

# The evolution of political thought: from conservatism to communism

[Politics](#), [Communism](#)



Hobbes: Language In Contracts, the right passeth, not onely where the words are of the time Present, or Past; but also where they are of the Future: because all Contract is mutual translation, or change of Right; and therefore he that promiseth onely, because he hath already received the benefit for which he prosimeth, is to be understood as if he intended the Right should passe: for unlesse he had been content to have his words so understood, the other would not have performed his part first. (Hobbes, Thomas, Richard Tuck, Raymond Geuss, and Quentin Skinner 1996) Hobbes delineates a social contract through the use of fixed, universal language in order to facilitate the transfer of authority to a sovereign to attain security in an otherwise chaotic state of nature. In this state of nature, humans have an affinity towards self-preservation which is contrasted with the imminent fear of death.

Given the inclination to reside in a state where one may be able to live out their desires without the constant threat of death, there arises the need for safety in an anarchic natural state. The progression of sensations to desires within humans is ultimately developed into the need to communicate these wills. The transference of wills under the mechanism of language is central to Hobbes's notion of a social contract. Thus, this comes about through communicating that very inclination for safety to those who can provide stability" in Hobbes' interpretation, a monarch.

In this relationship between the constituent and the ruler, trust is the mechanism to make a political society a viable option. However, the question of the communication of fundamental instinctual desires" which a

government must make possible for one to pursue” is essential to the formation of language. Contracts as mutual translation subsequently rely on accurate communication. For stability to exist in a constant condition of disorder, the consent of the ruled under their sovereign must be clearly determined. This, as in the excerpt above, is where Hobbes highlights the importance of perfect language rooted in the universal understanding of the meaning of words themselves. He realizes that there is a need to have universally set definitions of words for language in order to be able to establish a covenant that will outline the order of a civil society. To uphold the credibility of a contract of the utmost importance” in this case, pertaining to the way people submit to authority to ensure civil security” the role of language is crucial to the implementation of a government. In a modern sense, the importance of language in the development of political institutions is epitomized in one document: a constitution. It can generally be acknowledged that nations view these contracts as holding the highest degree of value in the formation of what the state is founded upon. Therefore, Hobbes’ conception of language’s role in terms of the political organization of society is further demonstrated time and time again.

Moreover, historical conflicts arising from the misinterpretation of the meaning of what such contracts translate to demonstrate the validity of the argument in this work. Hobbes’ implementation of such a perfect language is meant to institute theoretical peace. Under the protection of a sovereign with a rigid political structure is the solution to a world where entropy reigns supreme, his proposed government seems to be a far better option than the

state of nature. What is ironic about Hobbes' argument for the covenant of giving up liberty to attain security is that in a primarily ideal state, all citizens consent to this. However, the reality of this transference of power to a sovereign is not guaranteed to be accepted by all. Rousseau: Equality ... The other, which may be called moral, or political inequality, because it depends on a sort of convention, and is established, or at least authorized by Men's consent. It consists in different Privileges which some enjoy to the prejudice of other, such as to be more wealthy, more honoured, more Powerful than they, or even to get obeyed themselves by them. (Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, and Victor Gourevitch 2012) To prompt a new structuralization of modern unequal political institutions, Rousseau's account of political inequality is rooted in the awareness that this is not a natural phenomenon" it is a construct based upon distinctions between individuals through linguistic conventions that create the capacity for comparison in a civil society. Rousseau's use of a secular hypothetical state of nature concerning mankind is used to explore the origin of social inequalities. This particular passage begins with the fundamental truth that the only inequality found in the state of nature is that which cannot be changed, that which is found in physical distinctions between individuals.

Transcending this fact, the moral inequality that is spoken of is that which has proliferated society through disparities amongst people via the economic and political structures of power. What is most concerning about the origin of this situation present in modern civilization is the fact that individuals view the matter as a result of nature. Thus, social conditioning of the acceptance

of subsequent Privileges is viewed as being authorized by Men's consent, in that the current political framework is able to perpetuate the inequalities present. Conceptually, this relates to the establishment of power on the basis of the ability for humans to be conditioned to accept the current state of inequality as normal under this political organization. In understanding the development of humanity from its original state to the present civilization which places individuals in a state of inequality, it is then evident that the notion of social inequality itself is not a purely natural phenomenon. For Rousseau, the hierarchies that dominate the rigid social conventions through the acceptance of this system of oppression are present through the means of comparison; this account of inequality begins with distinctions. Language is a means to articulate humanity's key capacity: comparison. With the possession of the means to make distinctions acquired from language, humans are propelled into a constant state of competition. However, one must remember that although distinctions may exist in a natural state, the comparisons and inequality derived from the ability to differentiate are not entirely natural. For it is through language that individuals have the intellectual capacity to make distinctions. The mere capacity for comparison, then, is the the beginning of inequality.

Although Rousseau's conception of the natural state of humans is characterized by being free, they are bound to inequality in the present conditions. The political nature of such artificial inequality is indicated in the fact that as humans progress, there is an immense need for institutions to make the matter right in establishing equality. Rousseau's cry to Geneva in

this work is a plea for humanity to establish a peaceful state through a republican system of government. Recognizing this allows one to realize the extent to which Rousseau's notions in regard to the unnatural conception of inequality are rooted in the reorganization of political societies to ensure that the course of modern civilizations shall no longer proceed in the way in which they have for centuries leading up to the present.

