

Ethics
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Module No 3
Lecture 11

Welcome back to the lecture series on ethics. In this lecture we will try to conclude our discussion on contractarianism. So the social contract theory and its moral implications. We have been primarily examining the contributions of Thomas Hobbes and while concluding our discussions on the moral position of contractarianism we will now see some important contributions of another very prominent philosopher, very vital thing in this tradition, very important thinker in this tradition, Jean Jacques Rousseau.

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Ethics 11

THE MORAL POSITION OF
CONTRACTARIANISM

- Hobbes' Theory
- Rousseau's Theory
- Naturalized and Normative Social Contract
- The Moral Position

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So what we will do today is that we will see Hobbes theory in a nutshell. Then we will go to Rousseau's theory to have a comparison between these 2 versions of contractarianism and then we will see the kind of distinction which Rousseau makes between naturalised and normative social contracts and then we will examine the moral position and conclude this lecture.

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Moral Position of Contractarianism

- What ethical insights can contractarianism offer?
- Apparently reduces moral obligations into contracts.
- Nothing more than practical utility in Hobbes' theory.
- Rousseau's idea makes room for ethics in a different manner.
- Idea of state of nature is vital.


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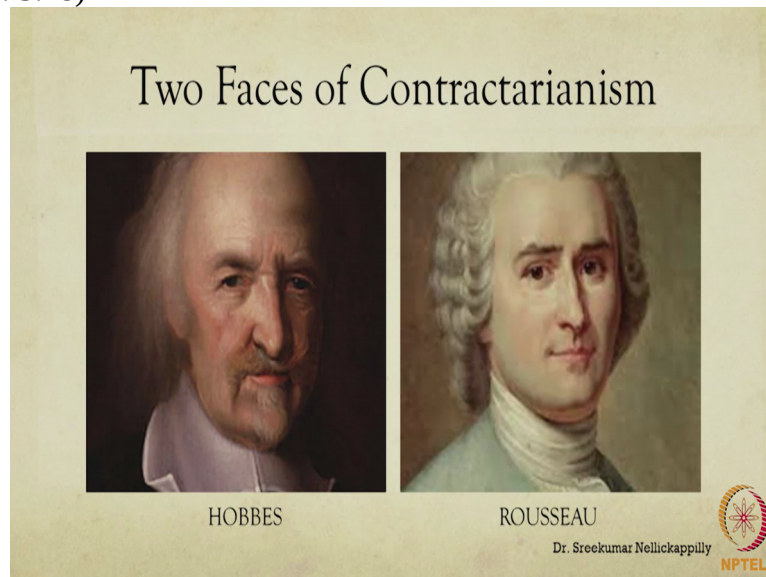
So when we talk about the moral position of contractarianism, the question is what ethical insights can contractarianism offer. So this is very important because we have seen that social contract theory actually reduces everything to the contract, to the concept of a contract. And a contract as we know, is a practical arrangement which 2 people or more than 2 people are arrived at in order to attain certain goals.

So it has no validity beyond that practical context in which the goals are more important. And in Hobbes framework, we have seen what are those goals because there is a concept of natural state and some of the evil, some of the problem which the state of nature give rise to and how can we overcome its problems. And it is in this context, Hobbes comes up with this theory of social contract. It is not that he is proposing social contract, rather he says that this is what has happened.

So social contract revolts from this requirement. This requirement of what you call, making the necessity of overcoming the evils or the problems arising out of the state of nature. Now again, it reduces all moral obligations into contracts. So there is nothing more than a contract in a moral obligation and when we emphasise on contract, what we emphasise is actually the practical utility.

So Hobbes conceives that there is nothing more than a practical utility as far as contracts are concerned and moral rules or moral norms also have nothing more than that. And then, when we come to Rousseau, Rousseau's idea makes room for ethics in a different manner. So we have to address, we have to see that it are complete our discussion on social contract theory. And in this context also, the idea of state of nature is vital in our understanding.

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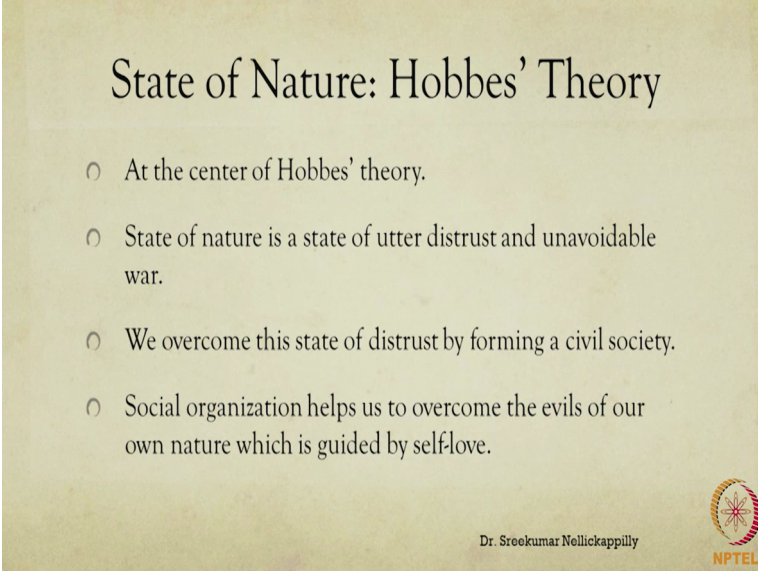


