

Ethics
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Module No 4
Lecture 19

Welcome to this lecture series on ethics. This the lecture will focus the topic existentialism and ethics. So what we will do is we will primarily focus on the existentialism of Sartre, John Paul Sartre, the French philosopher and writer, author who is a very prominent philosopher as well as a fiction writer. Sartre is a very special philosopher because unlike many other philosophers whom we have already examined as part of this lecture series, he is not a purely academic thinker.

Of course, he has been working in academics and he has also been teaching and also wrote several books which are really scholarly works but at the same time he also chosen another very strong media to popularise his philosophy, that is literature. He has written novels, short stories, dramas, through such works also he has popularised his philosophy. And he himself causes philosophy existentialism which is not a very unique philosophical approach.

Of course, Sartre has made a unique contribution to that but existentialism as such is not a very unique philosophical approach. It has been present much before Sartre but as a philosophical system, it was Sartre who develops it and tries to argue for it. Sartre was influenced by many thinkers and the existentials are traditional itself. There are many others other than Sartre, like Kricregard for example, the Danish philosopher, then Gabriel Marcel and many others.

But our lecture series, we are to discuss only the contributions of Sartre. This is primarily because of 2 reasons. One is that it is in Sartre's philosophy we will find a very clear and very systematic articulation of existentialism as both as a philosophical method as well as an ethical standpoint. 2nd reason is that in one sense we can say that in Sartre or rather Sartre comprehensively present the basic insights of existentialism that is presented by many philosophers and many writers in European tradition in his philosophy.

So in that way, we will try to focus on the contributions of Sartre. So to begin with, Sartre is one philosopher who has asserted the value of choosing.

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Sartre's Existentialism

- We can't avoid choosing.
- One is morally obliged to recognize the value of both one's own freedom and the freedom of others.
- We are entirely responsible for not only what we are but also what we will be.



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We cannot avoid choosing. Human beings have to make choices, they have to take decisions and act accordingly. And these decisions or choices they make have to be free, completely free from other influences and Sartre believed that it is possible for human beings to make such choices, man is free to make choices, take decisions and act. So this ability of man is being presupposed by Sartre and there are certain reasons for that.

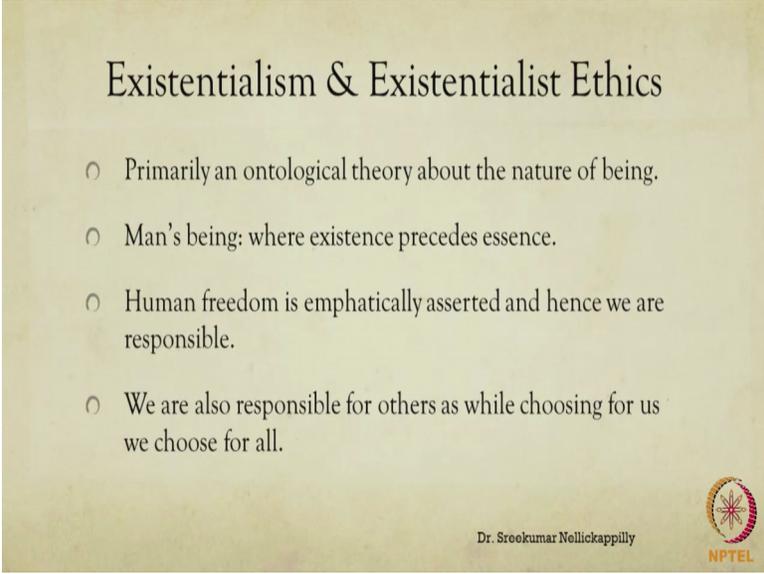
So his entire phenomenological ontological approaches which existentialism is all about, is concentrated on this idea of human freedom. So that is the most important concept and as far as ethics is concerned, we all know that human freedom occupies the centre stage, no doubt about it because it is from freedom, concepts like responsibility and other certain very important moral concepts are derived. But in Sartre's philosophical scheme, all these terms acquire different meanings.

We are going to see that. Then again, Sartre says that one is morally obliged to recognise the value of both one's own freedom and the freedom of other people. So this seems to be in one sense, advocating his moral position in nutshell. One has to organise one's own freedom. At the same time, one has to realise the freedom of other people as well. Why? So that comes as a moral necessity or rather a moral responsibility that every individual should recognise other individual's freedom.

Every individual has to recognise the freedom of other individuals. And again, we are entirely responsible for not only what we are but also what we will be. So this again, presents the human self or the human being, the being of man to put it more precisely in a temporal framework. Man is according to Sartre, project. He projects himself to the future.

He is not just what he has already done and what he has already made up of himself but more than that, man is also his future. Man projects himself the future. Certain projects he has and those projects are also very important in understanding his existential being. So this is also very important to understand Sartre.

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Existentialism & Existentialist Ethics

- Primarily an ontological theory about the nature of being.
- Man's being: where existence precedes essence.
- Human freedom is emphatically asserted and hence we are responsible.
- We are also responsible for others as while choosing for us we choose for all.

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Again, existentialism is primarily an ontological theory about the nature of being. This is something which I have already very briefly mentioned and it talks about as far as Sartrean existentialism is concerned, it fundamentally concentrates on the being of man. Here we could see that Sartre is influenced by several other philosophers, particularly by Heidegger, Martin Heidegger, the German philosopher who has developed a concept called the being-in-the-world or being in the world.

