



# **MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**SEMESTER-I**

**PSC-1.4: WESTERN POLITICAL THINKERS-I**

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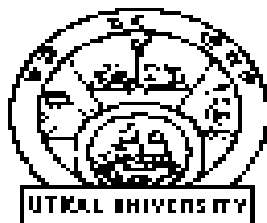
**BLOCK: 1,2,3 & 4**

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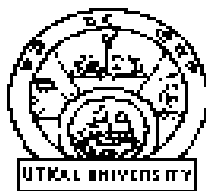
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DIRECTOR

**PSC-1.4**  
**WESTREN POLITICAL THINKERS-I**

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**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION, UTKAL UNIVERSITY,**  
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## **PSC-1.4-WESTERN POLITICAL THINKERS-I**

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## **BLOCK-1: PLATO AND ARISTOTLE**

Unit-1: Introduction to Greek Philosophy & Plato

Unit-2: Contribution of Plato

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## **UNIT-1: INTRODUCTION TO GREEK PHILOSOPHY & PLATO**

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### **Structure**

- 1.1 Objectives
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- 1.6 Summary
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### **1.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- The basic features of the ancient Greek Philosophy
- Difference between pre-Socratic and classical Greek Philosophy
- Influence of Socrates on Plato

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### **1.2: INTRODUCTION**

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Metaphysics literally means what is beyond (meta) the physical. A more definite sense of metaphysics is suggested in Aristotle's notion of 'first philosophy' by which he means the study of 'being qua being'. In general terms, it is an investigation into the real nature of things by going beyond what is only apparently or conditionally given to us. Therefore, it is an inquiry into the nature of reality or being. In other words, it attempts to know everything as it is in itself. This general sense of metaphysics coincides with the all- comprehensive nature of philosophy because in studying philosophy we seek to know the real from what is apparently presented to us. Thus, philosophy guides us in knowing about the eternal and essential nature of things. There is, in the process, a movement of thought from the immanent to the transcendent. As a result, our intellect is developed to know and understand the universe in a

better way. Philosophy, in this way, helps us in discovering those ultimate principles which gives continuity, meaning, and value to the complexity of our experiences.

However, apart from this general similarity between metaphysics and philosophy, there are certain issues that remain specific to metaphysics alone. For instance:

- Regarding the status of physical entities, metaphysics examines whether a thing is material (materialism) or mental (idealism) or both (dualism).
- Likewise, it is also concerned about certain non-physical particulars, like God.
- Besides, it probes into relations such as causality.

Space and time constitute another important area of metaphysical investigation. Since our knowledge of the world in terms of its spatiotemporal dimension is limited, the possibility of the number of ways to know the world becomes infinite. Consequently, the idea of possible ‘worlds’ arises which becomes another subject of metaphysical inquiry<sup>1</sup>. We thus observe that the scope of metaphysics is much wider than that of physics and cosmology

It follows from the above account that the task of metaphysics is to reveal the character of being or the real. The concepts and categories of ontological structure serve as symbols, and point to the unconditioned being. The point is well asserted in Plato’s works, wherein he makes an attempt to show that the phenomenal world is but a reflection or appearance of the transcendental reality which lies beyond the apparent world. Even Nagarjuna, in his *Madhyamaka* philosophy, reiterates that ‘phenomena do not completely cut us off from reality. Phenomena are appearances, appearances point to their reality’.<sup>2</sup> The world of appearance or the phenomenal world is like a veil and reality is that which is veiled.

The characteristic feature of David Hume and the logical positivists Ayer is the rejection of metaphysics mainly on the ground that metaphysical concepts and statements are not verifiable by sense-perception. Hume rejects it because it does not fall within his categories of knowledge namely ‘relations of ideas’ and ‘matters of fact’. On the other hand, Ayer repudiates the metaphysics because its statements are not empirically verifiable. However, in spite of these criticisms metaphysics appears to be important because the existential situation of man necessitates an inquiry into the nature of being. Every individual at some stage of his life becomes aware of his existential situation which Buddhism describes as ‘suffering’.

Thus, metaphysics serves dual purpose. On one hand, it develops and sharpens our cognitive approach towards reality which helps us in understanding the nature and structure of being. This objective is highlighted by Spinoza. On the other hand, it opens up before us the possibility of realising our freedom or liberation with the knowledge of the being. This aspect is made prominent in the Indian metaphysics, and with some modifications, in Greek philosophy.

In this unit we will take a look at the various aspects of Plato's philosophy, while specifically focusing on the ideas discussed in *Republic*.

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### **1.3: FEATURES OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY**

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As we are going to occupy ourselves mainly with Plato and Aristotle in this book, it is imperative to understand the nature of Greek philosophy and its divisions. In the process, it also becomes important to briefly discuss about Socrates and his method of philosophising because Plato makes him the mouthpiece of most of his dialogues. In the process it is also important to briefly discuss about Socrates and his method of philosophising because Plato makes him the mouthpiece of most of his dialogues. In fact, both Plato and Aristotle along with Socrates form one of the sections of the Greek philosophical system.

There have been several claims regarding the origin of Greek philosophy. Some say it has come from India, while others trace its origin mainly to Egypt. None of these claims are true, and it has been well established now that the Greeks themselves were responsible for carving a system of their own.

The inception of Greek philosophy can be traced back to the sixth century BC when men first attempted to use reason and logic to explain the world. Prior to this, all explanations were based on mythologies, cosmogonies, and theologies of the poets. The Greeks are, therefore, praised for their scientific temperament because many vague concepts become precise in their hands. The development of western philosophy is largely attributed to free and independent style of Greek thinking which is without any supernatural reference. The West considers the Greek philosophers to be the founders of science because it was in their hands that the idea of an independent and free inquiry into the nature of things without any religious compulsions first materialized. All their inquiries are structured on the proposition that nature must be

explained based on the principles of nature. This tendency is largely reflected in the works of pre-Socratic philosophers as well as in Aristotle's. So we can say that Greek philosophy highlights man's capacity to think and inquire independently, and it is with the Greeks that one finds a gradual departure from religion and religious influences.

Greek philosophy is grouped into three prominent periods. We first have the pre-Socratic phase which serves as the foundation of Greek philosophy. Then we have classical Greek philosophy or Athenian School, which includes Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. It is here that Greek philosophy reaches its maturity and culminates into Aristotle's system. The third phase is Hellenistic philosophy which developed after the death Alexander the Great and with the emergence of Roman Empire.

### **The pre-Socratics phase**

The pre-Socratic phase in the history of Greek philosophy represents the earliest period of the Greek system. It is also called as the Ionic period. This name is derived from the fact that the three prominent philosophers of this period namely Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes belonged to Ionia, which was the coast of Asia Minor. All the philosophers of this period engaged themselves in explaining the phenomena with reference to natural principles, rather than by appealing to mythical beings. The primary focus of their inquiry was on the nature of thing of which the world is made. They attempted to answer this question on the basis of sense-perception. Some said it was substance, and tried to explain the universe in terms of a single principle. They thus advocated monism. This was the position of Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes. Others particularly the Pythagoreans focussed not so much on sense-perception as on the relations between existing things, uniformity, and harmony in the world. They used numbers to express all these and consequently assumed numbers to be underlying at the base of everything. There were yet others like Heraclitus who pointed out to the fact of change, and claimed that since nothing was permanent in the world, change or becoming was the only cause behind all phenomena. As opposed to them the Eleatics and among them Parmenides held that a thing could not be something other than what it originally was. Hence, he advocated permanence, not change, as the significant characteristic of reality. Let us look into all these views one by one now.

### **Thales (624-550 BC)**

Thales is generally considered to be the founder of all philosophers because he represents the earliest school of philosophy in history. The importance of Thales lies in the fact that he attempted to answer philosophical questions without any reference to mythology. He declared water to be the most fundamental element out of which the universe has come into existence. His inference was based on the observations that all the essential elements of life contain moisture. Hence, he maintained that universe is basically water because only water can be converted into vapour, liquid, and solid. In other words water explains all the three states of matter. Consequently, he believed that nature is much alive, moving, and changing all the time. At the same time, he also maintained that everything returns back to water.

### **Anaximander (611-547 BC)**

After Thales, Anaximander comes into the scene, and unlike Thales he claims that the essence of the universe is a boundless space filling mass. He believed that all qualities are derived from it. According to him, it is from this boundless or undifferentiated matter that different substances get separated due to constantly being in motion. He explains that first the hot gets separated and then the cold because the hot surrounds the cold like a sphere of flame. The heat of the flame converts cold first into moisture and then into air. The air expands and breaks up the sphere of fire that appear like wheel shaped rings. These rings have openings through which the fire comes out and takes the form of heavenly bodies and with the force of the surrounding air they start moving around the earth. As a result of this, the sun is the highest body in the heaven followed by moon, the fixed stars, and finally the planets.

In this context, Anaximander further explains that out of the moist element that got evaporated by the sun the first living beings came out. Like Thales, he also believes that everything must return to the mass from which it came out. Thus, Anaximander's position seems to be advanced as compared to that of Thales. What Thales set up as a principle, Anaximander explains as a derivative. Moreover, one also finds the notion of indestructibility of mass inherent in the above explanation. His theory of spheres has a significant place in the history of astronomy.

### **Anaximenes (588-524 BC)**

Anaximenes considers air to be the first principle of the universe because of its mobility and inner vitality. He explains that since air or breath is the only life giving element in us hence, it

must be the principle of the universe. He maintains that the way our soul binds us together, similarly air surrounding the world, holds it together. It is all pervasive, i.e. extended infinitely throughout the space.

He further maintains that the air is regulated by the principles of rarefaction and condensation. The same air when rarefied becomes fire and on condensation it becomes wind, water, cloud, and even earth and stone.

Thus, the views of Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes were used to analyze the importance of substance in the formation of the universe. Apart from substance, as we have mentioned above, the pre-Socratic philosophers also brought in the role of numbers and the ideas of change and permanence in order to explain the universe. We will try to understand how each of these philosophers and their theories have influenced both Plato and Aristotle in shaping up their respective philosophies. As far as number is concerned, we will mainly talk about Pythagoras followed by the views of Heraclitus and Parmenides.

### **Pythagoras (580-500 BC)**

So far, the three thinkers were engaged in revealing the essence of things or the universe at large. Their main focus was to determine the concrete determinate substance like water, air, or some undifferentiated mass that could explain the origin of the universe. Pythagoras belonged to the school that was particularly interested in the question of form or relation. Relation here refers to quantitative relations which are measurable and which constitutes the subject matter of mathematics. It is assumed that Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans wanted to speculate on the problem of uniformity and regularity in the world. They made use of their observation that there are various forms and relations in the world for instance measures, proportions, uniform recurrence, and so on. All these were expressible in numbers. Thus, they reasoned that no relations or uniformities or even law and order could be expressed without numbers. In other words, they claimed that numbers are the only reality that lie at the base of everything in this universe.

Now the question was, if numbers were the essence of the things then how are they to prove that whatever is true of the numbers is also true of the things. In order to prove so, the Pythagoreans studied the endless peculiarities of numbers and related them with the phenomenal world. For instance, they discovered that numbers were odd and even; the former

not divisible by two while the latter was. They argued that like numbers nature was also composed of opposites because one observes the odd and the even in nature as well. This is exemplified through the peculiarities of left and right, male and female, one and many, light and darkness, and similar things that we find in abundance in nature.

Besides, Pythagoras also explained the corporeal world in numerical terms as he believed that it was based on the idea of unit or one. The case was same with non- corporeal things like love, justice, and virtue. We find a reflection of this in Plato when he appeals to all to concentrate on the forms that he believes to be eternal and unchangeable essences of things. Yet another aspect of Pythagoras which was adopted by Plato was the former's belief in the immortality of the soul.

### **Heraclitus (535-475 BC)**

Heraclitus's teaching about the essence of the universe was based on the fundamental and obvious observation that the universe was an ever changing reality. His position is expressed through a single statement, 'you could not step twice into the same rivers, for other and yet other waters are ever flowing on.' He captured this notion of incessant activity to express that change was the first principle of the universe. He rested this principle on what he considered to be the most mobile substance, fire, which he felt was ever living because it was the essence of the soul. Heraclitus was not interested in the physical aspect of fire. He only wanted to show how fire represents the principle of change and the idea of qualitative transformation. Basically, he wanted to emphasize that process alone is reality which he tried to represent by fire. According to him, there is an inbuilt order even in the ever changing fire. The process of fire involves a downward movement and an upward movement. The former involves condensation due to which fire changes into water. The latter takes into account rarefaction by which water again gives way to fire. Y. Masih gives a very interesting account of the whole phenomena while elaborating on Heraclitus in *A Critical History of Western Philosophy*. He mentions that this order of succession produces the illusion of permanence in us. He points out that every individual has fire in him that makes him more intellectual.<sup>3</sup> Coming back to Heraclitus, he expressed that everything appears to be permanent in the world as one is not able to perceive the movements inherent in them. What is lost in one way is acquired in some other way, which gives the impression that things are same. He also claims that there is a unity in the movement from loss to gain. For instance, when fire is changed into water the former is

lost and emerges in a new form. Thus, he asserts that everything is changed into its opposite in the course of its existence in the universe. And it is this change that creates the world. Thus, he holds that change which is the union of the opposites is the cause of the universe. In this sense, he tries to assert that everything is both is and is not. We find a reiteration of the Heraclitean view in Buddha's theory of momentariness as well.