And these 2 thinkers, Hobbes and Rousseau, the 2 faces of contractorianism, they are very important philosophers as far as the history of European thinking is concerned, the history of political thought is concerned and also, the history of ethics is concerned. Because they proposed something which is very unique, the social contract theory which even today, many prominent philosophers of even contemporary philosophers like John Rawls and even Hebburmass, they all have recognised the importance of social contract in understanding human relationships and also the very dynamics of social formation, the per formation of society and civil society in today's world.

So in that way, we have to understand 2 faces of contractorianism. In very simple terms, we will try to do that in this lecture. We are not going to the details here because of the paucity of time. Now, we will will briefly address, we have already done this, we have already analysed this concept of state of nature in Hobbes theory. Just to have a comparison with how Rousseau's

theory is different from, how significantly it is different from Hobbes theory, we will just refresh our understanding about it.

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State of Nature: Hobbes' Theory

- At the center of Hobbes' theory.
- State of nature is a state of utter distrust and unavoidable war.
- We overcome this state of distrust by forming a civil society.
- Social organization helps us to overcome the evils of our own nature which is guided by self-love.

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At the centre of Hobbes theory and also state of nature is a state of utter distrust I repeat, this has been, I have been debating this in almost the last two three lectures. It is a state of unavoidable war. War all against all. This is a situation which if we follow the state of nature according to Hobbes. So it is essential that we must overcome this.

Otherwise, there will not be any social life, there will not be any human achievements. There will be at chaos and total destruction. So we have to overcome this. And we overcome the state of distrust by forming civil society and civil societies are formed with the help of contracts. Social organisation helps us to overcome the evils of our own nature which is guided by self love. So this is at the very heart of Hobbes theory that human beings, all human beings are fundamentally guided by self interest.

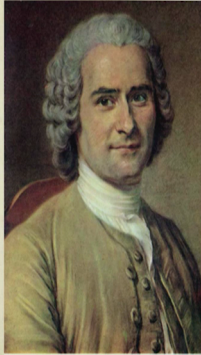
Since all of us pursue our own self interests and it is impossible for all of us to pursue that without really taking into account that others also have self-interest and they would also be pursuing it, so we must have to practically from a utility perspective, from a utilitarian perspective, we might have to enter into meaningful contracts with other fellow human beings so that we can make better achievements in our life.

Or rather, we can pursue our own self-interests in a better manner, in a cooperative environment. So this is what social contract would facilitate. But Rousseau had a different idea about it and his analysis is in one sense, it is very brilliant.


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Jean-Jacques Rousseau

- Disagrees with Hobbes.
- Human nature is distorted by existing social and political institutions.
- Changes happen to human nature.
- New desires and motives may occur.



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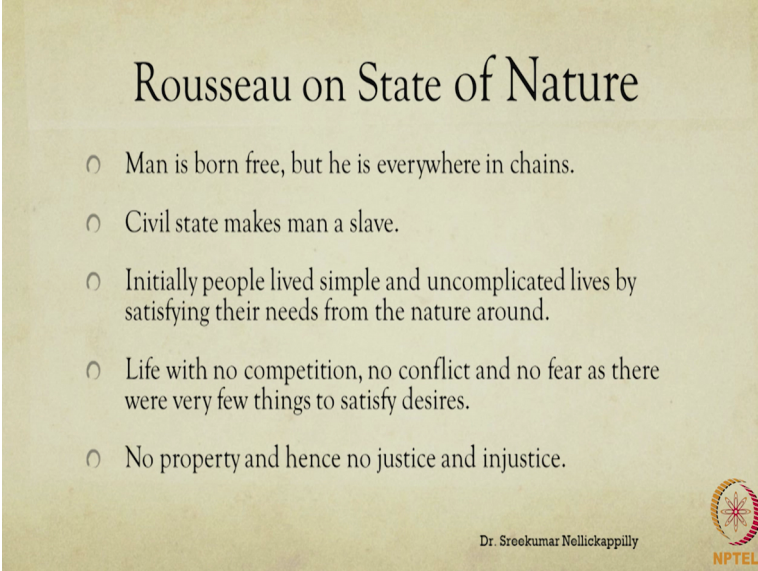


What he says is that he fundamentally disagrees with Hobbes and he says that human nature is distorted by existing social and political institutions. So there is a conception of human nature which Rousseau seems to be advocating which is very different, which is essentially different from what Hobbes was doing. His concept of human nature is I mean, there is something called , there is a kind of purity about the essential human nature which Rousseau ascribe to human being. So what he says is that the social life, actually he attributes a lot to socialisation or social life which evolves much later.

