

Rousseau: Finds civilization to be a lamentable development in human history.
We can't go back at this point, but we can still regret our current state.

Compassion acts as “a powerful restraint on the drives that might lead to attack and war”.

The idea is not that we are compelled to compassion because of the recognition of moral responsibilities. It's simply that we have an aversion to harm. We're naturally bothered by the prospect of suffering, even if it's not ours.

But compassion only prevents my attacking and robbing you if I have the prospect of acquiring the means of my survival elsewhere.

Nor is compassion enough to create family bonds on its own.

-Think of the “savage man” as being accustomed to, and equipped for, living on his own, and being directed toward nothing other than his own survival.

Wolff: This view of the state of nature doesn't look so hot, either. Where's the *humanity* in this state of affairs? Why should we find it regrettable that we've left this state of affairs? Moreover, how could we get from utter savagery to civilization?

Rousseau offers speculation. He says that our natural response to scarcity is innovation (where Hobbes sees the response as competition). Our first preference to solving problems of scarcity is to create tools or methods for working for it, rather than automatically trying to take it from others.

So we end up with tools and cooperative activities, which lead to comforts and capabilities that we didn't have before

But then we have the problem of leisure: We come to depend on our comforts.

“Having them gives us little or no pleasure, but losing them is devastating—even though we once managed perfectly well without them.”

The balance between civilized pride and savage brutishness eventually tips over and we arrive at the wars and problems of civilization. This is what's lamentable. We might, in cultivating political structures, want to re-establish this balance.