### **Parmenides (5<sup>th</sup> century BC)**

A counter view of the Heraclitean position was put forward by the proponents of the school of Elea famously known as the Eleatics. This school propagated the idea that the principal underlying things must be permanent, unmoved, and unchanging something. Although, the school has three distinct phases that are identified by Xenophanes, Parmenides, and Zeno and Melissus we shall restrict ourselves only to Parmenides because his view offers a contrast to that of Heraclitus, thus showing the growth and movement of the Greek thought. It would suffice to mention at this point that Parmenides was impressed by Xenophanes declaration that 'all is one' in accounting for the universe from a strictly theological viewpoint. He develops this line as ontology to complete the Eleatic system which was further defended by the successors of the school.

Parmenides contended his predecessor's view by asking how can a thing both be and not be? Such a contradiction was beyond his comprehension. He argued that to say that one quality can become another is equivalent to assert that something can come from nothing and also that it can become nothing. This thought was not acceptable to Parmenides. He, on the other hand, maintained that if the being has to become, it has to come from itself. In other words, according to Parmenides being can come only from being and nothing else. From this thought, he concluded that whatever is would continue to remain what it is. This further implied that the being was always one, eternal, unchangeable, and underived. Moreover, he also maintained that the being ought to be immovable because we cannot conceive of a being that comes into existence and disappears. He even identified being with thought and pronounced them to be one thus asserting that reality is mental. This constituted the basic tenet of idealism.

Parmenides was not convinced with the concept of manyness, for it conveyed change and change was not real for him. He advocated the theory of oneness, which was later adopted by Plato.

From the Eleatics, the line of thought was carried forward by the Atomists who presupposed the numberless minute indivisible particles of matter, which they called atoms, to be the principle of the universe. In their view these particles were more elementary than earth, water, fire, and water, and also the moving forces in the form of love and hate. The above discussion thus highlights some of the major viewpoints that laid the foundation of Greek philosophy in particular and entire western philosophy as a whole. We shall next discuss Socrates who along with Plato and Aristotle carried these thoughts to their logical culmination.

## **Socrates**

Coming to Socrates, it is very important to know his background in order to understand his teaching. He was a religious man who believed in the immortality of the soul, life after death, and the doctrine of reminiscence. He always believed that there was a supernatural force that guided all his actions and counselled him during hard times. He used to have premonitions of good or evil consequences of his actions and could never disobey this inner voice. He is not credited with advocating a philosophy of his own neither has he contributed to formation of any system. Mostly, we know him through the writings of Plato, his disciple. He had this habit of going to any spot where people gathered and would try to engage them in conversation. The conversation would start with simple question and answer and would involve correction, refutation, etc. He would, thus initiate an intellectual activity, which the youth enjoyed a lot. It was this style of stimulating intellectual and critical thinking that later became famous as Socrates method.

However, he was quite taken a back when he was declared the wisest man because he was conscious of his ignorance. He checked with people who claimed to be the wise lots and found, on examining them, that they were not wise. So, by this logic, Socrates, who was aware of his own ignorance, was wise. Therefore, it became his mission to question every wise man, and this eventually got transformed into a passion for the search for knowledge. This passion called for his death too. He was condemned to death for corrupting the youth by refuting the existing

gods and replacing them by new gods. However, it seems to appear, as one can make out from Plato's *Apology* and some other works that somewhere in his heart he believed in one God only.

It is thus, evident that knowledge was a major obsession for him, and he became all the more concerned about the concept of knowledge when the Sophists defined knowledge in terms of perception alone and logically inferred that all knowledge is probable. This analysis was also extended by them to understand morality when they restricted morality to one's feelings and desires. As a result, moral laws were not universal according to them.

Socrates was not convinced by their arguments because he believed in the universal validity of knowledge which he attributed exclusively to the element of reason, thereby putting it at a higher plane than that of perception and individual feelings. He believed in knowledge purely by concepts and he was of the opinion that these were formed essentially by reason. He even defined virtue as knowledge of the good that is to be gained through concepts alone. This is what constituted universal knowledge according to Socrates.

There are two main sources from which one can derive knowledge about Socrates teachings: one is Plato and the other is Xenophon. This is particularly indicated in the earlier writings of Plato when he was still a disciple of Socrates and his own philosophy had not developed. These dialogues, thus portray the substance of Socrates philosophy. So Plato, as will be evident, was basically an idealizing philosopher. On the other hand, Xenophon was a practical man who believed in the matters of facts. He admired Socrates character and personality more than his philosophy. His references to Plato are largely found in his *Memorabilia*.

Socrates teachings are mainly ethical pertaining to man and his duties, but even that is based on his theory of knowledge. Unlike what the sophists claimed, Socrates desired to show that the primary basis of knowledge is reason. He aimed to restore the objectivity of knowledge. The bottom line of his epistemology is that 'all knowledge is knowledge through concepts'. This makes it necessary to explain what is a concept? According to Socrates, when we see a particular thing and are conscious of its presence, we have a perception of that thing, for example a particular tree or a man. Next, he says when we shut our eyes and think of the object we have a mental picture of the same. This consciousness is an image or representation

of what we saw and gives us an idea of that thing. Thus we always have ideas of particular things. But he holds that when we have ideas of the whole class of a particular object, say a horse, we form a general idea and such a general idea is what we call concept. All class names are thus concepts. In other words, a concept is formed by bringing together such ideas wherein all the objects of a class agree with one another.

Now, the question is how does one form a concept? Socrates claims that concepts are formed by the faculty of reason. It is debated by some that the faculty of reason helps only in arguing and in deriving conclusions from the premises. Against such propositions, Socrates maintains that both types of reasoning, induction and deduction, are engaged in the formulation of a concept. Induction is employed to make general principles or statements from particular cases, that is to say general principles refer to the entire class of objects or things and that is nothing but a concept. Deduction on the other hand involves the application of the general principles to particular cases. This implies that whereas inductive reasoning is used to form concepts deductive reasoning is concerned with their application.<sup>4</sup>

A very pertinent aspect of Socratic thinking comes into focus here. By making the knowledge conceptual, Socrates was trying to emphasise on reason as the main organ or the source of knowledge. This was in diametrical opposition to the Sophist claim that all knowledge is derived from sense experience. Socrates believed that reason is universally present in all men. So, if knowledge is grounded in reason then it will have the element of objective truth in it. This would further make knowledge valid for all men. He even draws a parallel between a concept and a definition. He explains that we define a thing by classifying all the common qualities of that thing. The same formula applies in the making of a concept. In other words, according to Socrates a definition is nothing but the expression of a concept in words. And if the definitions are fixed one gets the objective standard of truth. In other words, the question of choice no longer remains there as has been claimed by the sophists. Basically, he wanted to rid knowledge of any subjective element. By knowledge, he only meant knowledge of concepts, i.e. of things as they are independent of the individuals. His entire epistemology is focussed on the formation of concepts. He was concerned with the concepts and definition of virtue, temperance, etc. He extended the objectivity of knowledge to determine the objectivity of morality. It is said that Socrates always considered theory

secondary to practice. His intention to know what virtue consisted of was mainly to practise virtue in life.<sup>5</sup>

This brings us to his Ethics. In his ethical teachings, he emphasizes that virtue is identified with knowledge. He firmly believes that in order to act right, a man must first have the knowledge of what is right. From this premise, he derives that moral actions must have their roots in knowledge. The identification of virtue with knowledge results in three significant propositions. First, he tries to convey that any man who does not have knowledge cannot do what is right. Second, it shows that virtue can be taught. And third, it implies that 'virtue is one'. The first proposition is a debatable proposition, and Aristotle in particular argued against this proposition. He blamed Socrates for leaving out the roles of passions and emotions in governing man's conducts and restricting human action only to one's reason. His argument may appear to have some point, but Socrates only desired to communicate that men always seek the good without many of them knowing what is good at all.

As regards the second statement, it appears a little difficult to comprehend because it claims of teaching virtue like mathematics. One connects virtue as dependent on a number of factors like the dispositions with which a man is born, his environment, education, heredity, and so on. These factors go on to define his character and he continues to remain the same till the end of his life. Minor changes may reflect by practising some amount of self-control, but for the larger part he continues to remain what he happens to be. In this context, it is worth referring to W.T. Stace's analysis. He says that since Socrates solely conditioned virtue on knowledge, he must have felt that the way knowledge is imparted by teaching similarly virtue may also be teachable; the only requirement being a teacher who would have the knowledge of the concept of virtue.

Coming to the last proposition, i.e. 'virtue is one', it is said that although we identify and acknowledge multiple virtues like kindness, prudence, temperance et al, Socrates claimed that each of them flow from one source that is knowledge. Thus, knowledge alone is virtue according to him.

The above exposition is a brief account of Socrates epistemology and his ethics. We will see how Plato incorporates these teachings in his philosophy. We shall now touch upon his methodology that is not only exclusive but is essentially Socraterian. His method of inquiry was quite unlike his predecessors or even his successors. It comprised of casual conversation

in the form of simple questions and answers. He mainly discussed ethical issues with the youth. And through skilful argumentation and questioning he would make them aware of the inadequacies of their views. This method later became the dialectical method and finds a confirmation in the works of several philosophers, Indian and Western. There is another side to the method of Socrates which was the maieutic method.<sup>7</sup> Through this method, he tried to establish that the real knowledge is already present in us like a child inside a mother's womb and it comes out by way of recollection when one is questioned. An extension of this thought was reasserted in his belief regarding the immortality of the soul and was central to his epistemology, though it is claimed that he did not write anything. To some, it was at the base of Aristotle's inductive theory too.

Thus, Socrates is credited with influencing the Greek thinking to the extent that one still finds its repercussions in western philosophy. He seems to have conceptualised both epistemology and morality. From an epistemological point of view, he maintained that knowledge proper is through concepts only and that is what makes it universal and eternal. Similarly, where morality is concerned, he held that morality was a way of knowing the good through concepts. This claim suggests that if one knows what was good and evil, one could never fail to act in a manner which is good or morally correct. Thus, he upheld the role of reason in his moral teachings also. This is now termed as Socrates intellectualism.

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#### **1.4: PLATO AND HIS WORKS**

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Plato and Aristotle have been the most influential among all philosophers. Their thoughts are constantly reflected in all the philosophies of subsequent ages ancient, medieval and modern. In fact, it would be more justifiable to state that out of the two, Plato has had a greater impact and influence on others. This is because Aristotle's philosophy itself grows and develops out of a critical analysis of Plato's theory of ideas, and in recent times we find references to Plato's *Republic* not only in Ambedkar's *Caste in India* but also in Bernard William's *Subjectivism* where he describes the amoralist (both are the area of applied ethics).

Plato was born in 427 BC and died in 347 BC. Since the time of his birth and throughout is youth, the Peloponnesian war (between city states of Athens and Sparta) was in full progress which eventually culminated in the defeat of Athens. The defeat was attributed to the democratic form of government which accentuated the death of Socrates for whom Plato had

deep-rooted affection and respect. He had earlier hoped to contribute to Athenian politics, as he was dissatisfied with the political scenario of Athens. There were several changes in the form of government as he was growing up. The democratic government, the rule of many, was taken over by the oligarchic government, the rule of a chosen few, and was again replaced by the democrats. Plato was quite disturbed by all this, particularly by the improper functioning of the government to protect the interests of its subjects. But, it was the death of Socrates that changed his career plans. He felt that it was unthinkable for civil war and corruption to stop unless people could understand the purpose of life and of society. This understanding, he believed, could be developed only through philosophy.

Therefore, in order to teach philosophy, he founded the Academy in 386 BC. The purpose of his Academy was to produce philosopher-rulers. For the rest of his life he taught at his school. The most outstanding student of the Academy was Aristotle. It is mandatory at this point to have some idea of the philosophical influences on Plato. This could help us in understanding his approach in the *Republic*.