So as far as the state of nature is concerned, many things are common in Rousseau and Hobbes. Both of them agree that human beings were living in a state of nature where things are less complex as compared to they are today. But at the same time, what, while Hobbes thought that state of major is essentially a state of utter distrust, for Rousseau, it is not so. Rather, he believed that social changes, it is the formation of society or complex social organisations that ultimately made changes in human nature in a bad way.

Essentially human beings are not that evil as Hobbes was conceiving. New desires and motives may occur which also caused problems in the process of socialisation.


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Rousseau on State of Nature

- Man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains.
- Civil state makes man a slave.
- Initially people lived simple and uncomplicated lives by satisfying their needs from the nature around.
- Life with no competition, no conflict and no fear as there were very few things to satisfy desires.
- No property and hence no justice and injustice.

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And again, when it comes to state of nature, there is this is Rousseau's famous assertion that man is born free but he is everywhere in chains. So important to understand Rousseau to you have to understand this statement. And what he says is that simple state makes man a slave, otherwise man is born free. By nature or endif essential nature, man is born free.

But his socialisation, his membership in the civil state, makes him a slave. Initially people lived simple and uncomplicated lives by satisfying the needs from the nature around. Because there were hardly any needs. It was others, it was a complex social organisation and the possibilities of a civil society that induces new desires and needs in our minds. Otherwise, the basic desires and needs are extremely limited.

Human beings have no such desires which he cannot satisfy without the help of his immediate environment but civil society and its possibilities introduces several new desires and several new deeds. This causes problems according to him. Life with no competition. So this is what Rousseau's concept of state of nature is. It was a life with no competition, no conflict.

If there is no competition, there is no need for a conflict and no fear as there were very few satisfy desires. So because you know, human beings have no such desires so that they should


compete with each other and finally end up with conflict and then total distrust. There is no need for that. Again, there is no property. This is very crucial because Rousseau always thought that the introduction of, the emergence of private property is a very crucial juncture in the history of human beings.

It is this introduction, it is the very emergence of property, private property, created all problems because once private property is created, then naturally it would also create the whole dichotomy between property owning classes and propertyless classes, the class difference or there are 2 types of people which later on Marx says in a celebrated slogan, the whole of human history can be understood in terms of the conflict between 2 classes, haves and have nots.

So something which is very similar to that, Rousseau also says here that the emergence of private property have created inequalities in the society because some people have more property than others. Now once inequalities are created, naturally, the concept of justice and injustice also would be emerging because there are inequalities and inequalities would create problems in the society.

It would create conflicts and society. These conflicts have to be addressed and negotiated. In order to solve his problems arising in social life, we need to have moral concepts, advanced moral concepts have to be evolved. Justice and injustice of such concepts. Many moral concepts have evolved in this context. Otherwise, we do not need them. We do not need moral concepts, advanced moral concepts. We need them only when we started only after the started living complex social life.


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State of Nature: Rousseau

- Man's natural, unreflective impulses are not rooted exclusively in self-interest.
- Self-love is not antithetical to sympathy and compassion.
- Moral purity was naturally endowed on them.
- Initially all advanced moral concepts are absent.
- Social life formed later was responsible in the loss of this natural state of goodness and happiness.

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Again, man's natural, unreflective impulses are not rooted exclusively in self-interest. See, what we have to understand about Rousseau is that Rousseau never denies the fact that there is a very important role with self-interest plays in human life. He never denies it. He recognises that self-love and self-interest are there.

But at the same time, he is not prepared to understand, he is not prepared to accept that man is completely and exclusively ruled by self-interest. Also, he says that self-love is not always antithetical to sympathy and compassion. That is also part of human nature or rather that is very much part of human nature in its initial state. There is sympathy, there is compassion because without sympathy and compassion, human beings would not have formed social lives.

Or even to talk about contracts, we cannot form them. Moral purity was naturally endowed on them. So this is a very positive conception of the natural state which Rousseau develops much in contrary to what Thomas Hobbes state where he conceived a state of nature as essentially a state of utter distrust. Initially all advanced moral concepts are absent. I have already mentioned this because such concept had no place in human life.

We could live happier lives, we could live happily lives without them. So why do we need them? Social life formed later was responsible in the loss of this natural state of goodness and happiness. So there was this whole idea of an original, initial life, initial state of nature which

human beings enjoy it which was a state of natural goodness and happiness where human beings are endowed with moral purity and in spite of self-love or regardless of self-love, human beings also had compassion and sympathy towards fellow human beings and other creatures.