Being in the world is the being of man, the human being. The human being according to Heidegger is a very peculiar being because it always finds itself in the world amidst of other objects and other human beings in a society, in a culture. And Sartre takes this concept or takes

this insight from Heidegger. He was tremendously influenced by Heidegger as far as the developing this concept is concerned.

Again man's being is also very peculiar according to Sartre because in the case of man, the existence of man precedes his essence, unlike other objects. Say for example, in the case of a pen, or a computer, it is not so. The computer's essence precedes its existence. 1st of all, the computer engineer would have had a design of the computer which he is going to make in his mind or else the pen. There is a design.

Already you know, the maker of the pen or the maker of the chair or the maker of the computer has a design in his mind. And by making it, by materialising it, he is actually bringing it out what is already there in his mind. So the essence has already existed. It preceded its existence. You could see that you know, all the pens which is made by a particular company under a particular brand, they all look alike.

All the cars made by a particular company in the name of particular brand look alike. All mobile phones, all television sets, all computers, everything look alike but in the case of man, it is not so. In the case of man, according to Sartre, there is no such blueprint available prior to his existence. What matters is what is his essence is always determined by what he does and through his actions, through his life and also through his projects.

So there is no way we can say that human essence is already fixed a priori before he has come into existence and before he has lived a life for himself by taking decisions, by making choices, by exercising his freedom and also taking responsibility. So all these things conjointly make human existence very peculiar and unique. And human freedom is emphatically asserted and hence we are all responsible for what we do.

So this is again something which makes man different from other creatures. No other creature is free like man. Man is the only being which has freedom, which can do whatever it wants, which can make choices about what it is going to do, which can decide its own projects and what it is going to do with those projects. Everything men can decide.

It is wrong to say that man has no freedom or circumstances lead a man to do certain things. All these things according to Sartre are wrong. They all actually lead to a kind of bad faith in

Sartrean terms. Again we are also responsible for others. So this is a very interesting concept which I will be discussing slightly later. Here he says that as far as his ethical theory is concerned, this concept seems to be very important.

What he says is that by making a choice, I also make a choice for the entire humanity. It is not just for me alone I am making a choice and accordingly designing my project. But I make this choice for the entire humanity so by making a choice for the entire humanity, this actually doubles my responsibility. Here I am responsible for others as well because I am presenting in front of others a model of life.

These are all issues which we have to discuss when we try to understand the ethical framework which is projected by existentialism as far as Sartre is concerned. But before we get into all those details, let us see the background, I am not going to the detail. I will just try to highlight the most important things. I have already mentioned the importance of Heidegger, the influence of Heidegger in Sartre's life, Sartre's intellectual life.

And Sartre also belongs to the phenomenological tradition. So he was also influenced by people like Husserl and many others who were important figures in the phenomenological tradition. But Heidegger's influence is quite phenomenal because it was Heidegger who 1st introduced or rather problematised the being of man with all the philosophical seriousness it deserves, the design, being in the world is such a concept.

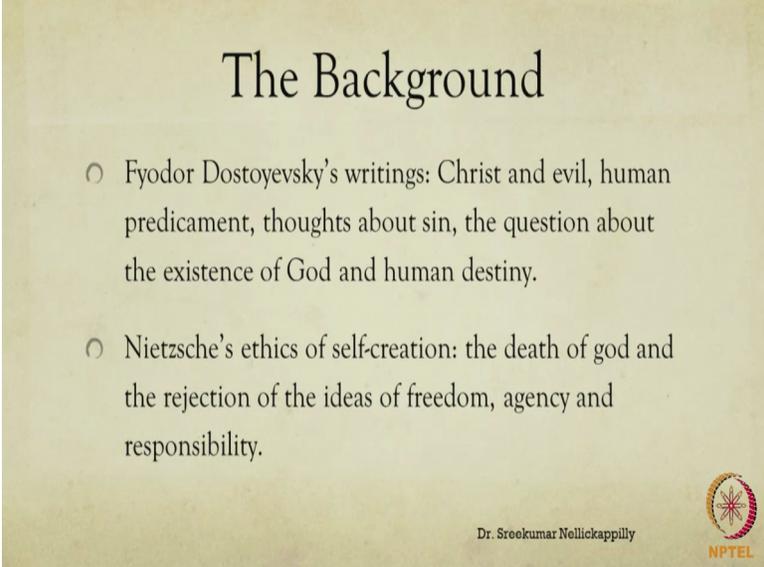
And Heidegger talks about authentic existence and inauthentic existence and many other concepts which later we would find expressions in Sartre's philosophy in a different way. But apart from that, we could also see that you know, writers like Frederick Dostrowski, famous, celebrated author, Russian philosopher and also. Actually, the Dostrowski is not an academic philosopher at all. He is a full-time author, writer, novelist and story writer.

But Dostrowski's novels and short stories were quite influential among all of Europe during the 19th and 20th century. Even today, they are quite influential. His classic works like *Crime and Punishment* and *Brother's Caramezov* are still influential and these novels, through these novels, and Dostrowski was presenting a very profound philosophical insight. He seems to be sort of

problematising the issue of sin, the whole concept, the whole dichotomy between good and evil through Christ and evil.

And again Ostrowski also goes ahead with a lot of criticism of the 19th century European society. So all these things have actually influenced many people, many philosophers and particularly Sartre.

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The Background

- Fyodor Dostoyevsky's writings: Christ and evil, human predicament, thoughts about sin, the question about the existence of God and human destiny.
- Nietzsche's ethics of self-creation: the death of god and the rejection of the ideas of freedom, agency and responsibility.