There have been four major influences on Plato's philosophical temper. They are Pythagoras, Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Socrates.

Plato's belief in immortality, the other worldliness, his concept of the smile of the cave, and his tendency to connect intellect with mysticism is attributed to Pythagoras. From Parmenides, he accepted the belief that reality is eternal, unchanging, and timeless and, logically speaking, all change must be illusory.

From Heraclitus he took that nothing is permanent in the sensible world. He combined both Parmenides and Heraclitus to conclude that knowledge is not derived from senses, but only gained by the intellect.

Finally, his obsession and ethical problem (evident in the *Republic*) and teleological explanation of the world are borrowed from Socrates' teachings.

We will thus observe that all the concepts (justice, state, ruler, etc.) are explained in a teleological fashion by Plato, i.e. with the view of what is ultimately good: What is good about justice or what is good that one should look for in a ruler or in a state and so on. Thus, there is an emphasis on understanding the good because he identifies the goodness with reality by claiming it to be timeless and eternal.

### 1.4.1: Chronology of Plato's Works

Plato's works are mostly presented in the form of dialogues between Socrates and other speakers. In other words, Plato uses Socrates as his mouthpiece and it is through him that he presents his ideas on various topics. One finds frequent use of analogies and myths that makes his literature rich.

As far as Plato's works are concerned, they are broadly divided into early and middle periods, but a few of them could be taken as his late works. In the early dialogues, the focus is exclusively on ethical questions, but the tone is pessimistic in the sense that one is unsure about the answers. These include Plato's works like the *Apology*, *Crito*, *Euthyphro*, *Meno*, and *Protagoras*. The dialogues are typically between Socrates and an interlocutor who assumes that he understands common evaluative concepts, like courage and piety. But after being questioned repeatedly by Socrates, he fails to answer what these concepts mean. In fact, Socrates also admits that he has no answer to such concepts.

For instance, in the dialogue called *Euthipro*, the interlocutor Euthipro claims that his father's prosecution is not an impious act. But when questioned by Socrates he fails to point out a single common feature by virtue of which an act can be acknowledged as pious. In fact, in his apology Socrates admits his wisdom is in his realisation that he knows little. Thus, in the early dialogues Socrates fails to establish a defensible theory that would justify the use of normative terms. However, one observes a change in *Meno*, wherein the question raised is once again about virtue, and there is no convincing answer to it. Here, for the first time the issue of methodology is brought in by Plato. He claims that even if one does not know, it is possible for him to learn through questioning (method used by Socrates). This is because he explains that our soul is already in acquisition of knowledge before it enters the body. So, while we learn, we actually recollect what we already knew once and have forgotten. Therefore, he appears more confident in the *Meno* than in the *Apology*. From here, Plato becomes more assertive about the immortality of soul, and this is reflected in *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and the *Republic*. These constitute his works in the middle periods. What is noticeable in these works is how Plato takes support of the metaphysical considerations regarding the ability of soul to learn, in order to support and explain the idea of goodness and how people should strive for it in whatever they do in life. He tries to show that Socratic questions can be resolved if we analyze ethical enquiries in metaphysical terms.

With this understanding he writes the *Phaedo*, wherein he asserts the existence of abstract objects. These abstract objects are Plato's forms or ideas which he claims to have independent existence and are not provided by our thoughts. As a result, they are eternal and changeless and also incorporeal. In fact, Socrates in his dialogues pre-supposes these forms. For instance, referring back to *Euthyphro*, Socrates explains the common between two pious acts. He says that both or rather all such acts participate in the form of piety. Similarly, what makes two sticks equal is their participation in the form of equality. Thus, there is an appeal to standard of piety or equality that the soul already knows.

According to Plato, all the words of our language refer to some form or the other, though they represent different sorts of objects at the level of sensation and perception. In other words, these forms represent the universals and the unconditioned whereas every word represents something particular and conditioned.

Coming to his later works one notices another change in Plato's methodology, especially, when he uses clarification, i.e. 'collection and division of kinds' in the *Phaedrus*. This approach is carried through his later works comprising of the *Sophist*, *Statesman*, and *Pilebus*. One assumes that Plato's later works have contributed to Aristotle's interest in categories and biological clarifications.<sup>8</sup> Let us now take a look at the subject matter of the *Republic*.

#### **1.4.2: Brief Sketch of the *Republic***

The *Republic* is by far one of the most popular and finest dialogues of Plato. It needs to be clarified at the onset that this dialogue is not to be read as a novel or play. It is just a discussion that takes place in a single room between Socrates and others. While reading the *Republic*, what the reader has to look forward to is how abstract thoughts are made relevant by Plato. Pure philosophy or metaphysics occupies a central place in the dialogue because Plato attempts to answer practical questions by constantly involving metaphysical. In other words, the moral or the ethical is explained through metaphysical, which is much wider in scope and content.

The subject matter may briefly be stated as follows:

Socrates is asked if justice is good in itself, because the common view assume that injustice pays if one can get away with it. To answer this question, Socrates presents a picture of his ideal state that is also an ideal political community. He claims that such a state will be so dominated by justice that it would be easier to find justice even in the individual soul. Such

state will be ruled by trained philosophers as they would have a better understanding of the good so that the everyday affairs are fairly judged. The ruler's life will be designed to serve the interest of the community. They would be educated like the prisoners in the caves. Nothing is to be possessed privately by them. Their sexual lives are to be regulated by eugenic considerations and they are not to know their children. Political positions would be open to women and popular poetry would be replaced by philosophical reflections in order to impart moral education.

Such a city would be ideally a just city because every component/department would perform the task for which it is specially trained. For instance, rulers would rule, the soldiers would enforce their commands and so on. Accordingly, the souls of individuals would be just souls in the sense that every component of the soul would perform the job it is best suited to perform – the understanding and the reasoning part of the soul would rule; the assertive part which is expressed in our anger would supply the understanding with the force it needs; the appetite that inclines us towards food and sex would only seek objects that are approved by reasons.

Consequently, any individual who displays an integration of these elements of the soul would be a just and balanced individual and such an individual would be none other than a philosopher.

Socrates argues that the worth of our lives depends on the worth of the objects to which we are devoted. Therefore, if the soul shows maximum attachment to the forms, i.e. the ultimately valuable objects, then it follows that the attachment to the form or idea of justice would result in a just soul. Plato explains that those who feel that injustice pays assume wealth, domination, etc. to be supremely valuable. Their souls are thus not attached to the most intelligible and valuable objects. Such souls do not form just souls because of their failure to grasp the ultimate good.

Along with the brief description of the *Republic* it is beneficial for the readers to know the speakers. The main speakers who surface in the dialogue are:

- Socrates
- Cephalus
- Polemarchus (son of Cephalus)

- Thrasymachus
- Glaucon (Plato's elder brother)
- Adeimantus

Cephalus and Polemarchus appear only in the beginning, and Thrasymachus is silenced by Socrates gradually. But rest of the conversation is carried on between Socrates and Plato's brother.

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## 1.5: CONCEPT OF JUSTICE

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In this section we will see how the notion of justice is introduced in the *Republic*. It is important to mention at the onset that in the initial stages justice is frequently interpreted as 'doing the right thing'. The discussion takes place in the house of Cephalus, an old and wealthy businessman. The subject of justice is introduced in an informal and preliminary sense.

Socrates goes to the Piraeus with Glaucon where many well-known Athenians have gathered to celebrate a festival in honour of goddess Bendice. Since this celebration is first of its kind, Socrates too wants to offer prayers to the Goddess. After finishing his prayers he prepares to return to his town when he is stopped by Polymarchus's slave. There are many others like Glaucon's brother Adeimantus and Niceratus, and all of them together succeed in convincing Socrates to stay back. So all of them land at Polymarchus's house where Socrates meets Cephalus and some other prominent personalities. A friendly discussion begins between them on the issue of old age and wealth. Socrates expresses how much he enjoys talking to old people because their experience guides us immensely. 'I enjoy talking to very old men, for they have gone before us on a road that we too may have to tread....'<sup>9</sup> However, regarding his views on old age, Cephalus gives a totally different picture contrary to the opinions of most of his age mates who usually grumble that their 'families show no respect for their age and proceed to harp on the miseries old age brings'. He, on the other hand, says that these people are to be blamed because of their character. According to him, 'If men are sensible and good tempered old age is easy enough to bear'<sup>10</sup>. Socrates wants him to speak more so he provokes Cephalus by pointing out that people do not agree with his observations of old age. He tells him that most people feel that old age is easy for Cephalus because of his wealth and not because of his character: 'I am afraid that most people don't agree with what you say

Cephalus, but think you carry your years lightly not because of your character but because of your wealth. They say that the rich have many consolations'<sup>11</sup>. Following this, Socrates asks him about the greatest advantage that he has gained from his richness. Cephalus replies that wealth is valuable not to everyone but to good and sensible men because 'wealth contributes ... to one's ability to avoid both unintentional cheating or lying and the fear that one has left some debt to man unpaid before one dies'<sup>12</sup>. Socrates expresses his doubt and points out to him that justice or doing the right cannot simply be a matter of telling the truth or paying back what one has received. He gives an instance to explain his position. He says if one borrows a weapon from a friend who subsequently goes out of his mind and then asks for his weapon to be returned then it would be not right to return the weapon to him because the latter might misuse it. Cephalus reluctantly agrees with Socrates and politely withdraws from the conversation. The issue is then taken up by his son Polemarchus. This constitutes the first view of justice, wherein it is equated with telling truth and paying back what one owes to others.

We now come to the second view, which is proposed by Polemarchus with a little modification in his father's position. He starts by saying that justice consists in 'giving a man his dues'. This position is borrowed from the poet Simonides who claims that 'right' is 'to give every man his due'. But Socrates disagrees with him and expresses that the poet's views of 'right' only reflects his wisdom and inspiration. What he is interested in knowing, on the other hand, is whether we should return anything that is entrusted to us to the person we owe it even after knowing that the person is no longer sane. Polemarchus concedes that it is not right to do so, but at the same time he clarifies that Simonides got this idea from the mere thought that if there is an exchange, say of money, between two friends A and B then A should not return the money to B if this return would cause harm to him. It was thus concluded that by 'due' Simonides must have only meant what is 'appropriate' in the context of 'friends' and 'enemies'<sup>13</sup>. In other words, according to Simonides, it is not appropriate to return a friend something (his due) that will cause him harm, although it is appropriate to do so with one's enemies. Thus, Polemarchus takes his final stand on justice saying that it is 'benefitting one's friend and doing harm to one's enemies.' Hereafter, Socrates discusses a number of questions and situations with Polemarchus, only to show him that if we follow his definition of justice then this concept would turn out to be 'useless' and not a 'very serious' issue at all. In other words, Socrates tries to convey to the latter that justice has no use if we

interpret it in terms of helping friends and harming enemies. This reflects an extreme position because one can be wrong about one's friends and enemies. Socrates further explains that as human beings we often make mistake and consider a man honest where he is actually not and vice-versa. This, all the more, entails that sometimes the enemies are actually good and friends are indeed bad. In such a situation, he claims that if we follow Polemarchus's definition it would mean that it is right to 'help the bad and harm the good', whereas the common understanding suggests that good men are just because they are not likely to do any wrong. Another implication of this position would mean that we are justified in causing injury to those who may not have done any wrong at all. Polemarchus now realizes that his reckoning of friends and enemies is not a correct one. Socrates also conveys to him that by his definition it would often be 'right....to injure ....friends, who are bad and help....enemies....who are good', and this is just the opposite of what Simonides meant. Polemarchus who by now is more or less convinced by Socrates' arguments, offers a little variation in his own definition of friends and enemies. He describes a friend as '....one who both seems and is an honest man: while the man who seems, but is not, an honest man seems a friend, but really is not and similarly for an enemy'<sup>14</sup>. In other words, a friend should not only seem to be an honest man but he must actually be so and in the same way an enemy must not only seem to be dishonest but must actually be so. At this point, Socrates guides him a little more and asks him to generalise the definition by equating the good man as being a friend and the bad man as being an enemy. Subsequently, this change is incorporated too and justice is restated as '....doing good to one's friend if he is good, and to harm one's enemy if he is evil'<sup>15</sup>. In simple words, justice now means benefiting only those friends who are actually good people and harming those enemies who are indeed bad men. This forms the second view of justice. As far as Socrates is concerned, he is not quite satisfied with the above modification as suggested by Polemarchus. Basically, he wants the latter to believe that to harm anyone in any sense is not good. He proceeds to argue in a dialogue form. His arguments are based on two assumptions:

- That a just man can never harm anyone
- Whenever we harm anyone we make that individual even worse

He asks Polemarchus, 'does a just man do harm to anyone'. The latter answers assertively that 'one ought to harm bad men who are enemies.' But, Socrates expresses that when we harm a

horse or a dog, it becomes worse by the standard of its own 'excellence'. This is to say that it will no longer remain its natural self. By natural self Socrates mean the state of being good, i.e. how one ought to be. Applying the same analogy in the context of an individual he argues that if a man is harmed he becomes worse by the standards of human excellence which consists in being just or good. The conclusion one arrives at is that if men are harmed they become all the more unjust. He thus opines, 'So men if harmed must become more unjust'<sup>16</sup>. All through the dialogue up to this point Polemarchus concurs with Socrates. Continuing further with his explanation, Socrates says that no musicians or riding masters will use their skills to make their pupils unmusical or bad riders respectively. Similarly, if a man is just he will not use his sense of justice to make others unjust and likewise a good man will not use his goodness to make others bad. He draws some more analogies from natural things and explicates further '....it is not the function of heat to cool things, but of its opposite.....nor the function of dryness to wet things but of its opposite.' And therefore '....it is not the function of the good man to do harm but of its opposite'<sup>17</sup>. Now, since the good man is also the just man, he tells Polemarchus: 'Then, Polemarchus, it is not the function of the just man to harm either his friend or anyone else, but of his opposite, the unjust man'<sup>18</sup>. In simple language, Socrates maintains that if a man is a good man as well as a just man, he should neither cause harm to his friends nor even to his enemies. His general conclusion is that '.... It is never right to harm anyone at anytime.'<sup>19</sup> Polemarchus readily agrees with Socrates and declares that he would always side with Socrates to fight with anyone who would say that this view was given by Simonides.