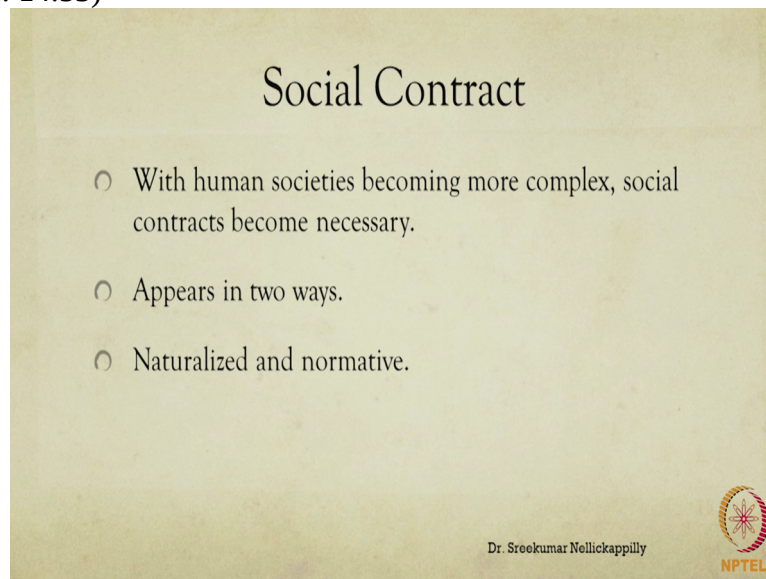
So this was Rousseau's concept of natural state. So what happened? How did this natural state get contaminated? So this is where he explains his idea of social formation comes in. So it is very different from Thomas Hobbes explanation.

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So when we try to understand the very concept, the very idea of social contract, we could see that there are 2 things about it. One is, the state of nature is something which essentially explains who we truly and essentially are while social contract would probably explain how we actually live together because basically the idea of social contract brings other people, the social life, a civil society into the picture where we find ourselves not as isolated individuals but always in association with others, sharing certain common objectives, certain common norms, certain common practices and naturally evolving certain contracts which are either simple or complex depending on situation and circumstances.

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Again, with human society is becoming more and more complex, there are this necessity for contacts become evident. So we need to come up with complex contracts, very complex contracts in order to address the problems which we encounter in social life in cooperation with others. And this can according to Rousseau, this can be understood in 2 ways or rather this appears in 2 ways, social contract appears in 2 ways.

One is naturalised social contract that actually what we do is that we naturalise a contract in order to justify or legitimise certain practices, certain practices which we consider are good for us, our essential for us, are important for us. In order to legitimise these practices, we need an authority. We need an authority to protect these practices. So in order to do that, we create an authority and that authority is created with social contract.

This is what is happening when we talk about naturalised social contract. On the other hand, normative social contract is for a different purpose. Here what happens is that we are actually not trying to justify any practice but rather we are trying to gain something, we are trying to regain a freedom, an original freedom which we lost in the process of socialising which we enjoyed during the state of nature. But it is impossible for us to take a 360 degree turn.

We cannot leave the social life in order to enjoy our the original Bliss we used to experience during the state of nature in our initial days. So we have to live in this society. So now what we

will do is that they will try to live with our fellow human beings, live together with them, with more meaningful contracts so that all of us would benefit from that situation.

So there is a concept of we, we developed a concept of we and we start considering other human beings as equal to us because basically we are all equals, we are all born free. There is no concept of inequality in the initial state. All these inequalities and hierarchies and differences and dichotomies appeared much later. The original state is a state of moral purity and equality.

So we have organised that. The original equality has to be recognised and it is our purpose. The purpose of life is to establish or rather to regain this original state of equality which alone would make us happy. But there are certain limitations. It is not always possible to attain this because we have already formed social organisations and societies and we cannot go back.

Our society has become extremely complex. So we cannot get rid of these complexities of social life and go back to our initial state of nature. We have to accept that these complexities and at the same time, try to derive the better out of it. How do we do that? By regaining the freedom, by recognising the initial inequality and recognising it as fundamental to human nature, we start negotiating with other people and avoid at better contracts so that all of us would probably have I mean which is the 2nd best probably.

If not the best, it is the 2nd best. So that is the normative idea of social contract which we will find Rousseau's philosophy.

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Naturalized and Normative Contracts	
NATURALIZED	NORMATIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Contracts established for naturalizing inequalities.○ Protecting private property.○ In reality protects inequalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Contracts established for regaining the lost freedom.○ To have both freedom and social life we need contracts and a government authority.
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So what is happening in naturalised is that contracts established for naturalising inequalities. It is protecting private property and in reality protects inequalities. So what Rousseau is trying to argue is that the society in its process of creating complex social forms or social organisations, will have to necessarily arrive at certain contracts and this happens particularly because concept of private property has been already introduced.

