.”[45](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f45) **The ultimate violence**, the surest and most complete way of removing a person’s ability to create meaning, **is to kill that person**, and the escalating contentiousness of the state of nature makes life short in the war of all against all. But this does not render the fundamental reason for this violence any less discursive, any less based on “one’s sense of self-importance in comparison with others”[46](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f46) or human nature as a creator of meaning.

#### Only the sovereign can create moral truths; our ethical obligation is to the state. Otherwise, morality is infinitely regressive and impossible to determine. Parrish 3

All of the foregoing points to the conclusion that in the commonwealth **the sovereign’s** first and most fundamental **job is** to be **the ultimate definer**. Several other commentators have also reached this conclusion. By way of elaborating upon the importance of the moderation of individuality in Hobbes’ theory of government, Richard Flathman claims that **peace “is possible only if** the ambiguity and **disagreement** that pervade general thinking and acting **are eliminated by** the stipulations of **a sovereign**.”[57](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f57) Pursuant to debunking the perennial misinterpretation of Hobbes’ mention of people as wolves, Paul Johnson argues that “one of the primary functions of the sovereign is to provide the necessary unity of meaning and reference for the primary terms in which men try to conduct their social lives.”[58](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f58) “The whole raison d’êtreof sovereign helmsmanship lies squarely in the chronic defusing of interpretive clashes,”[59](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f59) without which humans would “fly off in all directions”[60](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f60) and fall inevitably into the violence of the natural condition. It is not surprising that so many noted students of Hobbes have reached this conclusion, given how prominently he himself makes this claim. According to Hobbes, “in the state of nature, where every [person] is [their] own judge**,** and differeth from others concerning the names and appellations of things, and from those differences arise quarrels and breach of peace, it was necessary there should be a common measure of all things, that might fall in controversy.”[61](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f61) The main categories of the sovereign’s tasks are “to make and abrogate laws, to determine war and peace, [and] to know and judge of all controversies,”[62](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f62) but each of these duties is a subspecies of its ultimate duty to be the sole and ultimate definer in matters of public importance. It is only through the sovereign’s effective continued accomplishment of this duty that the people of a commonwealth avoid the definitional problems that typify the state of nature. Judging controversies, which Hobbes lists as the third main task of the sovereign, is the duty most obviously about being the ultimate definer. In fact, Hobbes declares it a law of nature that “in every controversy, the parties thereto ought mutually to agree upon an arbitrator, whom they both trust; and mutually to covenant to stand to the sentence shall give therein.”[63](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f63) As I repeatedly alluded to above, this agreement to abide by the decision of a third party arbitrator, a sovereign in the commonwealth, is necessary because of the fundamentally perspectival and relative nature of persons’ imputations of meaning and value into the situations they construct. Hobbes understands this problem, as evidenced by his claim that “seeing right reason is not existent, the reason of some man or men must supply the place thereof; and that man or men, is he or they, that have the sovereign power”[64](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f64)to dictate meanings that will be followed by all. The sovereign is even protected from potential democratic impulses, by which a ‘true’ meaning would be that agreed upon by the greatest number of people. Because “no one man’s reason, nor the reason of any one number of men, makes the certainty,” they will still “come to blows . . . for want of a right reason constituted by nature”[65](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/244119" \l "f65) unless both the majority and the minority agree to abide by the meanings promulgated by the sovereign.

#### Thus, the standard is consistency with the sovereign’s will. Prefer additionally:

#### Inevitability—if there is no sovereign than each individual becomes a sovereign and attempts to impose their wills upon others until one wins out to become the sovereign. This means that even if they win that the aff framework is best you still look to mine because my framework will be used no matter what.

#### Enforcement – No ethical theory can be enforced in the state of nature because it is just a state of endless struggle in which no one has the authority to put one into place. This is especially true because there are inevitable disagreements over which ethical theory is best that cannot be resolved if no one has power. This means that even if you win the aff framework, my offense turns case and outweighs because they cannot get any of their benefits without having mine first.

#### Now negate:

#### First, Decisions made by colleges and universities are state decisions, meaning that they are legally the sovereign.

**Buchter 73** [Jonathan. “Contract law and the student-university relationship.” Indiana Law Journal, vol. 48, issue. 2, article 5, Winter 1973] CL

“This theoretical mixture was applied in student-university litigation until Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education was decided in 1961. Dixon held, generally, that a public university’s actions were state actions and therefore subject to constitutional restraints and, more particularly, that a student must be afforded procedural due process prior to expulsion. However, the state action doctrine in Dixon has not replaced the implied contract theory. Courts still view the student-university relationship as one of contract with certain constitutional protections required if the institution is public. Thus, there may currently be some limits on what the public university may demand from the student. For example, a public university may not be able to deny a student certain first amendment rights. However, since the Dixon holding is limited to public institutions, a private university may be able to contract in such a way as to limit these constitutional rights.”

#### That links to the standard—if colleges and universities are an extension of the state, they determine how admissions ought to operate, anything else is a restriction on their power.

#### Second, many standardized tests are created and administered by the government, like state tests. Denying the government’s ability to produce and administer these tests are an imposition on their will.