Marx: Alienation

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to the division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, monotonous, and easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and the propagation of his race. (Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels 2012 )

Under Marxist theory, there must exist a radical overthrow of the socio-political factors that give rise to the alienation of the individual through the capitalist system which creates the mechanistic existence of the proletariat. The criticism of the bourgeois's systematic dehumanization of the proletariat class demonstrates the reality that the individuals in this society must face in the context of their daily lives: they are a means to an end for the gain of profit.

According to Marx, what we do is connected to who we are; therefore, the actions which one commits are a sort of definition of one's essential being. Thus, the economic outputs of a human are an extension of their essence. But, under the economic system of capitalism, the individual has lost their

most fundamental sense of self through their isolation from society as they lose the value of their work under the model of industry. As individuals are lost in the masses of a mechanistic existence, they are alienated from what it fundamentally means to be human. They are denied the right to live for themselves. The proletariat becomes the property of the bourgeois. As slaves to this system, those who make up the proletariat class are dehumanized in how they are seen not only by those under the hierarchy of the capitalist society but in the fact that they become alien to themselves. The value of the individual is reduced to their equivalence to a machine in their expenditure of energy for products. Therefore, as the individual is lost at the hands of industry, the cyclical exploitation of their wage labor is demonstrated in the notion of property. Those belonging to the proletariat class are valued less than the property, the commodity, they produce. As individuals are only valued for the work that can be exploited from them, the human becomes less than an inanimate object. Marx's primary concern is that bourgeois society is able to systematically instill a livelihood of the proletariat that perpetuates their dehumanization at the hands of the few to increase the property of what does not even belong to those creating the object.

The irony of this deeply destructive system in modern times is the fact that once one is not in an industrial setting, consumerism is set in place as compensation for alienation in the workplace. Hence, the political nature of Marx's argument is embedded in the solution to the problem. His proposition to abolish private property is a way for humans to radically develop their

ideal state in an inevitable force of history. From a political standpoint, Marx conceptualizes an inevitable revolution through a call to materialize the natural force of history in the fight for the final stage of development. Following this logic, Communism is the final stage in the evolution of mankind. The premise of his analysis of the conditions of humans in this system ruled by industry is political at its core in recognizing the exploitation of power by one over the other: the oppressor and the oppressed. By understanding this relationship of power in a much more historically dynamic way, Marx's proposition for a revolution in the evolution of humanity is expected to come naturally. His argument against alienation relies on recognizing that if the past has seen the overturning of power, why can't the present? Nietzsche: Genealogy ... it was rather out of the most rudimentary form of legal rights that the budding sense of exchange, contract, guilt, right, obligation, settlement, first transferred itself to the coarsest and most elementary social complexes (in their relations with other similar complexes), together with the custom of comparing, measuring, and calculating power against power. (Nietzsche, Friedrich, and Walter Kaufmann 2000)

Nietzsche is concerned with the genealogy of morals in the examination of passing down social constructs as values through historical development in that individuals must reassess values in recognizing that man has the power to rewrite the moral playbook. According to Nietzsche's central suspicion of society, there is a fundamental reality that nothing is natural in the concept of human progress. This conclusion relies on recognizing that political power



has developed through false contracts. For it is the will to power that drives one's concept of morality today. Furthermore, these assertions are merely random and the idea of a social contract is a facade. Instead, this is a romanticization of a constant underlying human search for power. This is damaging to individuals in that the instinct of freedom is repressed in social order. As citizens under established governments are meant to give up their freedoms to ideally attain a more perfect society, Nietzsche is critical of this a merely calculating power against power. In this sense, Nietzsche serves to deconstruct moral values in order to analyze their origin. The evolution of such morals in terms of the system of power set in place is subsequently a continuation of assigning a given morality to what has no value beyond the realm of the human mind. Hence, it is not natural for humans to create social contracts apart from their independent state of nature. Acknowledging the role of power throughout history in the formation of the present perception of values through the use of genealogy is the key to moving past the idea that the history of morality is one driven by a natural progression of thought.

In fact, the past remains relevant to the future in understanding that such social complexes are not purely positive values. This is evident in which power has a hidden reality of negativity that must be ignored (or forgotten) in the creation and implementation of ideologies in the foundations of civil societies. What current civilizations deem as moral and such is merely a culmination of random events that have perpetuated the social conditioning of such beliefs. Thus, the future is nothing more than the manifestation of consequences of the manipulation of power in the time prior. To Nietzsche,

excavating the meaning of values through the genealogy of morals entails turning away from accepting such concepts as natural in the course of human evolution. The revaluation of values is dependent on recognizing that what is held to be the ultimate image of morality merely is a matter of a long history of aspiring to grasp power through the institution of such falsely originated ideals. The genealogy of morals set forth bring one about to question the notion of morality under systems of government. For if such moral originate out of falsehood, what is the true origin of what individuals have been fed to believe as natural? To Nietzsche, the birth of such moral is merely a symptom of the strong will to power. One is set free from harsh social complexes when the conclusion is arrived at for oneself that none of such morals truly matter nor exist in the natural state of being.

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