If we analyze the above stated views of justice as voiced by Cephalus and his son Polemarchus, we will observe that both these views represent cases of conventional morality which means morality based on conventions of society in accordance with the accepted standards of conduct and taste.

Let us now come to the third view of justice which is initiated by Thrasymachus. He, by this time is at his wits end. He has been trying to interrupt the conversation for quite some time but was prevented from doing so. Therefore, as soon as Socrates pauses for a moment he attacks him saying, 'what is all this nonsense, Socrates?...If you really want to know what justice is, stop asking questions...Give us an answer yourself, and tell us what you think justice is.....give me a clear and precise definition'<sup>20</sup>. For a moment Socrates is taken aback but he

tries to tackle him by politely admitting that he himself is not very clear about the issue but is trying to find one. Thrasymachus laughs at him and comments: 'there you go ....I knew it, and I told the others that you would never let yourself be questioned but go on shamming ignorance and do anything rather than give a straight answer'<sup>21</sup>. He poses a challenge to Socrates saying, 'what if I give you a different and a better reply about justice? What should be your penalty then?' Socrates proposes that the proper penalty of ignorance is that anyone who does not know should learn. Thrasymachus, on the other hand puts the condition that in order to learn from him one has to pay the fee as well. Glaucon ensures it for Socrates and urges Thrasymachus to present his definition of justice. At the same time he is a little suspicious too as he has seen how easily Socrates tricks his opponent into accepting his views by refuting their position. The latter makes him feel at ease and confesses about his ignorance on the issue and Thrasymachus begins: 'I say that justice or right is simply what is in the interest of the stronger party...'.<sup>22</sup> There is, thus a shift in position here from what has been advocated by his predecessors. He clarifies his stand further by referring to some of the city-states which were governed by different forms of government at that time like tyrannies, democracies, and aristocracies, and each enacted laws as per their own interests. Thus, he asserts that right is that which is in the 'interest of the established government'. And since government is 'strongest element' in any state, he thus succeeds in showing therefore that right is always in the 'interest of the stronger party'. Socrates agrees that 'right' expresses an 'interest' but he is uncomfortable with the reference to 'the stronger party'. He explains that rulers can also make mistakes because they are not 'infallible'. So, they may commit errors while making laws. If they do their job well then naturally the law is in their interest but if they do it badly then it does not serve their interest (Thrasymachus is in agreement with Socrates so far). He further adds that in any case the subjects need to obey the laws, 'for that is what right is'. This then proves that 'right is not only to do what is in the interest of the stronger party but also the opposite'.

Explaining further, he says that sometime the rulers (by mistake) issue orders which are likely to cause them harm. Yet, it is expected of the weaker party to obey those orders. This implies that the weaker party does what is against the interest of the stronger party. So once again Socrates proves 'right' is not always in the interest of the stronger party. At this point, Thrasymachus attempts to clarify what he means when he says that rulers are infallible. He

says that we do not call someone a mathematician or a ruler or a doctor by virtue of his mistakes. As long as a person is a skilled doctor or ruler, he does not make a mistake. And if he makes a mistake then the cause of his mistake is to be attributed to the failure of his knowledge and then he no longer remains skilled. So he asserts, 'to be precise, the ruler in so far as he is a ruler, makes no mistake.' He enacts what is best for him and what his subjects must obey. And in this sense 'right' always means the interest of the stronger. Socrates targets the word 'precise' and points out that a medical practitioner or a captain of a ship are so called by virtue of their professional skills. Each has their own particular interests and uses their respective skills only to make their profession perfect. This means that skilled activities are not supposed to have any defects. They are faultless and flawless and their business lies in seeking the interest of their subject- matter rather than promoting their own interests. For instance, he explains the doctor always prescribes for his patients not for himself and so on. In the same manner the purpose of a ruler is always to rule for the interest of his subjects. Thrasymachus does not want to take his defeat lying down, so he tries to restate his theory in a round-about manner. He now claims that political power is the exploitation of one class by the other, i.e. to say that ordinary morality is nothing but what the exploiter imposes on the exploited. In other words, it reflects someone else's interest.

Drawing analogy from the shepherd who fattens his flock for his own and his master's sake (for a good meal or a good sale), he tries to show that the ruler of the state serve their subjects only with the aim of making a profit out of them. In this sense 'justice' lies in the interest of the stronger party. Calling Socrates a simple minded man, he says that the just man always comes off worse than the unjust man. For example, he says that in any business relation the unjust man is better off at the end of the deal. Basically, he wants to drive home the point that justice is a virtue only for cowardly simpletons and fools whereas injustice is a worth of the strong and the intelligent. He claims that 'injustice has greater strength and freedom and power than justice'. Thus, he once again reiterates his point that justice is in the interest of the stronger party.

This analysis is attacked by Socrates by challenging the following three claims:

- That an unjust man is more intelligent and knowledgeable than the just man
- That injustice is the source of strength

- That injustice brings happiness

As far as the first point is concerned, his arguments are based on comparisons drawn from craftsmen and professionals. He explains that no two craftsmen or professionals disagree about their standards of correctness, and therefore do not compete with each other. Similarly, just men also are not in competition with one another because they have knowledge. At the most they compete with their opposites. On the other hand the ignorant men due to lack of knowledge tend to compete both with their like and unlike. They are therefore bad and unjust unlike the just men who are considered to be good. Thus, Socrates proves that an unjust man is less intelligent and knowledgeable as compared to the just man.

Coming to the second point, Socrates attempts to prove that injustice is a source of disunity and weakness rather than that of strength. He argues that any group of men be it a state or an army or even thieves cannot undertake any kind of action if they are unjust with each other. They can work together only if they are just to each other. If they do wrong to one another, there will be hatred and disunity among them. On the other hand, if they treat each other justly they will develop a feeling of friendship. The overall effect is that unjustness weakens people rather than making them strong.

Lastly, regarding the third point Socrates again uses analogies to show that the just man is happier than the unjust one. He uses the idea of ‘function’ to prove his point. He explains that everything has a function. For instance, we cannot see with anything but eyes, cannot hear with anything but ears. Thus, sight and hearing are exclusively the functions of eyes and ears, respectively. Likewise, he claims that a function of a man is to live. This is promoted by a good mind and justice is a peculiar excellence of the mind whereas injustice is the defect of the mind. Therefore, only a just man with a just mind will have a good life and so be happy. Thus, he concludes by proving to Thrasymachus that ‘injustice never pays better than justice’<sup>23</sup>.

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## 1.6: SUMMARY

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In conclusion, Greek philosophy stands as a monumental intellectual legacy that has profoundly shaped the foundations of Western thought. From the early inquiries into the nature of the cosmos by the Pre-Socratic philosophers to the ethical explorations of Socrates, the metaphysical inquiries of Plato, and the systematic approach of Aristotle, Greek philosophy laid

the groundwork for the development of various philosophical traditions. The Hellenistic and Roman philosophical schools further diversified the landscape, offering different perspectives on ethics, virtue, and the nature of the good life. The enduring impact of Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Skepticism is evident in their influence on ethical theories and approaches to leading a meaningful life. Neoplatonism, with figures like Plotinus, introduced mystical and metaphysical dimensions to Greek philosophy, bridging the gap between classical thought and later religious and philosophical developments. Greek philosophy's emphasis on rational inquiry, critical thinking, and the pursuit of knowledge has had a lasting impact on the development of science, ethics, politics, and metaphysics. Even as subsequent philosophical traditions emerged, the enduring questions posed by the ancient Greeks continue to inspire and inform contemporary philosophical discourse. The legacy of Greek philosophy persists as a cornerstone of intellectual history, inviting ongoing reflection and exploration into the fundamental aspects of human existence and understanding.

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### 1.7: KEY TERMS

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- **Materialism:** The theory of materialism holds that all things are composed of material, and that all emergent phenomena (including consciousness) are the result of material properties and interactions.
- **Idealism:** Idealism is the group of philosophies which assert that reality, or reality as we can know it, is fundamentally mental, mentally constructed, or otherwise immaterial.
- **Dualism:** Dualism denotes a state of two parts.
- **Causality:** Causality is the relation between an event (the cause) and a second event (the effect), where the second event is understood as a consequence of the first.
- **Spatiotemporal:** It means having both spatial and temporal qualities

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### 1.8: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- How is 'justice' interpreted in the *Republic*?
- What is conventional morality? Whose views exemplify this type of morality?
- Why does Socrates reject the views of Cephalus and Polemarchus on justice?

- Why does Plato or Socrates propose to study justice first in the state and then in the individual? Why do people form a society according to Socrates

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## 1.9: REFERENCES

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## **UNIT-2: CONTRIBUTION OF PLATO**

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### **Structure**

- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 The Ideal State
- 2.4 Virtue in State
- 2.5 The Tripartite division of the Soul
- 2.6 Virtue in the Individual
- 2.7 The Paradox-Philosopher must be the King
- 2.8 Good as the highest object of knowledge
- 2.9 Theories of Government
- 2.10 Plato's Idealism
- 2.11 Relevance of Plato
- 2.12 Summary
- 2.13 Key Terms
- 2.14 Self Assessment Questions
- 2.15 References

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### **2.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- Platonic concept of Ideal State
- Theories of Government
- Virtue of the Individual
- Idealism and relevance of Plato

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### **2.2: INTRODUCTION**

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Plato (427 – 348 BC) was an ancient Greek philosopher of the Classical period who is considered a top thinker in Philosophy. He is the namesake of Platonic love and the Platonic solids. He founded the Academy, a philosophical school in Athens where Plato taught the doctrines that would later become known as Platonism. The philosopher was an innovator of the written dialogue and dialectic forms in philosophy. He was a system-builder. He also raised

problems for what became all the major areas of both theoretical philosophy and practical philosophy. Plato's most famous contribution is the theory of forms (or ideas), which has been interpreted as advancing a solution to what is now known as the problem of universals. He had decisive influence in the pre-Socratic thinkers Pythagoras, Heraclitus, and Parmenides, although much of what is known about them derives from Plato himself.

Along with his teacher Socrates, and Aristotle, his student, Plato is a central figure in the history of philosophy. Plato's entire body of work is believed to have survived intact for over 2,400 years—unlike that of nearly all of his contemporaries. Although their popularity has fluctuated, they have consistently been read and studied through the ages. Through Neoplatonism, he also greatly influenced both Christian and Islamic philosophy. In modern times, Alfred North Whitehead famously said: "the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."

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### **2.3: THE IDEAL STATE**

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In the preceding section we discussed three different views of justice. The views represented the individual positions of Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus. As a result none of these positions could give a complete picture of what justice actually is. Socrates, on his part, tries to analyze and examine their views but fails to arrive at any conclusion regarding the concept of justice. He therefore uses another approach to understand this concept. This is based on his assumption that it is always easier to study things on a larger scale and then apply them to analyze the relevant particular cases. With this assumption, he makes an attempt to first study justice within the context of state and subsequently applies it to understand the same with regard to the individuals.