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So Ostrowski's writing, Christ and human predicament, see this is another very important aspect which Ostrowski discusses in his writings. The whole idea of human predicament is being discussed, thoughts about, the question about the existence of God and human destiny. See caramesov brothers for example, in his famous novel, brothers caramesov, he takes up this particular problem, the existence of God for discussion.

Dostoyevsky's writings, particularly the problem of human predicament is taken for discussion and this actually compiles a very central known in Hollist writings writings, all his novels. But then again you know, thoughts about sin, the question about the existence of God and human destiny, all these are very interestingly discussed by Dostoevsky. This 2 See for instance in his novel, brothers caramesov, there is a whole section on the question of existence of God.

The 2 brothers, Alyosha and intellectual Ivan, they both are in a conversation and the question is existence of God. So we will find lot of arguments which existential philosopher would later

found interesting and in Dostoyevsky's writings itself. And enter existential movement was incest by Dostoevsky. Then again, Nietzsche's ethics of self-creation, the death of God and the rejection of the ideas of freedom, agency and responsibility, these were also exerting phenomenal influence in the development of existential philosophy as a whole and particularly on the ethical position advocated by existentialism in general.

And particularly the idea of self-creation because self-creation seems to be arguing that human beings have to exert their freedom and create themselves, rather than allowing themselves to be created by someone else, either a metaphysical entity like God or something which is not there in your hand like human nature or other people in the society. So fundamentally, this concept of Nietzsche has been argued.

Nietzsche actually was not trying to articulate or assert the importance of freedom in life. But Sartre has developed the concept of freedom from this and he says that it is very important that we have to exert our freedom and write over own stories. Then again, the socio-political and historical events happened during the late 19th and 20th centuries like the Second World War. This situation, the 1st and Second World Wars which have taken place in the 1st half of 20th-century, exerted very great influence on all the existential philosophers and all the writers, particularly Sartre.

And it is in this context you know, they most of them tried to problematise the concept of freedom and in one sense, we can see them the existentialist ethics as a whole is an ethics of freedom. And this is what Sartre says about freedom. Man is condemned to be free. There is no way he can escape from Freedom. That is his situation. That defines his very existential situation that he finds himself in this world where he is completely free, absolutely free and he cannot say that I was bound with certain other things and all that.

He cannot escape from Freedom. So Sartre claims that the human condition is actually characterised by finitude and situatedness.

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The Ethics of Freedom

- Man is condemned to be free.
- The human condition: finiteness and situatedness.
- Not being in itself but being for itself.
- No fixed human nature and is not just a creation of god.

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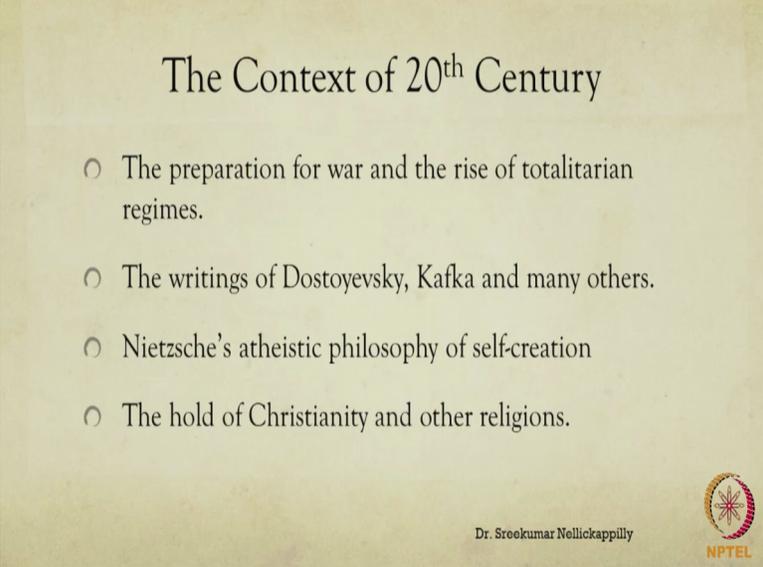


So we can find each individual, human being as uniquely situated with a certain historicity, with a certain peculiar freedom he or she enjoys. And again, not being in itself but being for itself, this is a very interesting concept, very important concept in Sartrean scheme of things because he says that he divides the entire scheme of being into 3, being in itself, being for itself, and being for others. And being in itself is the kind of being which objects like computers, books and pens have where their essences are already decided a priori.

Before they came into existence, their essence is decided. But being for itself is the peculiar being of man where the essence is not decided prior to his existence but only after he exists, his essence comes to be decided by himself. According to Sartre, defines his own essence by a process of living, by exercising choices and freedom and in the case of man, there is no fixed human nature.

It is not just a creation of God so that we can say that man is created by someone else. So in the case of man, man's existence precedes his essence. And 20th century context is also very interesting because the preparation of war, the 2 wars actually happened.

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The Context of 20th Century

- The preparation for war and the rise of totalitarian regimes.
- The writings of Dostoyevsky, Kafka and many others.
- Nietzsche's atheistic philosophy of self-creation
- The hold of Christianity and other religions.

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And also the preparation of war, every country is planning to wage a war against other countries and the preparation of war and its rise of totalitarian regimes, many totalitarian regimes have emerged in Europe predominantly in Italy under Mussolini and in Germany under Hitler and many other places. But all these have actually raised very serious questions about the human predicament, the human existence and the writings of Dostoyevsky as already mentioned.