And private property, as I mentioned earlier, would also entered so give birth to inequalities in the society. Now inequalities would give rise to conflicts. Now we have to somehow address these conflicts because conflicts might result in total chaos. So in order to avoid that, what we do as we try to address these conflicts and we would establish certain norms to address them, certain contracts to address them.

What is that contract? Protecting private property. So we protect the very concept of private property which we think is private very essential for human growth. But by protecting private property, what are we actually doing is that we are protecting inequalities because it is the concept of private property which has given rise to the concept of inequality. So, by attracting private property, we in reality protect inequalities.

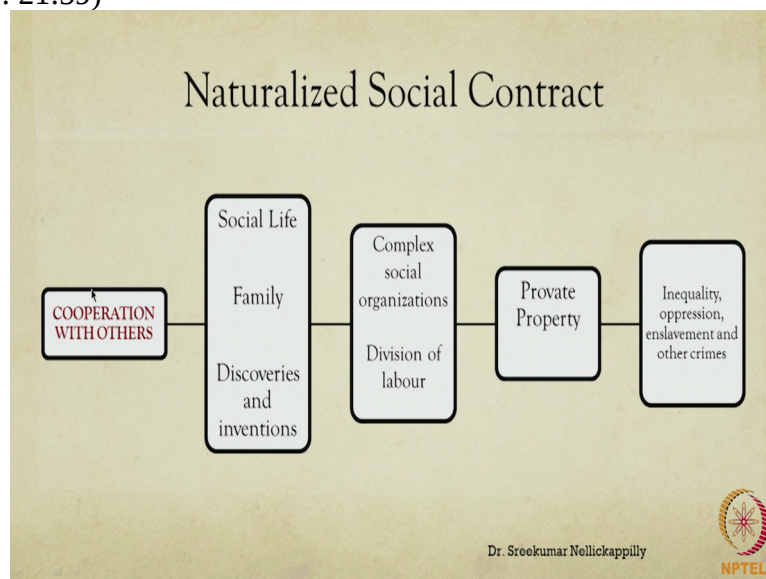
And this is what happens when social contract is naturalised. Again now, under the conditions of normative social contract, contracts established for a hearing the lost freedom. This is what I

mentioned. The original freedom which we enjoyed in our state of nature, in our initial state, this has to be regained. And to have both freedom and social life because as I mentioned, we cannot do away with social life because we always find ourselves in society, in a complex society and we cannot do away with that, we cannot run away from that.

We need social life as well. So we need both. We need both freedom and social life. And the contracts and the government authority, a governing authority or a government to negotiate, to probably monitor the kind of negotiations that happen between these 2, for that you need a government. For a naturalised framework, you need a government to protect private property and in that way way, to protect inequalities.

And by doing that, you can definitely ensure peace because you know government is there to ensure that there is peace. Government protects any qualities but that is not the idea which is present when we conceived social contract is normative. Here, the purpose of government is not to protect private property or inequalities but to negotiate between the contracts that happens between the 2 interests, between freedom and social life.

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So this is what happens naturalised social contract in nutshell. You can see from left to right. Here, there is cooperation with others because this is the stage where society is becoming complex, slowly becoming complex. Our simple forms of life that existed during the state of

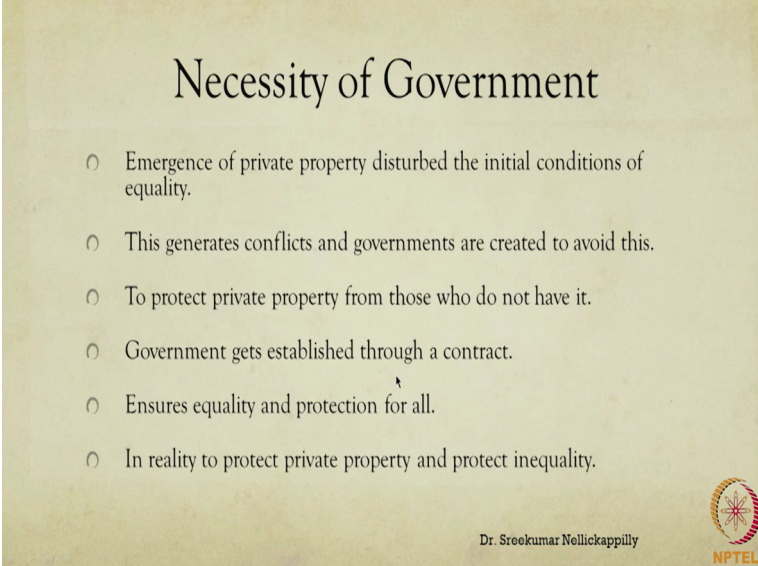
nature is lost and we started cooperating with other human beings and creating societies which leads to social life and then family.

Family will definitely introduced division of labour. And initially, the division of labour exists within the family and gradually it expands to the society as well. So there are different kinds of labour and different kinds of occupations and labour would in that process introduced inequalities and also discoveries and inventions that happen in the domain of science and other things.