This then necessitates the formation of an ideal state along with its various components. But how is such a state formed? Socrates works out two principles underlying the foundation of his utopian state. These are:

- Mutual needs
- Different aptitudes<sup>24</sup>

And then he moves on to frame the economic structure of the society.

He starts by making a somewhat strange comparison. He says, given that we are all short-sighted people, if we are made to read something, which in one place is written in small letters and in another place written in large letters, it will always be easier and better for us to read the one written in large letters. Using the above analogy, he declares, that it would be easier for us to locate the meaning of justice, first in the context of state (large scale) and then in that of the individual. 'Let us suppose we are rather short-sighted men and are set to read some small letters at a distance; one of us then discovers the same letters elsewhere on a large scale and larger surface: won't it be god send to us to be able to read the larger letters first and then compare them with the smaller.....'.<sup>25</sup> He explains that justice can be a characteristic both of an individual as well as the state or community. And since a community is larger than an individual, he seems confident to '....find justice on a larger scale in the larger entity.... I accordingly propose that we start our inquiry with the community, and then proceed to the individual and see if we can find the conformation of the smaller entity anything similar to what we have found in the larger'.<sup>26</sup>

But the question that arises here is that how would Socrates explain the existence of a society. To this he replies by asserting that when individuals realize that they are not self-sufficient to fulfil their respective needs, they come together to form a society. He says, 'Society originates, then .....Because the individual is not self-sufficient, but has many needs which he can't supply himself'.<sup>27</sup> These needs are threefold, i.e. food to keep us alive followed by shelter, and clothing. Now, Socrates suggests that in order to fulfil these needs we have to have primarily a farmer, a builder, and a weaver apart from a few others to provide for other needs. Therefore, the state or community must have at least four to five men. Thus the first constituent of the economic structure is formed in the sense of producers including both agricultural and industrial producers.

Socrates, however, is a little doubtful here and wonders if each of these men should produce enough for a common consumption or should they produce for their own families and disregard the others. Adeimantus supports the first alternative saying that 'The first alternative is perhaps the simpler.' To this Socrates adds that the best and efficient way of satisfying our needs is to make different individuals practice different trades according to their capabilities. He expresses, 'We have different natural aptitudes, which fit us for different jobs Quantity and quality are, therefore, more

easily produced when a man specializes appropriately on a single job for which he is naturally fitted...'<sup>28</sup> This thought leads to the requirement of more than four to five citizens. For instance, he says that the farmer would be in demand of an expert to make his plough or other agricultural implements and the same would apply with the builder and the weaver. Moving ahead, he says that in order to enhance production the state may be in need of some imports, which in turn would command another class or community, 'to fetch for it what it needs from abroad'. But in exchange of what we import, Socrates suggests that we ought to have a substantial production so that we make a good export too. This is how he forms the second part of the economic structure, namely the merchant class who could 'handle the export and import of goods'.

Subsequent to this development, Socrates is concerned that if the trade spreads overseas, there will be a requisition for yet another class, i.e. sailors and ship owners. This would comprise the third element of the economic structure.

Once this import export business gets established, Socrates foresees the need of a market, 'and a currency as the medium of exchange.' But to run this market properly, there would be the need of retail traders. 'And so this requirement produces a class of retailers in our state....,' says Socrates. Thus, the fourth step is framed. Besides, he also realizes the importance of physical labour and adds one last class to the above list, namely the class of 'wage-learners' who may not be intellectually strong but market their physical strength to earn wages.<sup>29</sup>

With these categories of classes, the 'component of citizens' is completed in the ideal state. But another issue arises: how does one trace justice and injustice within this structure? Adeimantus suggests that it could be traced from the mutual relationship between these elements. As a result Socrates starts visualizing how the citizens so equipped would live in his utopia. He imagines they would produce crops and wine and clothes and also build houses for themselves. They would adorn clothes subject to the weather and climate. Further, they would indulge in great food along with their children and also confine their families within their means for fear of war and so on. At this point Glaucon raises his objection. He is not particularly happy with such a picture of the state as it appears quite primitive. He, in fact, says that such a society is not suitable for men but for the pigs! '...that's just the fodder you would provide if you were founding a community of pigs!'<sup>30</sup> Glaucon's intention is to divert Socrates attention from the mundane necessities of people to their comforts, luxuries, and entertainments too so that

citizens are satisfied with their standard of living. Socrates complies with the former's proposal and proceeds to work on a 'civilized' state. He goes beyond the five existing classes and now adjoins artists, poets, painters, musicians, and servants, including tutors, cooks, nannies, cosmeticians and also ladies maids. However, he cautions at the same time that with all these new luxuries the citizens might get over-indulgent and eventually fall sick. This would give rise to the need of a class of doctors in the state. What is more, according to Socrates, is that with all these new additions to make the state 'civilized' the territory of the state might have to be extended. This would enforce people to 'cut a slice of our neighbour's territory'. And in response they 'will want a slice of ours too'. Thus, the inevitability of a war must not be ruled out. So, to safeguard the citizens and their possessions Socrates brings in the soldier class and declares them to be 'guardians' of the state. Since the guardian class have the responsibility of the entire state they ought to be efficient and so need to be carefully selected and trained. In other words, they must have some special qualities. What are these qualities then? According to Socrates, they should have the natural qualities of a watch dog. The watch dogs, have a keen perception, are courageous, and highly spirited. Here, Glaucon points out that these qualities may make the guardians aggressive not only to each other but towards the rest of the community which could lead to a dangerous situation. Socrates agrees and suggests that they should be gentle towards fellow citizens but dangerous only to their enemies in order to prevent any untoward situation in the community. But how would they get such a sense of discrimination? To this, Socrates replies that the guardians must have the 'disposition of a philosopher' in addition to their high spirits. In order to explain his idea he points to a 'remarkable quality' in the watch-dog which tends to get annoyed on seeing a stranger and welcomes the one it is familiar with thus displaying a sense of discrimination.

Socrates expects the guardians to have this power, i.e. to say to have a truly 'philosophic nature' or the love for learning. The qualities of the guardians would, therefore include, 'a philosophical disposition, high spirits, speed and strength'<sup>31</sup>. The guardians, thus qualified are further classified into two groups — guardian proper or the rulers who would govern the state and the auxiliaries who would assist the rulers and execute their decisions. Thus, the government in the ideal state will be composed of the rulers and their auxiliaries. But Socrates is very particular that only the best among the guardians must rule. The entire procedure is discussed with Glaucon thus: To begin with it is proposed by Socrates that the 'elder must govern and the

younger be governed.’ And the best guardians must be the ones who have the ‘greatest skill in watching over the community.’ He opines that these are the people, ‘...who are most likely to devote what they judge to be in the interest of the community, and who are never prepared to act against it’<sup>32</sup>. Moreover, he adds they must be able to stand through all sorts of hard work pain and competitive trials right through their childhood, youth, and manhood. He expresses, ‘strictly speaking, then, it is for them that we should reserve the term guardian in its fullest sense.....while the young men whom we have been describing as guardians should more strictly be called auxiliaries, their function being to assist the rulers in the execution of their decisions’<sup>33</sup>.

So basically, the state would now comprise of three classes of citizens, namely the rulers, the auxiliaries, and the craftsmen. The last of the classes refer to all those citizens who are not involved in governing the state, like doctors, farmers, artists, and poet. But, how does one ensure that these classes do not interfere with each other’s affairs thereby destroying the peace and harmony of the state? Socrates evolves a technique to handle such a possibility. This has been famously termed as the Myth of the Metals.<sup>34</sup> According to the myth, all citizens are taken to be brothers as they are produced by God from the same stock. However, some of them are gifted with gold in their veins (rulers), others have silver running through their veins (auxiliaries), and the remaining have iron and bronze. Now the off-springs of respective would be expected to have similar metals in their veins too. But once in a while, the orders of the metals in the children may change. In that case, Socrates suggests that they be taken away from their parent class and transported to the class to which they belong. Although he is apprehensive about peoples’ belief in such a myth, he is nevertheless hopeful that the lessons ensuing from the myth would increase the loyalty of the citizens for their community. To end it all, Socrates further recommends that the rulers and auxiliaries lead a simple life with best of education, without private property, and a family-life as these factors mislead men to pursue their personal interests and neglect the public whom they are meant to serve. He says that they must be educated in such a way so that they have strong and stable minds and characters. He also debars them from reading books or poetries that would generate negative feelings and emotions in them, thus making them weak. In other words, they are to be educated to become brave hearts.

Adeimantus who had been listening till now is not particularly happy with the proposed life style of the rulers as he finds it quite rigorous and Spartan. He feels that they must have magnificent

houses and gold and silver and must also benefit from their position or else they would be an unhappy lot. Socrates answers by explaining to Adeimantus that happiness is not to be looked for in material possessions because these are external things. Instead, he tries to argue that it is to be located for the sake of the community as a whole. He maintains ‘...our purpose in founding our state was not to promote the particular happiness of a single class, but, so far as possible, of the whole community.’ Thus, he succeeds in convincing Adeimantus.

So with the three classes the ideal state is finally formed. It is interesting to note here that the state undergoes transition from what initially looked like a primitive society to a civilized one and finally to a class society.

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## **2.4: VIRTUES IN STATE**

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The state, thus founded by Socrates, is the ideal and perfect state because it has the qualities of wisdom, courage, justice, and discipline. These qualities are also termed as the four cardinal virtues. To use Socrates words, ‘If we have founded it properly, our state is presumably perfect’. Such a state will have ‘the qualities of wisdom, courage, self-discipline and justice’. Consequently, the task before Socrates now is to identify and locate these qualities within the state. In what follows, we will see how he makes an attempt to find these qualities in the state. He starts with the quality of wisdom but the question is where to locate it in the state. As we know wisdom is directly linked with one’s knowledge and judgement, so it may be asked whether it is to be traced in the judgement of the carpenter who has perfect knowledge of woodwork and is also excellent with his designs. The answer is no. Neither can it be looked for among the farmers for their wisdom regarding agricultural matters. According to Socrates, it can be found only in the guardian’s knowledge. Thus, he explains that we can find wisdom ‘.... With those we call guardians in the full sense’ and they ‘alone of all others deserve the title of wisdom’<sup>35</sup>. Therefore, he concludes that a state ruled by the guardians is a wise state because it has a quality of good judgement and wisdom.

Coming to the quality of courage, he tries to find out those circumstances under which the state can be called a brave state. He observes that this can be done only ‘....With sole reference to the part which defends it and campaigns for it’<sup>36</sup>. He explains that the members of

no other classes have the power to make the state cowardly or brave other than the soldier or the auxiliary class. So the quality of courage is located in the auxiliary class.

As far as self-discipline is concerned, he first defines it and then tries to identify the quality with one of the three classes. This is because self-discipline is not as simple a quality like wisdom and courage to be identified with a particular class. So he explains, 'Self-discipline is surely a kind of order, a control of certain desires and appetites. So people use "being master of oneself" and similar phrases as indications of it.' It follows according to Socrates that the phrase 'master of oneself' implies that the same person is both the master and subject of his own self. This further means that there is a better and a worse element in each individual's personality. The former controls the latter and when this happens a man is praised. If it is the other way round, he is criticized. In other words, the best part (his reason) keeps a check on the worst part (his desires). He applies this analogy to the new founded state and says that such a state is a master of itself because '...in our state the desires of less respectable majority are controlled by the desires and wisdom of the superior minority.' Here 'less respectable majority' refers to children, women and slaves and their desires, and by 'respectable minority' he means a select few who have moderate desires guided by reason and right judgement. This indicates that discipline of a state is not to be traced in a single class but in the way all the classes are connected and integrated with one another. That is to say it involves all the three classes and must therefore be the characteristic both of the ruler and the ruled. Thus, he justifies his definition of self-discipline as a kind of concord, 'because unlike courage and wisdom, self-discipline stretches across the whole scale. It produces harmony between its strongest and weakest and middle elements ....and so there is a natural concordance between higher and lower...'

Lastly, Socrates explores the fourth quality namely justice, but again is faced with the conundrum of locating a class to represent it. After contemplating for a while Socrates realizes that justice is right at the base of his ideal state. He says: '....I believe justice is the requirement we laid down at the beginning .... When we founded our state....and often repeated that in our state one man was to do one job, the job he was naturally most suited for.' So basically Socrates tries to emphasize that justice is related to the work for which one is best suited. In support of his claim, he uses some arguments. For instance, he proposes that it is the duty of rulers to administer justice, which is another way of asserting that 'justice is keeping

what is properly one's own and doing one's own job.' The same idea is asserted once again by arguing in the opposite manner. He holds that the worst thing that could happen to his ideal state is the intermingling of the three classes with each other's business as this would generate the worst of evils. He maintains that 'interference by the three classes with each other's jobs and interchange of jobs between them, therefore, does the greatest harm to our state, and we are entirely justified in calling it the worst of evils' which is nothing but injustice. '...the worst of evils for one's own community is injustice.' Thus, Socrates proves that justice would prevail in his state if and only if the three classes did not interfere with each other. 'And conversely, when each of the three classes does its own job and minds its own business, which, by contrast is justice and makes our state just.' This is how Socrates traces justice in the state. He expresses that it is the foundation of all qualities because unless a man is just he can't exercise wisdom, courage, and self-discipline<sup>37</sup>.