Kafka is another very important influence on many of the existential philosophers particularly on Sartre and most importantly Nietzsche's atheistic philosophy of self-creation. The hold of Christianity and other religions on the lives of men, lives of human beings in society, all these things create a very complex context in 20th-century Europe.

Now we will straightaway come to discuss very briefly, the atheism and death of God, the concept of death of God advocated by Nietzsche because this is highly inferential in developing a peculiar existentialist ethics by Sartre. We have already discussed the works of Nietzsche in the previous lecture but we will continue with that and we will see some of those very interesting insights which Nietzsche develops, has been further developed by Sartre to kind of unique existential philosophy.

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Atheism & Death of God

- God is a crude answer, a piece of indelicacy against us thinkers—fundamentally even a crude prohibition to us: you shall not think! [Nietzsche]
- God remains dead. And we have killed him.
- “the greatest event of our time,” is an attempt to refocus people’s attention on their inherent, individual freedoms and responsibilities and on the here-and now world, and away from all escapist, pain-relieving, heavenly other worlds [Nietzsche]

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I quote. God is a crude answer, a piece of an indelicacy against others fundamentally even a crude prohibition to us; you shall not think. So this is Nietzsche’s observation. And God remains dead, Nietzsche says and we have killed him. So Nietzsche’s death of God is not just proclaiming a kind of atheism but also is trying to describe a situation that existed during 19th-century Europe, towards the end of 19th century Europe.

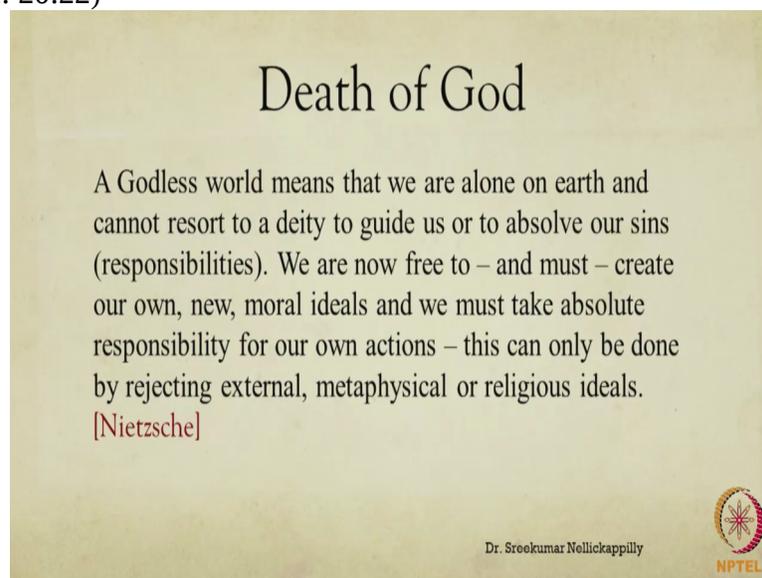
A kind of atheism, a kind of loss of faith in God, a kind of loss of faith in humanity or the total humankind is being built during that period. And that is being expressed by Nietzsche which is actually characterised by a kind of moral nihilism. Again I quote from Nietzsche. The greatest event of our time is an attempt to refocus people because the death of God, we have to refocus on people, people’s attention on their inherent, individual freedoms and responsibilities and on the here and now world and the from all escapist, pain relieving, heavenly other worlds.

So one has to refocus on people. Christianity has never allowed historically to refocus on people. It has always been emphasising the importance of otherworldly existence, the heaven was very important for Christianity. But here now Nietzsche saved the here and now world has to be emphasised. So that is where you know Sartre would find his situatedness, the being of man is find itself in this role, the concrete world, the here and now world.

And the whole meaning of this world lies here itself. There is no otherworldly meaning that can be ascribed to his existence in this world. One has to find meaning in this world itself. That is the human predicament. And in this world itself, one does not find any meaning. One fails to find a any significant meaning. And this meaninglessness would characterise the human predicament, the human existential situation.

One has to accept it and live with it. That is what characterises, that is the realistic position adopted by existential philosophy and ethics. Again, about that of God Nietzsche. I quote.

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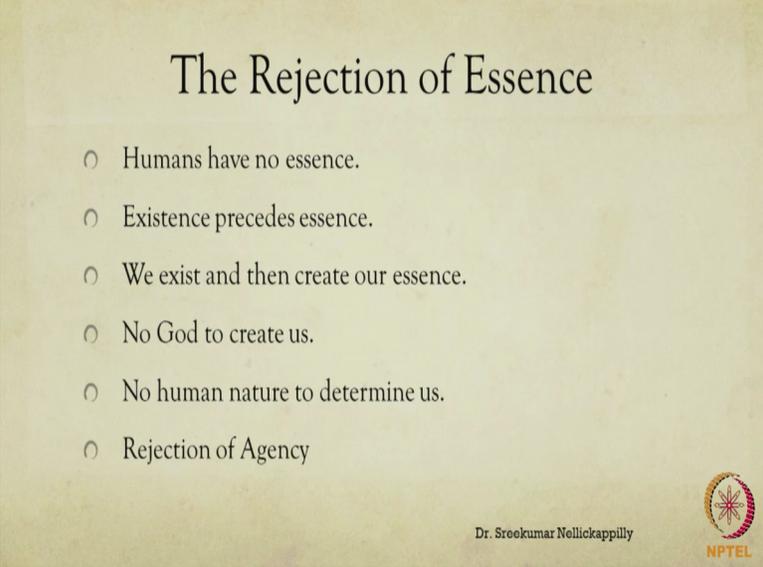


A Godless world means that we are alone on earth and cannot resort to a deity to guide us or absolve our sense, our responsibilities. So we have no external guidance. We have to live in this world and find out our own path. So this is what it around you will find Sartre develops into the concept of projects. Everything human being has his own projects. He has to make choices and he has to make his own life.