That also would have contributed to the days of such developments happening in the social life which led to the formation of complex social organisations and much complex divisions of labour. Then, to private property and private property had led to inequality, operation, enslavement and other objectionable problems which we face in today's life, other crimes. So this is naturalised social contract in nutshell.

Now, it is in this context, government becomes necessary. To address the problem, inequality, operation, enslavement and other crimes, would definitely give rise to certain problems in the society, certain conflicts in society. And there is a government, a powerful government is required in order to control it.


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Necessity of Government

- Emergence of private property disturbed the initial conditions of equality.
- This generates conflicts and governments are created to avoid this.
- To protect private property from those who do not have it.
- Government gets established through a contract.
- Ensures equality and protection for all.
- In reality to protect private property and protect inequality.

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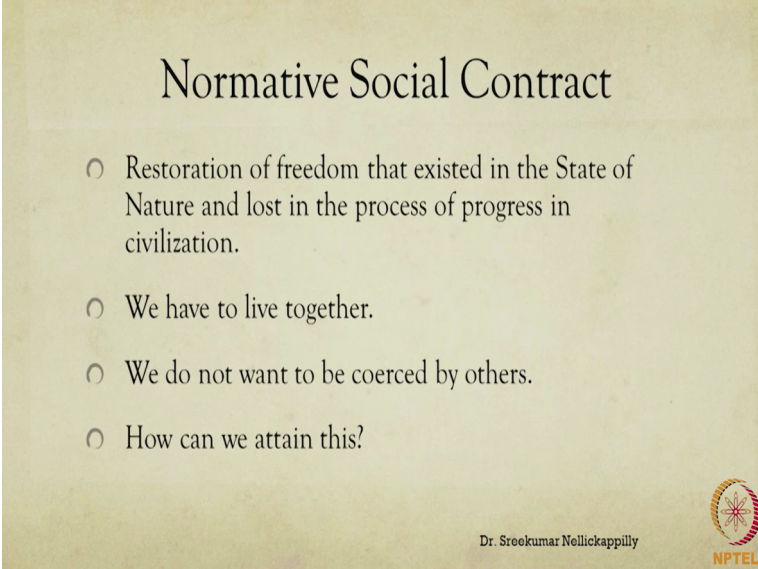


Now, necessity of government is emergence of private property disturbed the initial conditions of equality. This is I have already mentioned. This generates conflicts and governments are created to avoid this. To protect private property from those who do not have it. Government gets established through contract. So this is the purpose.

I am underlying these facts because Hobbes theory as well as Rousseau's theory of social contract or even their moral theory, moral ethics, concept of ethics, it is not independent of their political philosophy. Their conception of authority, political authority, the concept of government, all these things are extremely important in order to understand their moral position.

Ensures equality and protection for all. In reality to protect private property and protect inequality. Definitely it protects people, it ensures people some peace. It ensures people that people can reasonably pursue their self-interests. But at the same time, the basic idea is to protect the idea of private property and this logically is nothing but protecting inequalities.

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Normative Social Contract

- Restoration of freedom that existed in the State of Nature and lost in the process of progress in civilization.
- We have to live together.
- We do not want to be coerced by others.
- How can we attain this?

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And once we come to normative social contract, it talks about the restoration of freedom, regaining of freedom that existed in the state of nature are lost in the progress of vibration. As civilisation progressed, as human society progressed, we lost it, we lost our initial state. We have to live together.

That is something which we cannot avoid and we do not want the coerced by others. While living together, this is very important because when we live with other people, everyone of us have certain interests, certain self interests, we can put it in that way. And there are power relationships, there are inequalities. So we cannot avoid all these things happening in the social life.

What we have to do is that we have to reasonably avoid, we do not want to be coerced by other people. So in that way, we have to protect some freedom, the freedom which we have as human beings because fundamentally we are all equal. So in that way, no one is above me and no one is below me. I have to accept that. And how can we attain this?

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Normative Social Contract

- All men are born free and are fundamentally equals.
- No one has any natural authority over the other.
- All authority is the result of some agreement or covenant.
- Individuals create a collectivity with other free individuals – a general will.
- All authority is formed out of covenants.

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This can be attained by all men you know this can be attained by forming a government, I am authority. How can we attain this? That is the question. So let us try to understand this, let us to find an answer to this. So but for that, let us go back to Rousseau's original as such we have already mentioned. All men are born free and as equals.

So this is the basic concept which Rousseau purposes and this is at the very heart of his moral theory that equality which all men enjoys. And no one has any natural authority over other people. So when you try to understand the question of power, the question of authority, this has

to be underlined that one individual has natural authority or power over others. Everyone is equal.