Next, Socrates ventures into finding justice in the individual following the same pattern and lines of argument. But for this purpose, first he has to demonstrate that the soul or the mind of individuals is also made up of three parts because after all the state or community is composed of individuals. He concludes his theory concerning the three parts of the soul from the fact that individuals often display a conflict of their motives. It is after a proper analysis of the three parts of the soul that Socrates makes an attempt to trace virtues in the individual.

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## **2.5: THE TRIPARTITE DIVISION OF THE SOUL**

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We have seen in the previous section that in order to arrive at an understanding of the concept of justice, Socrates offers to analyze it in the context of a larger field and in the process the ideal state was founded. Now, having established the ultimate virtue of the state in terms of justice he makes an attempt to transfer the same findings to the individual to discover the virtues of the latter. As far as the state is concerned, we remember, he concluded that '...a state was just when its three natural constituents were each doing their job, and that it was self-disciplined and brave and wise...' <sup>38</sup>. Similarly, he is hopeful to find three elements in an individual's personality corresponding to the three parts of the state. He says, '...we shall expect to find that the individual has the same three elements in his personality' <sup>39</sup>. The interesting point here is the way in which he divides the soul into three parts parallel to the three classes of his ideal state.

Socrates begins with the general observation that one and the same thing can never have two opposites at the same time and further it cannot do two opposite things simultaneously. He says, 'Clearly one and the same thing cannot act or be affected in two opposite ways at the same time in the same part of it and in relation to the same object'<sup>40</sup>. He supports his claim by asking Glaucon if it is possible for a thing to be at rest and in motion at the same time and in the same part of itself. Glaucon answers in negative. But using his argumentative skills he tries to be precise so as to avoid any kind of ambiguity and in the process puts forth a couple of cases that show the reverse of the observation he has cited above. He says, for example, that if we are told about man who is standing still but moving his hands and head and so is at rest and in motion simultaneously then this is not to be accepted as the proper statement of the case. He suggests that we have to say that a part of him is standing still and another part of him is in motion. Similarly, he cites a more authentic case by arguing that a top spinning around its own axis is both at rest and in motion as a whole. But even in this case he argues that it is not the same parts that are rest and in motion. In order to state the case clearly, one will have to say that the axis of the top is at rest and the circumference is in motion. He thus tries to emphasize that the two different parts of the same thing can be said to be behaving in opposite ways.

With reference to these examples, Socrates explains that the human mind and body can also behave in a manner whereby different parts perform opposite functions at the same time. He expresses that we sometime want to do something and still don't want to do it. For example, when we feel thirsty we look for a glass of plain water first. At the same time if we are offered any other drinks we don't like to take it, irrespective of the fact that we are thirsty. This is because, according to Socrates, one part of our mind pushes us in one direction and the other part pushes us just in the opposite direction. 'Must we not say that there is one element in their minds which bids them drink, and a second which prevents them and masters the first?'. The former is attributed to the reflective element of the mind while the latter is assigned to the element of irrational appetite. 'We can call the reflective element in the mind the reason, and the element with which it feels hunger and thirst and the agitation of sex and other desires the element of irrational appetite closely connected with satisfaction and pleasure'. Thus, the two parts of the mind and soul are clearly defined by Socrates and their clash is often termed as 'mental conflict'.

As far as the third part is concerned, he says that it is that in which one feels indignation and disgust. Here conflict is between desire and disgust. For example, he refers to Leonetion, son of Aglaion, who once saw some corpses lying on the ground. He wanted to go and look at them, but at the same time held himself back in disgust. The part of the mind which feels is termed by Socrates as the emotional or the spirited part. It always sides with the reason when there is a clash between reason and desire.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, Socrates shows that one soul has three different elements, namely reason, emotion, and desire. These three elements correspond to three classes of state – reason correspond to the rulers; emotions or spirit to the auxiliaries of the state; and desires to the craftsmen.

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## **2.6: VIRTUE IN THE INDIVIDUAL**

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The entire exercise taken up by Socrates in the last section wherein he demonstrates the three parts of the soul was precisely to search for the virtues in the individuals. For this purpose, he follows the same pattern of arguments that he used to locate virtues in the state. This appears in his claim when he says, ‘...but we have pretty well reached agreement that there are the same three elements in the personality of the individual as there are in state’<sup>42</sup>. Talking about the virtue of wisdom he maintains that ‘...the individual is wise in the same way and with the same part of himself as the state’<sup>43</sup>. Thus, a man is wise as per Socrates’ calculation if he has wisdom in the reasoning part of his mind. In a similar manner the individual’s being brave is associated, ‘...with the same part and in the same way as the state...’

In other words, according to him a man will be courageous if he has it in the emotional or the spirited part of his personality. But then this is not enough. He makes it very clear that as in the case of the state, so in the case of the individual too, the latter will be acknowledged a just man if and only if the different parts of his personality perform their own jobs without mixing up with the others. Socrates tells Glaucon thus, ‘...we shall also say that the individual man is just in the same way that the state is just’<sup>44</sup> and further that ‘...the state was just when the three elements within it each minded their own business’<sup>45</sup>. So, it seems to follow that in a man his reason must rule as it has wisdom and foresight, and the spirit should obey the reason. Socrates insists, ‘So the reason ought to rule, having the wisdom and foresight to act for the whole, and the spirit ought to obey and support it’<sup>46</sup>. He explains that such coordination between the reason and spirit is maintained through a combination of intellectual and physical training. The reason

is tuned up by training in rational argument and higher studies, whereas the spirit is toned down by harmony and rhythm. The two parts thus trained, must take charge of the appetite according to Socrates, for the simple reason that man tends to give in to his appetite that includes his physical pleasure and other desires thus messing up his life.

So, Socrates strongly feels that man's appetite needs to be controlled by reason and spirit. He considers these to be the '...best defence mind and body have against external enemies' with mind doing the thinking and body providing courage to carry on with the orders of the former. Socrates expresses that it is due to this that an individual is called brave because '...he has a spirit which holds fast to the orders of reason about what to fear and what not to fear, in spite of pleasure and pain'<sup>47</sup>. In the same way, he claims that a man is considered wise '...in virtue of that small part of him which is in control and issues orders....knowing ...what is best for each of the three elements...'. Having specified the different functions of reason and spirit, he comes to the virtue of self-discipline in the individual. He says that an individual is self-disciplined when reason rules the other two parts and there is a proper coordination between all these three elements. '...then don't we call himself disciplined when all these three elements are in friendly and harmonious agreement, when reason and its subordinates are all agreed that reason should rule and there is no civil war among them'<sup>48</sup>. This constitutes self-control or discipline not only in the state but also in an individual. But what about justice? We have already observed that Socrates claims the state to be just only when there is no intermingling between the three classes, i.e. when there is a harmonious agreement between the three classes. He applies the same analogy in case of the individual too. He says that 'the just man will not allow the three elements which make up his inward self to trespass on each other's functions or interfere with each other, but by keeping all three in tune will..... attain self-mastery and order and live on good terms with himself'<sup>49</sup>.

However, if and when the three elements interfere with each other or when one of them rebel against the others just to take over them, it disturbs the mind causing confusion therein, and Socrates says that this is what leads to injustice, confusion, and all sorts of wickedness in the individual. He concludes, 'It must be some kind of civil war between these same three elements, when they interfere with each other ... or when one of them rebels against the whole to get control when it has no business to do so ... This sort of situation, when the elements of mind are confused, ... is what constitutes injustice, indiscipline ... in short, wickedness of all kinds.' He

elucidates his claim finally by drawing an analogy between the justice, bodily health, and sickness. He draws parallel between justice and good health. We produce good health by maintaining a 'natural relation of control and subordination among the various constituents of the body' and we have diseases when this relation is disturbed. The same thing happens in the context of justice.

He holds 'so justice is produced by establishing in the mind a natural relation of control and subordination among its constituents, and injustice by establishing an unnatural one'<sup>50</sup>. With this analogy the definition of justice is completed, and Socrates also provides us with a workable account of injustice. But at this point, Glaucon and others ask him to prove how justice pays better than injustice in all situations and circumstances. Socrates is now faced with a fresh task of explaining injustice. But no sooner than he starts doing that, he is interrupted once again by Polemarchus and Adeimantus, who express their eagerness to learn more about the life in the ideal state, especially about family lives and private possessions of the Guardians and the Auxiliaries. As a result he has to postpone his deliberations on injustice and take up the issue of women and children.

He begins with the position of women in the state with the assumption that sexual difference is not the criterion of difference of occupation and social function. The difference between men and women according to him is only of physical function. Other than this, he is quite positive that women are capable of any range of occupations and functions. So he feels that even women are fit to be guardians and so they deserve to be educated in the same way as men. And if it happens, the society will have the best of both. So he expresses, '...it's a good plan to let women come on stage now after men have played their part' and declares, '...if the only difference between them is that the female bears and the male begets, we shall not admit that this is a difference relevant for or purpose, but shall still maintain that our male and female guardians ought to follow the same occupations.'

He concludes by saying that, 'Then there is no pursuit of the administrators of a state that belongs to a woman because she is a woman or to a man because he is a man. But the natural capacities are distributed alike among both creatures, and women naturally share in all pursuits and men in all.' So it is made clear that both men and women can be guardians. But now the question is if women are to be guardians then they must share the same life-styles like their male counterparts. In other words, the institution of family has to be abolished. This would

naturally lead to some practical difficulties, particularly concerning the fulfilment of their sexual desires and reproduction. So as an alternative, Socrates suggests 'marriage festivals' to be organised in the state from time to time that would be manned essentially by the rulers. That is to say, the rulers must decide which couple is to be mated so that one can ensure good future citizens. He says, '....if we are to have a real pedigree herd, mate the best of our men with the best of our women as often as possible... and bring up only the offspring of the best. And no one but the rulers must know what is happening...'. Since all guardians won't be the best, therefore, he suggests that inferior men must mate inferior women only and the rulers must check that this is done rarely.

The ensuing question is how the children are to be raised since the state will have children of the best as well as the inferior parents. Socrates propounds that 'the officers will take the children of the better guardians to a nursery and put them in charge of nurses living in separate part of the city: the children of the inferior guardians, and any other defective child, will be quietly and secretly disposed of'. It is evident that such an arrangement is made not only to have the best possible breed of children but also to continue the practice of infanticide as was done in Sparta.

Plato apparently allowed infanticide of defective children, those born to over- aged parents, and lastly illegitimate children. The children brought up in the nursery would regard one another as 'brother' and 'sister' and will address all men as 'father' and all women as 'mother'.

Closely associated with the above mentioned arrangement is the common ownership of property, women, and children. Plato regards it to be 'much the best arrangement' as this is one way of attaining 'cohesion and unity' in society. He argues that if there are no families there are no distractions pertaining to family loyalties, affections, and interests. Everyone's interests would be focussed on the community at large. The vocabulary of people will not consist of words like 'mine' or 'yours'. In other words, 'mine' and 'not mine' will be used in the same sense for the same things by as many people as possible. This thought is further elaborated when he says that, 'In our society of all societies citizens will refer to the success and misfortunes of an individual fellow-citizen as 'my success' or 'my misfortune'. This means that in the ideal state every citizen will share each other's feelings and would be devoted to a common interest. He insists that such a tendency must cater mostly to women and children of the guardian class. To quote, 'Our citizens are devoted to a common interest

... and share each other's feelings of joy and sorrow. And the element ... to which this is especially due is the community of women and children in the guardian class'.