He has to choose his own life and live that life according to his choices, concrete choices he makes in this here and now world. There is no guidance from external authority. We are now free to and must create our own, new, moral ideals and we must take absolute responsibility for our own actions. This can only be done by rejecting external, metaphysical or religious ideals. Exactly the same insights we would find in Sartre also.

Sartre also says that if there is no God, he is a staunch atheist, atheist existentialist and he says that man is condemned to be free. There is no guidance available anywhere outside this world. And this rejection of essence is a very key aspect of both Nietzschean philosophy and also Sartrean philosophy.

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The Rejection of Essence

- Humans have no essence.
- Existence precedes essence.
- We exist and then create our essence.
- No God to create us.
- No human nature to determine us.
- Rejection of Agency

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Humans have no essence. Existence precedes essence. So Sartre reaffirms this insight, existence precedes essence because we know essence, we exist and then create our own essence. There is no God who has created us and no human nature is that determine us. And this idea, this fundamental idea ultimately leads to the rejection of an agency. This fundamental idea, this rejection of human nature, this rejection of the availability of an external agency has denied the possibility of a agent, the moral agent.

See for instance when we have examined Kantian deontology, we had seen that the concept of agent is at the middle, is at the centre of Kantian deontology. So that is why Kant says that an oath implies a can. Everything is associated with the notion of an agent, the moral agent, the ultimate moral agent and rejection of the concept of agent, this is what Nietzsche has to tell about it which Sartre adopts.

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Rejection of the Concept of Agent

- Popular superstition divorces the lightning from its brilliance, viewing the latter as an activity whose subject is the lightning, so does popular morality divorces strength from its manifestation, as though there were behind the strong a neutral agent, free to manifest its strength or contain it.
- There is no “being” behind the doing, acting and becoming.



I quote. Popular superstition divorce is the lightning from its believes, viewing the latter as an activity whose subject is the lightning. So there is a subject behind lightning. Lightning from its brilliance. Okay. So they are two. But actually they are not two but superstitiously we believe so, they are two. So does popular morality divorces strength from its manifestation, as though there were behind the strong a neutral agent, free to manifest its strength or contain it.

This is the fundamental mistake according to Nietzsche. There is now being behind the doing, acting and becoming. According to him, there is no such moral agency has Kant and other moralists have contented. Since idea of moral agency is deconstructed, the whole idea of human nature is also deconstructed.

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The Rejection of Agency

- The tendency to find an agent has its origin in our linguistic habits.
- It presupposes the availability of something like fixed human nature, supplemented by a unique character.
- Nietzsche: variability and changeable nature of man's character.

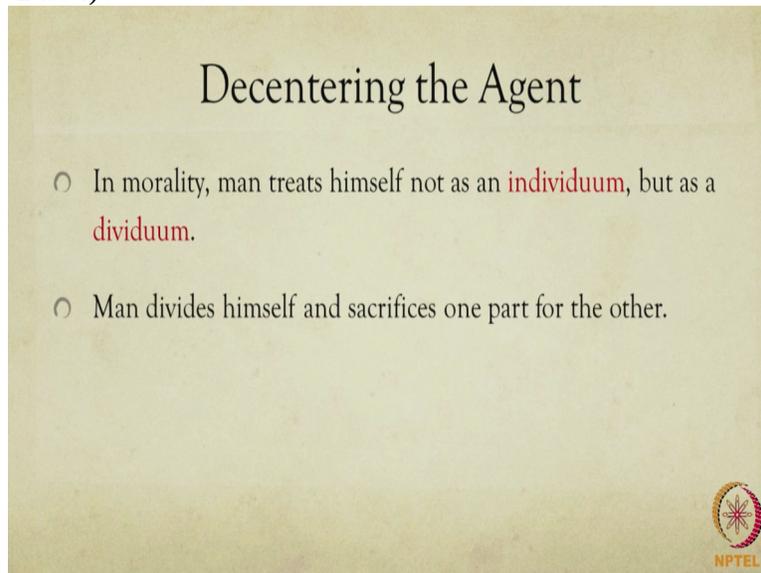
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And again, the tendency to find an agent has its origin in our linguistic habits according to Nietzsche. It presupposes the availability of something like fixed human nature, supplemented by a unique character. So normally when we use language, when we talk about morality, when we make pass such judgements about value judgements, we make this mistake, this linguistic habits.

Nietzsche says that the variability and changeable nature of man's character is very important in understanding his real nature. The variability of his character and the changeable nature. So there is nothing called a fixed human nature to which we can point to when we talk about agency. So Nietzsche goes ahead by decentering the agent.

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He says that in morality, man takes himself not as an individuum but as a dividuum. So this is exactly what happens in morality. We have seen in previous lectures that one of those characteristic features of morality is that it is always other regarding or rather one of the assumptions of any moral framework is that it needs to be other regarding.