All authority is the result of some agreement or covenant. So what makes one person enjoying our authority over others? That is the question. Because no sensible political organisation can be formed in today's world without recognising this that a group of people or one person or a group of people enjoying some sort of special authority and power over others.

We have a Prime Minister, we have a president, we have all kinds of people who are ruling us. So we have to recognise as how can we do this, on what basis their authority can be justified? Individuals create a collectivity. So this is what happens. With other free individuals, a general will is being created.

So we decide as instead of functioning as individuals, as isolated individuals who pursue our own self interests, remaining within our own nutshells, we decide to come out, come out of our nutshells and forming society, forming contracts with other human beings, forming a collectivity and then that collectivity becomes a unit, an entity on its own. Rather than functioning as independent individuals, these dependent individuals which we are, come together and form a collectivity.


And instead of having an individual will, a personal individual will, we now generate a general will. So this collectivity, this collectivity or the unity which we created would be ascribed with a general will. And all authorities formed out of covenants will be ascribed to that general will. So that is why you know, all these new concepts of role of law, all these things have emerged from this basic idea.

So it is very crucial, very important, very significant in the whole history of political thought in the West.

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Normative Social Contract

- Free and equal individuals together agree to form a single unit, the sovereign.
- Aim is the good of all considered.
- Interactions with equals.
- Though we all pursue self-interest we recognize others as equals.


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Free and equal individuals, this is something which we need to repeatedly underline, free and equal individuals together agreed to form a single unit, the sovereign. The sovereign now emerges. That unit is the sovereign. And sovereignty is ascribed to that, it is endowed upon it. Aim is to the good of all considered. Not just individual goods but the good of all.

Interactions with equals. So how do we form it? By interacting with equals. So the fundamental assumption is this equality and as a result, we create a unity and ascribe and endow that unity with sovereignty. Though we all pursue self-interests, we recognise others as equal. So now let us try to summarise the views of Hobbes and Rousseau and also summarise our views about, our understanding about the moral position of contractarianism.

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State of Nature: Hobbes and Rousseau	
HOBBS	ROUSSEAU
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ State of nature essentially leads to a state of war.○ Non-social condition is essentially problematic.○ Desires and objectives of people in society actually belonged to people in their natural state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Not a state of war of all against all.○ Human nature is distorted by existing social and political institutions.○ Changes happen to human nature and hence new desires and motives occur.○ Desires and objectives are developed by us as a result of social life.

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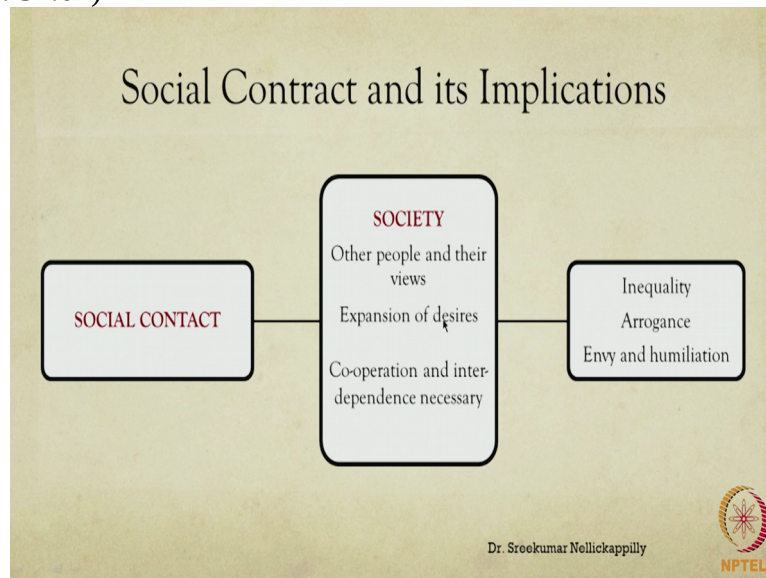
Hobbes would state that the nature, Hobbes advocated that state of nature essentially leads to a state of war. So that is the basic assumption and again, nonsocial condition is essentially problematic according to him. So hence we need society. That is what he thought. And again, desires and objectives of...see the problem here is that, this is actually a problem which Rousseau criticises him for.

Desires and objectives of people in society actually belong to people in their natural state. This is what he thought. Today, we know that we have certain desires and certain objectives and Rousseau's main argument is that these objectives and desires are formed as a result of social life but according to Hobbes, they were actually originally the human desires which we have ever since our origination.

But Rousseau on the other hand never conceived state of nature as a state of war of all against all. Human nature is distorted according to him by existing social and political institutions. And he as I as we mentioned earlier, man by nature is naturally endowed with some goodness which is distorted. Again, changes happen to human nature and hence new desires and new motives occur which might create problem according to Rousseau.

Again, desires and objectives are developed by us as a result of social life. So this is the basic difference between the 2 philosophers but in general, we can say that these are the implications of social contract theory.