Next, regarding the possession of private property Socrates is very much against it. He argues that all sorts of conflict and disputes among people begin the moment they start calling different things as their own. Envisaging the fact that ownership of private properties would eventually lead to litigations etc., he advocates that guardians must not have them. He holds that '...these further arrangements will make them even truer guardians. They will prevent the dissensions that start when different people call different things their own... and when each has his own wife and children, his own private joy....' He concludes by saying that since they will not own any private property except their 'own persons ... there won't be ... any quarrels ... caused by having money or children or family.' It follows from the above discussion that Plato harboured a communistic form of government based on egalitarian principles when he was imagining his ideal state.<sup>51</sup>

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## **2.7: THE PARADOX — PHILOSOPHER MUST BE THE KING**

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In the preceding section we have seen that Socrates, having discovered the virtues in the state and in individuals makes every possible effort to work out a plan so that the unity and integrity in both could be preserved, and subsequently an ideal state be formed. To achieve this end, he at times tends to become very insensitive and harsh towards the guardian class in particular, including its men, women, and children. Although his proposal sounds attractive, Glaucon, Adeimantus and others raise their doubts whether such a state is practically possible or not. Hence, they request Socrates to demonstrate the practical possibility of his state.

Socrates' analysis of the whole issue is based on the distinction between the ideal and what is approximate to it. He is of the view that this is the best and the most a theory can achieve in practice. He cites the example of a painter who paints a picture of an ideally beautiful man and asks, '...is he any worse painter because he cannot show that such a man could really exist?' What he intends to convey is that theory and practice are two different aspects of the same thing wherein practice may not come very close to the truth as compared to the theory.

He questions, 'Does practice ever square with theory? Is it not in the nature of things that, ... practice should come less close to truth than theory?'. He admits that it is not necessary that

every detail of his description could be realized in practice but holds that under suitable conditions the state may at least approximate the descriptions, and insists that one should be content with that. He reminds people around him that the sole purpose of creating the ideal state was to discover justice in it. Hence, it should not matter if it actually existed or not as long as one derives an ideal working pattern from it in order to follow the same. He admits regarding the existing states that even they do not come close to the picture of the ideal state that he has drawn and recommends transformation which he feels can be brought about by one single change. What then is this change? Calling it the ‘biggest wave’ that would set people rolling into laughter, he proposes that change would consist in entrusting all political power to philosophers. To quote, ‘The society we have described can never grow into reality or see the light of the day, and there will be no end to the troubles of states ....of humanity, till philosophers become kings in this world, or till rulers become philosophers, and political power and philosophy come into the same hands...’ He concedes that this would sound a ‘paradox’ but there is, ‘... no other road to real happiness either for society or the individual’. In reply Glaucon exclaims and warns Socrates of the dire consequences that is likely to follow this kind of a pronouncement. Consequently, the latter takes charge to define the philosopher. ‘If we are somehow to escape the attack, we must define these philosophers who we dare to claim should be rulers ...’

He defines a philosopher as one who loves wisdom of any kind without any distinction. ‘So a philosopher’s passion is for wisdom of any kind without any distinction.’ He adds that anyone who is fussy about what he studies and does not know what is good or not so good is not fit to be called a philosopher. Such a man according to Socrates can be compared to a poor eater and not a food lover because he is fussy about his food and has no passion for eating. So, he holds that a philosopher is one ‘who is ready to taste every branch of learning and is never satisfied – he is the man who deserves to be called a philosopher’. At this point Glaucon drives his attention towards many such people who are passionate about things and are not satisfied. For instance he refers to music and theatre lovers and says that these people run around the city all the time not to miss any festival, but they certainly cannot be called philosophers. He asks what is there in a philosopher that these people lack. To this, Socrates answers that philosophers are ‘those who love to see the truth’. He explains that ‘art lover, sight lovers and practical men’ are different from philosophers in spite of their passions in the concerned field because they are

‘delighted by beautiful sounds and colours and shapes and works of art which make use of them but their minds are incapable of seeing and delighting in the essential nature of beauty in itself.’ He says further that there are only few such men who recognise ‘beauty’ and see it as it is in itself.

Moving ahead, he says that any individual who only recognises beautiful things without believing in beauty itself is said to be in a dreaming state, whereas a man who sees beauty itself as well as all the particular things participating in it can be said to be very much awake. He writes, ‘the man who contrariwise believes in beauty itself and can see both it and the particular things which share in it.... is much awake.’ This person according to Socrates is someone who knows, whereas the former only expresses his opinions. He says, ‘... and so because he knows we can rightly call his state of mind one of knowledge; and that of the other man who holds opinion only, opinion’. Thus, he makes it clear that ‘knowledge is related to what is, it knows what is as it is’. On the other hand, ignorance is counted as ‘what is not’. But there must be something lying between these two extremes and that he calls ‘opinion’. He clarifies the difference between opinion and knowledge, and says that they have different correlations suiting their respective faculties. According to him, each of them has their own field and capacity. The field of knowledge is ‘what is’ and that of opinion is ‘something other than what is’. It follows that if knowledge is equated with ‘what is’ and ignorance with ‘what is not’ then opinion is neither knowledge nor ignorance. One needs to locate its place, and according to Socrates opinion is ‘intermediate between them’. Having made the distinction between knowledge, opinion, and ignorance clear, he next attempts to explain what is meant by beauty in itself. This is because many people around him deny that there is anything as beauty in itself. To such people, he expresses that ‘those then who have eyes for the multiplicity of beautiful things but are unable.... to see beauty itself and justice itself may be said.... to have opinions....’ and he continues, on the other hand ‘those who have eyes for the eternal unchanging things surely have knowledge and not opinion’. He claims that philosopher belongs to second category. To quote, ‘... those whose hearts are fixed on true being of each thing are to be called philosophers and not lovers of opinion’. It follows thus that philosophers are knowledgeable people who are always keen to know the truth. But the question arises, what qualities a philosopher must have in order to become a good ruler or king. Socrates says that ‘one trait in philosopher’s character we can assume is his love of any branch of learning that reveals eternal reality... unaffected by...

change and decay.’ So a philosopher as a ruler must be in love with the whole of reality including its significant fragments but he must also have some further characteristics, like truthfulness, self-control, good memory, and sense of proportion.

He explains that philosopher as a king should not have both ‘love of wisdom’ and ‘love of falsehood’ in his character. In other words, he should be truthful and never willingly to tolerate anything that is not true. So, a man who has a real love of learning will yearn for the whole truth from the earliest years. He ought to be self-controlled in the sense that he should not desire money and crave for physical pleasure. Moreover, he should have a balanced state of mind and need not be afraid of death. Socrates says that ‘he won’t think of death as anything to be afraid of ... and so mean and cowardly nature can’t really have any dealings with true philosophy.’ He also includes the demand of a good memory in the character of a philosopher king because a forgetful man is not qualified to be a philosopher. Finally, there must be sense of proportion in him as it is related to truth. ‘So we want in addition.... a mind with a grace and sense of proportion that will naturally and easily lead it on to see the form of each reality’. Combining these traits, one can easily predict that the philosopher king must have all the virtues of wisdom courage discipline and justice, and this would qualify him to rule the state. He declares that one can never find any fault with the working of such a person because he will already be educated and matured. To quote, ‘Can you possibly find fault with an occupation for the pursuit of which a man combine in his nature good memory, readiness to learn, breadth of vision and grace, and be a friend of truth, justice, courage, and self- control?’

At this point, Adeimantus raises an objection. Though he agrees with the above description of a true philosopher and also acknowledges the qualification that would make him an ideal ruler or king, he nevertheless declares that the philosophers could not possibly make good rulers. His observations are accepted by Socrates. He blames the society for not respecting the knowledge and wisdom which are the only assets that a philosopher is expected to have. He explains to Adeimantus that in his existing state politicians are respected not because they have knowledge and wisdom but because they succeed in satisfying the desires and instincts of citizens.

He expresses that in such a society it is quite even for the philosopher to turn into a villain but is also hopeful that a philosopher may gain political power some day and teach people the value of knowledge and wisdom. However, he strongly feels that the philosopher ruler needs to go through a full-fledged training which must be based on the highest form of knowledge. Such

knowledge will not simply comprise the knowledge of forms, justice, beauty, etc., but also the knowledge of good that is goodness itself. In other words, the philosopher must be trained to understand that the good constitutes the ultimate object of knowledge.<sup>52</sup>

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## **2.8: GOOD AS THE HIGHEST OBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE**

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The preceding section is considered to be most abstract part of the *Republic*. As we have seen, it is concerned with abstract qualities like beauty, justice, and good, and appeals the readers to know is the idea of beauty in itself, good in itself, and so on. Plato terms these abstract qualities as forms. From here develops what is acknowledged as one of his best philosophical doctrines namely the theory of forms. He tries to convey that these abstract qualities not only exist in the things but also have an independent existence. In the latter sense, one calls them absolute beauty, good, and so on. So these are forms which, according to Plato, cannot be seen or touched yet they are eternal and changeless and therefore 'real'. According to Plato, the objects of ordinary of life which exemplify these forms are mere 'images'. He claims if we restrict ourselves only to the images we can never have the knowledge of the 'real'.

Reverting to the philosopher king, Socrates now deals with their training so that they can grasp what is good because in the final analysis he wants to show that all the qualities of philosopher king must be based on the latter's knowledge of good. He insists on an intellectual training of the philosopher king, besides their training in literature, music, and military tricks. This is because he wants to check whether the intellectual training 'has the endurance to pursue the highest form of knowledge'. Here, Glaucon expresses his ignorance about such knowledge, and Adeimantus too raises his doubt about the highest by asking 'if there is anything higher than justice and other qualities'. Socrates clarifies that highest form of knowledge is much above the knowledge of beauty, justice, etc. It is, he says, knowledge of the form of the good. To quote, '... the highest form of knowledge is knowledge of the form of the good from which things that are just and so on derive their usefulness and value'. He adds that our knowledge of the good is inadequate and if we are ignorant of it the rest of our knowledge can be of no benefit to us just as it's no use possessing if you can't get any good out of it'. He basically wants to convey to Glaucon and Adeimantus that until one knows the good he will not even understand why justice, beauty, etc. are good qualities. Now, the most important question that he faces is that what is good? He refers people's opinion and says that for some people good is knowledge

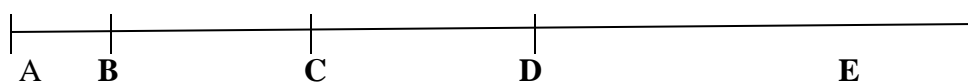
while for others it is only pleasure. ‘... most ordinary people think that pleasure is the good, while the more sophisticated think it is knowledge’. He explains those equate good with knowledge argue in a circle and when asked what sort of knowledge they mean by good they reply ‘knowledge of the good’. This, therefore, is not a proper definition and gives rise to absurdity. On the other hand, those who identify good with pleasure are compelled to admit that there are bad pleasures also. In other words they admit that the same things are both good and bad. ‘...They, thus find themselves admitting that the same things are both good and bad’. It seems that that good or goodness is ‘highly controversial’.

Socrates himself fails to explain the good. At the most he describes it by expressing that it is ‘... the end of all endeavour, the object on which every hut is set....at any rate a man will not be a very useful guardian of what is right and valuable if he does not know what their goodness consists in’. Thus, it is obvious that the guardians must possess a knowledge of goodness which Socrates himself is not able to explain in clear terms. Nevertheless, he is asked to give his own opinion on the issue but he decides to use an analogy to illustrate its function and importance. The analogy is famously known as ‘the simile of the sun’ wherein a comparison is made between the form of good and the sun.<sup>53</sup>

With the help of ‘the simile of the sun’, Plato tries to draw some parallels between the faculty of sight and the faculty of knowledge. To begin with, he specifies that particular objects belong to the visible worlds and the forms belong to the intelligible world. He explains that in the visible world if we have to see things then we must have the power of sight and also the visible objects to be seen. Apart from these two elements a third element is also required to illuminate the objects. This element is the light which comes from no other heavenly body than the sun. Thus, the light comes from the sun and makes the object visible to us. ‘If the eyes have the power of sight.... And if object have colour yet he will see nothing and the colours will remain invisible unless a third element is present which is specifically adapted for the purpose’. This element is light of the sun. Thus, even though the sun does not constitute the sight it is the cause of sight. Coming to the other side of the simile, he explains that if we have to know anything we must have the power of thought as well as the objects of knowledge, i.e. the forms. These objects of knowledge in order to become intelligible have to be true and this truth would come from goodness itself. He says that ‘when we turn our eyes to objects whose colour are no longer eliminated by daylight....they appear to be blind but when we turn them on things on which the

sun is shining then they are seen clearly...' Likewise he maintains that '... when the mind's eye is fixed on objects illuminated by truth and reality, it understands and knows them, and its possession of intelligence is evident; but when it is fixed on the twilight world of change and decay, it can only form opinions...and it seems to lack intelligence.' Continuing further he says, 'Then what gives the objects of knowledge their truth and the knower's mind the power of knowing is the form of the good. It is the cause of knowledge and truth.' He says that though knowledge and truth seem to be good, yet the position of the good must be ranked higher. The simile does not clearly give an insight into what goodness is. At the most we come to know from it how goodness stands in relation to other intelligible or knowable things. In itself, it is only a form but it is not like other forms, such as beauty, truth, etc. He concludes by saying that 'The good therefore may be said to be the source not only of the intelligibility of the objects of knowledge, but also of their being and reality; yet it is not itself that reality, but is beyond it and superior to it in dignity and power'.