So there is a certain amount of sacrifice involved in morality that we have a concern for other people but now Nietzsche is trying to argue that such a thing is a bogus concern. There is no such concern. It is hypocrisy. He says that what happens when a person commits or a person performs a sacrifice is that he divides himself and sacrifices one part for the other.

He is not actually sacrificing himself for someone else outside him. He is actually making a division, he divides himself and sacrifices one part for the other part because the other part is more important for him. Man loves one part more than the other and sacrifices the other for the one he loves more. And he gives an example here where the myth of a benevolent moral act, he takes the example of the mother sacrificing her sleep, her other pleasures for the side.

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The Myth of Benevolent Moral Act

- A mother gives her child what she takes from herself; sleep.
- She simply loves something of herself, her child, more than something else of herself.
- She sacrifices one part of herself for the other and not for something else that lies external to her.



A mother gives her child what she takes from herself; sleep. She simply love something of herself, the child. The child is actually not considered as something which is considered entirely different from herself. She considers the child as part of herself and then something else of herself. So she sacrifices one part of herself which is the sleep for the other which is the child, not for something else that lies external to her but one is considered by her as more important than the other part.

So there is nothing called a benevolent moral act. Her action need not to be seen as a benevolent moral act where one acts selflessly. So there is nothing called benevolent selfless action which many moral traditions try to highlight.

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The Seat of Morality

- Not in God or in human nature.
- Not in the rational nature of the human self.
- All truly noble morality grows out of triumphant self-assertion.

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Again, he says that the seat of morality is not God or human nature according to Nietzsche but it can be found in the rational nature of the human self as Kant and many others have contended. All truly noble morality grows out of triumphant self-assertion. So here we could see that you know which later on developed by Sartre as an ethics of self-creation, as an ethics of self-assertion, an ethics of self-centred selfishness.

Here we can find an ethics of self-creation which actually Sartre develops further based on what Nietzsche has contended. Now Nietzsche also takes, talks about these 2 concepts, the free will and moral responsibility which are at the centre of all moral debates. Most of the moral ethical traditions have considered these 2 concepts as very important. Here we take the effect to be the cause. This is what he says. The effect is misconceived as caused by us.

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Free Will and Moral Responsibility

- Here we take the effect to be the cause.
- We consider certain acts good or evil on the basis of their beneficial or harmful consequences.
- We then forget the origin of these terms and imagine that the qualities of good or evil are inherent in the actions themselves.



So what happens here is according to Nietzsche is that we consider certain acts good or evil on the basis of the benefits or harmful consequences. So not on the basis of the motives that led to such acts. But on the basis of human this factor strike us 1st. Then, we then forget the origin of these terms and imagine that the qualities of good or evil are inherent in the actions themselves. So this is the confusion. So we take the effect for the cause.

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Free Will and Moral Responsibility

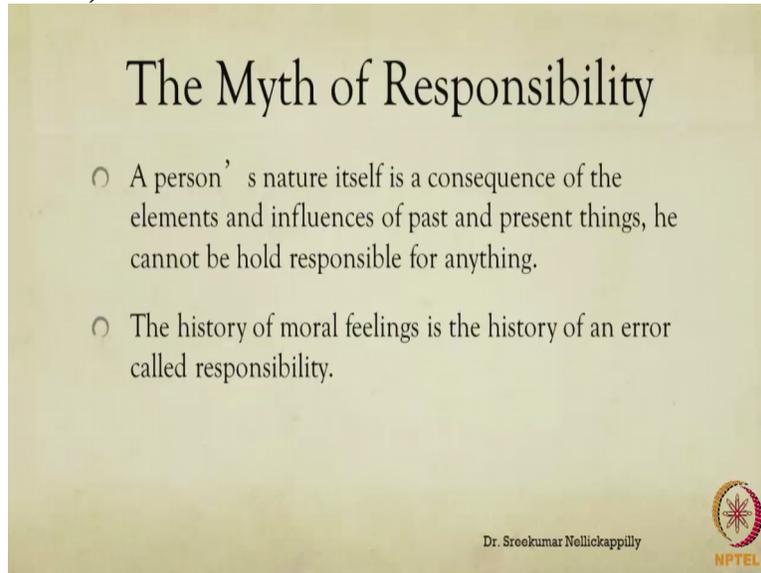
- We then link responsibility with the free will of a person.
- Afterwards, the predicates good or evil will be applied to the whole nature of man and now he seems to be responsible for his actions.



We then the link responsibility with the free will of a person and then afterwards, the predicate good and evil will be applied to the whole nature of man and now he seems to be responsible for

his actions. So this is how the whole concepts of free will, moral responsibility, good, bad, evil, all these things have derived by moral traditions according to Nietzsche. So he does brings out the myth of responsibility.

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The Myth of Responsibility

- A person 's nature itself is a consequence of the elements and influences of past and present things, he cannot be hold responsible for anything.
- The history of moral feelings is the history of an error called responsibility.