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Contract will lead to the formation of society, other people and their views become important. Expansion of desire happens in this stage because the more we progress, the more desires we have, the more complex becomes our desires rather. Cooperation and interdependence become necessary. This leads to inequality, arrogance, envy and humiliation.

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And then naturally we need a government. Now, how to legitimise the state? It is to be in this context we have to understand the question of legitimising political authority. The state of nature, there is no concept of political authority as Hobbes mentioned. Political authority is created by social contract for protecting citizens. We have already discussed this.

And state ensures self-preservation. So sovereignty by institution happens in this context. People transfer their rights to the sovereign who can guarantee their protection. So people actually ascribe this power, they transfer their power, individual power to the sovereign.


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Legitimizing the State: Rousseau

- Convention plays a key role in creating authority.
- Legitimacy arises from the democratic justification of the laws of the civil society.
- To protect human freedom and cultivating democracy.
- All are fundamentally equal is the presupposition.

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And Rousseau also agrees with Hobbes to a great deal but on fundamental aspects, he differs. He says that convention plays a key role in the creation of authority. So there is nothing sacred about the whole notion of authority. Legitimacy arises from the Democratic justification of the laws of the civil society. To protect human freedom and cultivating democracy.


So this is the objective of democracy. Not to protect what Hobbes thought the concept of private property and all. All are fundamentally equal is the basic presuppositions in Rousseau's philosophy.

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Contractarianism: Moral Position

- Morality has its roots in contracts.
- Contracts offer practical solutions for problems result from human conflicts.
- Initially moral principles were absent.
- Formation of complex social life introduced them.
- All authority arise from contracts or covenants.

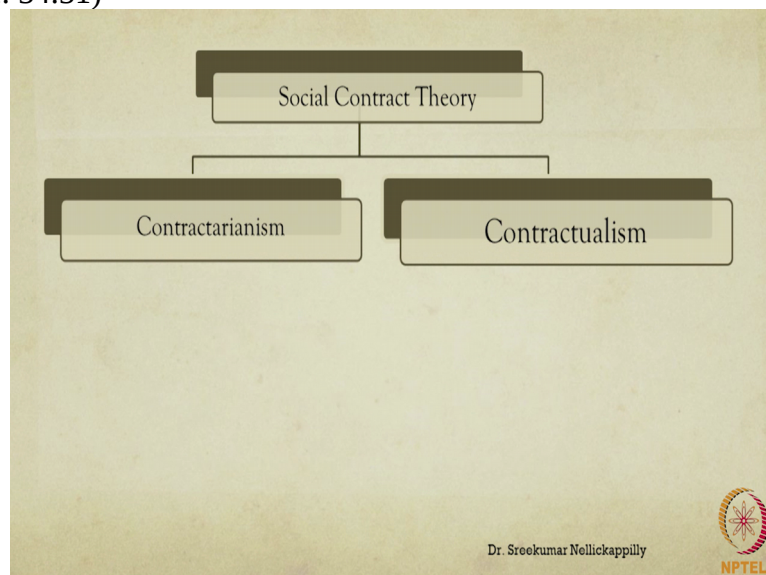
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Now when we try to summarise our discussion on moral position of contractorianism morality has its roots in contracts. So any concept of morality which has its roots in contracts need to be questioned, need to be viewed with suspicion. So contracts offer practical solutions for problems result from human conflicts the created by human conflicts.

And initially the moral principles were absent because our life was not very complex. Formation of complex social life introduced moral principles and all authority arise from the contracts or conventions which human beings formed.

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And to conclude, this is the moral position which contractorianism offers. We can reasonably conclude by saying that Rousseau's position offers better insights into understanding the moral insights of contractorianism. There is something more than that, more than contracts. Contracts he always believed are nothing but practical agreements between people.

But more than that, there is something, a kind of moral purity he ascribes to the original man, the man in his initial state. And that moral purity resulted in happiness, a kind of natural happiness. And now in the present life, we cannot go back to that past life. So in the present life where we have to accept that complex society exists, we have to, we should try to attain that original state of the kind of freedom we enjoyed during that original state so that we can also enjoy some happiness.

So that must be our objective and how do you do that? To do that, we have to primarily conceived that others are also equals with us, the fundamental equality. So there is a principle, there is a moral principle of equality which arises as what I would say, as a very important concept from the moral contemplations of contractorianism which Rousseau advocates.

And this concept of equality, all humans are fundamentally equal became very important in our understanding of the morality developed by democracy later. And later on, now we are going to address, now we are going to understand certain other moral theories, particularly that of

Emmanuel Kant. There again we will see this that what is more important is a idea of autonomy which presupposes that all human beings are fundamentally equal.

So this concept, from contractorianism now, we will move to contractualism which is also a kind of social contract theory where Emmanuel Kant becomes the major proponent. We will do that in subsequent lectures. For the time being, we will wind up here, thank you.