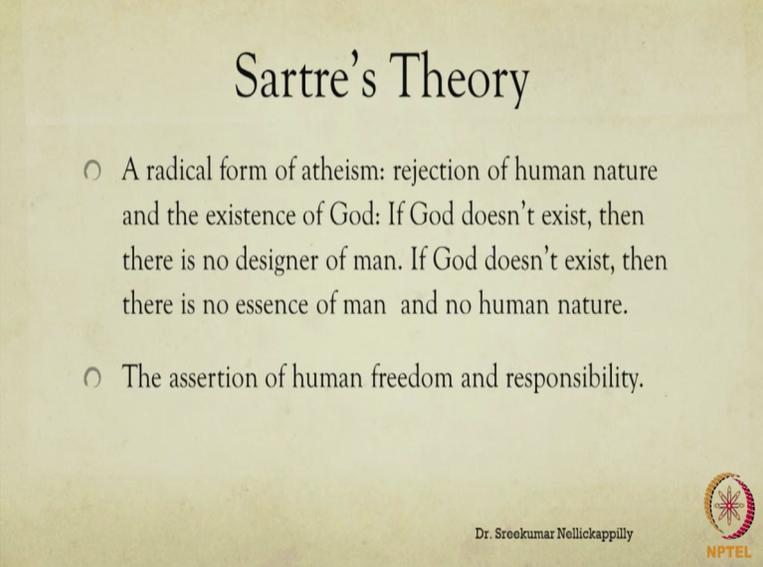
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A person's nature itself is the consequence of the elements and influences of past and present things, he cannot be hold responsible for anything. The history of moral feelings is the history of an error called responsibility according to Nietzsche. But Sartre's theory is slightly different here. He talks about responsibility. Of course, there is no opposition between Nietzsche and Sartre.

Nietzsche's opposition to the concept of moral responsibility functions in a different way. Sartre does not talk about the idea of moral responsibility as it is understood by the ethical traditions like in the Kantion tradition or utilitarianism or any other tradition. Sartre has a different concept of responsibility. His concept of responsibility is associated with a kind of boundless freedom which every human being according to him by nature enjoys because in the case of man, existence precedes essence.

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Sartre's Theory

- A radical form of atheism: rejection of human nature and the existence of God: If God doesn't exist, then there is no designer of man. If God doesn't exist, then there is no essence of man and no human nature.
- The assertion of human freedom and responsibility.

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He says that a radical form of atheism is imminent. It is inevitable for Sartre's philosophy which amounts to the rejection of human nature and the existence of God because the problem with the idea of God is that if God exists, then you are conditioned, then you are not free, then you are bound. You have a creator, you are answerable, you are accountable for everything.

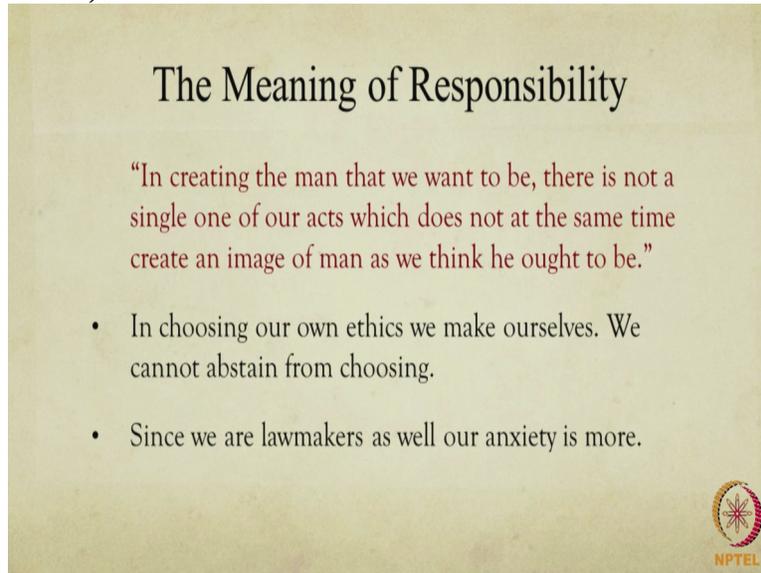
So most of the religious traditions control their people with this idea of God. But if God does not exist according to Sartre then there is no designer of man. Then man becomes completely free. If God does not exist then there is no essence of man and no human nature. So man is a free being and he has to exercise his freedom. He cannot run away from his freedom.

The assertion of human freedom and an responsibility are inevitable. Once you are free, you have responsible for your actions. That is why Sartre says that man is condemned to be free because responsibility of one is a pain. If you are made responsible, if you know that you would be made responsible for what you have done or what choices you have made, then you would be reluctant to make choices.

That actually scares you. That is the kind of anxiety which we derived from our existential situation and Sartre says that we cannot escape from this existential situation. That is inevitably going to be there. The notion of authentic existence is also there because existence to be authentic, has to recognise this freedom, has to recognise the situatedness, has to recognise this

existential condition which is finite and which is absolutely free which of course implies very strong responsibilities for the choices which we make. And the meaning of responsibility in Sartrean scheme of thing is this.

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The Meaning of Responsibility

“In creating the man that we want to be, there is not a single one of our acts which does not at the same time create an image of man as we think he ought to be.”

- In choosing our own ethics we make ourselves. We cannot abstain from choosing.
- Since we are lawmakers as well our anxiety is more.

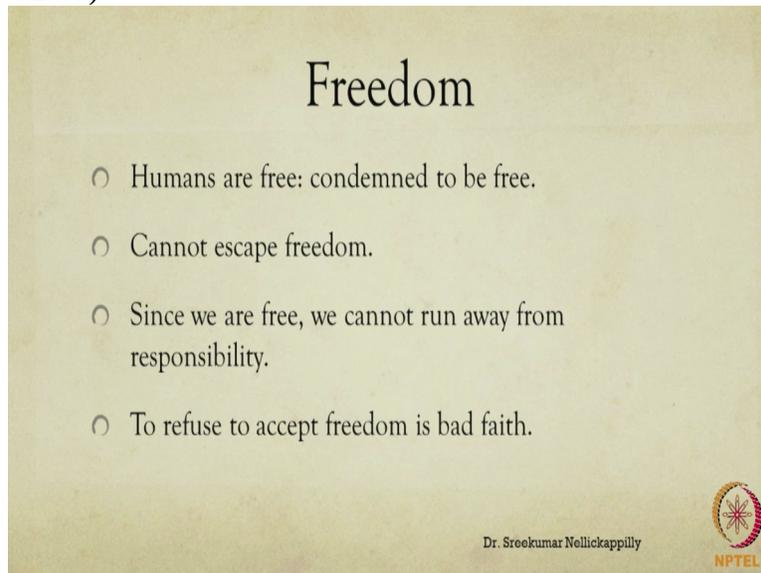


I quote, in creating the man that we want to be, there is not a single one of our acts which does not at the same time create an image of man as we think he ought to be. So when we make a choice what we want to be and we live a life or we make our own life possible in a certain way, we are actually creating an image for ourselves. There is not a single one of our acts which does not at the same time create an image of man.

So it is not that we are creating an image of ourselves but we are actually creating an image of man in general. In choosing our own ethics, we make ourselves. We cannot abstain from choosing. So by making a choice, by taking decisions and by acting, we make ourselves, we create ourselves. We cannot abstain from doing this.

But also, since we are lawmakers, since we are making it, since our laws are made by us, since there is no external agency or authority to control us or guide us, we are responsible for that, we are anxious about it. We do not know what would be the consequences and whatever are the consequences, we are responsible for that.

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The slide has a light beige background. At the top center, the word "Freedom" is written in a large, black, serif font. Below it, there are four bullet points, each starting with a small circle. The text of the bullet points is in a black, serif font. At the bottom right of the slide, there is a small circular logo with a red and white design, and the text "NPTEL" below it. To the left of the logo, the name "Dr. Srookumar Nellickappilly" is written in a small, black, sans-serif font.

Freedom

- Humans are free: condemned to be free.
- Cannot escape freedom.
- Since we are free, we cannot run away from responsibility.
- To refuse to accept freedom is bad faith.

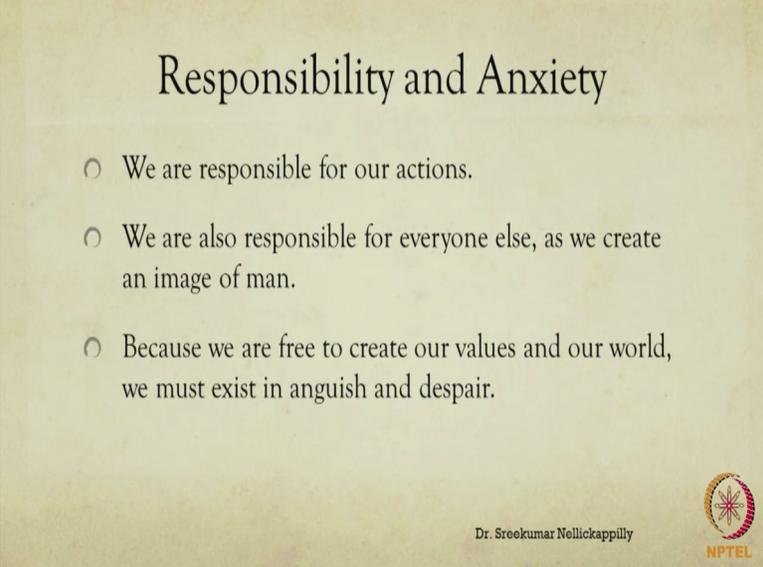
Dr. Srookumar Nellickappilly



But then, humans are free, we cannot escape freedom. Since we are free, we cannot run away from it, the responsibility. And to refuse to accept freedom is according to Sartre, bad faith. There are people who often try to argue that you know, circumstances led me to do certain things. All these blaming of circumstances and other people and other situations, according to Sartre is bad faith.

That implies inauthentic existence. And authentic person would take responsibility. Even if it fails, he takes responsibility. We are responsible for our actions. We are also responsible for everyone else as we create an image of man. Making a choice, we are actually creating an image of man in general. Not just for us but for everyone. We are projecting it as a possibility for everyone.

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The slide has a light beige background. At the top center, the title "Responsibility and Anxiety" is written in a black serif font. Below the title, there are three bullet points, each starting with a small circle. The text of the bullet points is in a black serif font. At the bottom right of the slide, there is a small circular logo with a red and white design, and the text "NPTEL" below it. To the left of the logo, the name "Dr. Srookumar Nellickappilly" is written in a small black font.

Responsibility and Anxiety

- We are responsible for our actions.
- We are also responsible for everyone else, as we create an image of man.
- Because we are free to create our values and our world, we must exist in anguish and despair.

Dr. Srookumar Nellickappilly



Because we are free to create our values and our world, we must exist in anguish and despair. So in a nutshell, we can put it in this way that we have to accept our existential condition which is characterised by finiteness and situatedness and all other limitations. There is no way we can escape from this. This would in one sense summarise the position of existentialist ethics as advocated by Sartre.

So I am winding up my discussion on this existentialist ethics now at this point of time. There are many other issues to be discussed of course because it is such a vast area and such a very interesting domain. We will have a very brief mention about some more issues that would become important from the perspective of existentialism in the next lecture which is going to be the last lecture and conclude our discussions on this coast with another discussion on post-modern ethics. So for the time being, we will wind up this lecture, thank you.