Socrates is requested by Glaucon to complete the analogy but he comes up with a sequel to the simile of the sun. This is known as 'the analogy of the divided line. The idea is to further illustrate the relation between the two orders of reality namely the visible world and the intelligible world. He attempts to apprehend these two realms with reference to various states of mind. The states of mind are primarily knowledge and opinion. The former deals with forms whereas the latter deals with ordinary physical objects. He also makes use of the fact that images represent objects of knowledge in the physical world. He makes a further division in these two states of mind, and tries to show that there are two levels for each of knowledge and opinion. The highest level of knowledge is the knowledge of goodness followed by the second level, i.e. knowledge of the forms. In the case of opinion the first level is that of physical things, followed by the level where one sees only shadow and images. Referring to knowledge and opinion as two powers, he holds that 'one of them is supreme over everything in the intelligible region, the other over everything in the visible region'. He explains the analogy of the divided line by making two unequal divisions of the line and further dividing the two parts in the same ratio in order to represent the visible and the intangible realms.



**Fig. 1.1** *The Divided Line – (AC) is Generally Taken as Representing the Visible World and (CE) as Representing the Intelligible World*

He starts with the sub-section AB, which is the section of images and shadows and explains ‘by images I mean first shadows, then, reflections in water and other polished surfaces and all that sort of things’.

The sub-section BC represents physical thing. He says that it ‘stands for the objects which are the originals of the images, i.e. the animals around us and every kind of plant and manufactured object’. He points out that in these sections one is genuine and the other is not and ‘the relation of image to original is same as that of the realm of opinion to that of knowledge’. He next moves on to elucidate the sub-divisions of the intelligible parts of the line. He explains that in the sub-section CD, the mind uses ‘images’ which makes up for the original in the visible realm and on the basis of assumptions it tries to reach a conclusion. He says that in one sub-section CD ‘the mind uses the originals of the visible order ...as images, and has to base its inquiries on assumptions and proceed from them not to a first principle but to a conclusion’. This section includes mathematical reasoning. Finally, regarding the sub-section DE, he says that although there are no images in the section, the mind moves ahead from the assumptions of the previous section to a first principle. Thus he states, that in the sub- section DE ‘it moves from assumptions to a first principle which involves no assumptions, without the images used in the other sub-section, but pursuing its inquiry solely by and through forms themselves.’ It needs to be mentioned here that the purpose of the sub- division of the line is to provide a comparative sense of clarity and obscurity in both the realms.

He summarizes the four divisions of the line in the following manner:

‘There are two subdivisions, in the lower of which the soul uses the figures given by the former division as images; the enquiry can only be hypothetical, and instead of going upwards to a principle descends to the other end; in the higher of the two, the soul passes out of hypotheses, and goes up to a principle which is above hypotheses, making no use of images as in the former case, but proceeding only in and through the ideas themselves.’

Thus, we can say that with the help this analogy, Plato tries to show that the mind ascends from the level of illusion to that of pure philosophy, where there is neither assumption nor any images, but only the forms.

Next, he presents the third and the final analogy of the series. This analogy is famously known as the allegory of the cave or the simile of the cave<sup>55</sup>. Through this simile Socrates tries to elaborate more on the four states of the mind and also the dual degrees both in the realm of knowledge and belief. His basic assumption is that once the philosopher achieves this supreme vision and clarity, he should return to the cave and enlighten his fellow beings. He starts by maintaining that the mental level of the people inside the cave represents the ‘ignorance of the human condition’. But how does he describe the cave? He imagines the cave to be like an underground chamber which has a long entrance opening to the daylight. In this chamber there are men who have been prisoners since their childhood. Their legs and necks are so fastened with chains that they can only look ahead of them and cannot turn their heads. Behind the line of prisoners a fire is burning and between the fire and the prisoners there is a road on which puppeteers can walk. The prisoners cannot turn their head to see the puppeteers but they can see the wall of the cave. Socrates says that people walk on this road carrying all sorts of gear including figures of man and animals made of wood and stone and other materials, and they also talk to one another. The prisoners who he says ‘are drawn from life’, can only see the shadows of these people that is thrown by the light of the fire on the wall of the cave opposite them and similarly they can hear the sounds coming from the shadows as these are reflected by the cave wall. Now, since the prisoners are not in position to turn their heads, their vision and knowledge is restricted only to the shadows that they are able to see. Consequently, they assume the shadows to be real things, ‘and so in every way they would believe that the shadows of the objects were the whole truth’. Now, supposing one of the prisoners is unchained and forced to stand up, turn his head, and look and walk towards the fire these actions would be extremely painful and his eye will be dazzled by the fire because he is only used to see the shadows. Moreover, if he is told that the things that he sees now are more real than the shadows he will not believe that. Instead, he would prefer to sit down again and face the wall of shadows that he understands. Socrates goes a step further and says that supposing the prisoner is now dragged out forcefully through the tunnel into the sunlight it will be all the more painful for him and he will be more frightened than before. In fact, he will be blinded by the sun: ‘...and when he

emerged into the light his eyes would be so dazzled by the glare of it that he wouldn't be able to see a single one of the things he was now told were real.'

But, Socrates keeps the option open that the prisoner will slowly get used to it. He says that it would be easier to look at shadows first, next at the reflections of men and other objects in water and later on at the objects themselves. In other words, it will only gradually that he would finally be able to see the trees and mountains in full daylight and recognize them as the real things than the shadows in the cave. He would also realize that the sun is the cause of changing seasons and years, and it is again the sun that controls everything in the visible world. Once he realizes the truth of the matter he would be in a self-congratulatory mood and consider himself fortunate. However, at the same time he would be sorry about his fellow prisoners inside the cave. Now, if he is asked to return back to the cave his eyes would be unaccustomed to the darkness '... because he had come in suddenly out of the sunlight.' And he will not be able to discriminate between the shadows with respect to the other prisoners. His fellow beings would consider his visit to the upper world to be responsible for ruining his sight and this ascent would seem worthless to them even to attempt. Given a chance they would like to kill him. With the help of this analogy, Socrates attempts to explain the relation between the prisoners' world inside the cave and the daylight world outside the cave. He expresses that the cave corresponds to the visible world which is the realm of opinion, whereas the daylight world represents the intelligible world which is the realm of knowledge. The sun symbolizes the form of goodness. To use his words: 'The realm revealed by sight corresponds to the prison, and the light of the fire in the prison to the power of sun. And you won't go wrong if you connect the ascent into the upper world and the sight of objects there with the progress of the mind into the intelligible region.' He admits that each move from the lower realm of belief to the higher realm of knowledge will be fraught with pain and difficulties; nevertheless it will be worth the pain. He also holds that one who has tasted this knowledge and seen the form of goodness may be reluctant to even involve himself with human affairs. If, however, he is made to do so, he may appear to be a fool to anyone who has never stepped outside the world of belief.

But Socrates maintains that a sensible person would know that our eyes are blinded in two ways, when we move from light to darkness and when we move from darkness to light. The same applies to the mind too. So, when the mind is confused and unable to see things clearly this sensible person would try to find out whether it is confused by the 'unaccustomed darkness' or is

it 'dazzled by the stronger light of the clearer world'. The first condition according to him seems to be a reasonable one. On the basis of the above analysis he rejects the conception of 'education', for it is held that its purpose is to 'put into mind knowledge which was not there before.' He is of the opinion that the way sight cannot be put into blind eyes, knowledge too cannot be put inside the mind. And here he makes a very important claim that '...the capacity for knowledge is innate in each man's mind'. This claim makes an appearance in Locke's epistemology when he refutes the innate ideas. He insists that in order to know the good mind as a whole one needs to turn away its eyes from the changing world and try to look straight at reality. He in fact recommends the 'turning around of the mind' to be made a subject of professional skill so that anyone who has this skill does not turn in the wrong direction. He gives knowledge a divine status as it doesn't seem to lose its power but its 'effects are useful and salutary or again useless and harmful according to the direction in which it is turned.'

A necessary consequence that ensues from this discourse on knowledge, according to Socrates, is that no society can be successfully governed either by the uneducated or by those who are completely dedicated to intellectual pursuits. So he suggests that the best minds, i.e. the philosophers (liberated prisoner) in the given simile must be compelled to return back to the cave not only to share his divine experiences with those inside the cave but also to guide them to identify the ultimate good. This means that the philosopher will not be a good ruler until he returns to his fellowmen and applies the knowledge he has gained on them. In doing so, he will have a better understanding of the shadow than what he had known when he was living inside the cave. In other words, he will know what the shadows actually are and will be able to guide his fellow prisoners in the right direction. At this point an objection is raised by Glaucon who claims that it would be unfair to ask our philosophers to return to the world of belief. '...that will not be fair. We shall be compelling them to live a poorer life than they might live.' But Socrates reminds him that the rulers are not supposed to be made happy: instead the whole community is to be made happy. He reiterates what he expressed earlier to Adimantus that 'The object of our legislation is not the special welfare of any particular class in our society but of society as a whole; and it uses persuasion and compulsion to unite all citizens and make them share together the benefits which each individually can confer on the community'.

He agrees with Glaucon that we should not be unfair to the philosophers, but he maintains that we can be fair to them only 'when we compel them to have some care and responsibility for

others.’ Therefore, if philosophers are to be good rulers they must be made responsible for the good of the community. He says if the rulers deliver their duties with least enthusiasm then we will have the ‘best and the most tranquil government’ since they would ‘approach the business of government as an unavoidable necessity’. He says, ‘The truth is that if you want a well governed state to be possible you must find for your future rulers some way of life they like better than government, for only then will you have government by the truly rich, i.e. whose riches consist not of gold but of the true happiness of good and rational life....’ It seems to follow then that ‘true philosophy ... looks down on positions of political power.’ Socrates concludes by expressing that men who deserve power are those who do not love power at all. The opposite leads to nothing but rivalry.

Thus, he succeeds in proving that only the philosophers have the capability to become the guardians of the state. Glaucon agrees, ‘There is no one else.’

Having settled down with the fact that philosophers are the suitable candidates to become guardians of the state, Socrates deliberates a little on their education. He meditates upon a course of study that would provoke their minds to think. The plan is basically to lead them out into the day. What is at issue here is the conversion of the mind from a kind of twilight to the true day, that climb up into reality which we shall say is true philosophy. He wants them to come out from the realm of belief and get into the realm of knowledge so that they not only know about the forms but also properly understand the nature of good. He says that no amount of elementary education, be it in literature, music, or military training, will enable the guardians to learn about the ‘goodness’ as it is in itself. Their education must, therefore, consist in some abstract thinking. He suggests the only way to teach them about abstract thinking is to teach them about numbers. In other words the rulers must study mathematics, and he claims that it is only through mathematics that they would learn about the practical aspects of ruling a state. He lists five mathematical disciplines which the philosopher ruler must study. These are arithmetic, plane geometry, solid geometry, astronomy, and harmonics.

We need to remember here that in section 1.8 Socrates’ discussion on injustice was interrupted when he was requested by Adiemantus and Polemarchus to talk more about the ideal state. Hence, in the following section we will take up what Socrates has to say about injustice. It will suffice to state here that he talks of four types of unjust societies.

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## 2.9: THEORIES OF GOVERNMENT

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We have seen that in the section where Socrates discusses virtues in state and those in the individual, he succeeds in establishing a one to one correspondence between a just man and a just state. In order to show Glaucon and others how justice is better than injustice and why a just man is more happy than the one who is unjust, Socrates now describes four kinds of unjust states and corresponding to these, four kinds of unjust men. He starts by imagining the decline of his ideal state, which can be understood either as royalty or aristocracy, and a simultaneous decay of the just man. The first such state is timocracy.

### **Timocracy**

While talking about timocracy, Socrates has in mind the picture of Sparta. In that kind of a setup, societies were ruled by military classes and so honour and ambitions were considered to be the highest virtues.

Now, he imagines how his ideal state would degenerate into a timocracy. He explains that such a political change could result from disagreement among the ruling class. For instance, he says suppose one of the rulers at a marriage festival breaks the convention and brings together men and women who are not appropriate for each other and for producing children. Now the children of such a marriage will be deprived of their natural aptitude for ruling. He leaves the possibility open that many of them may be appointed as rulers. With this, according to Socrates, the decline of the state would automatically begin. This is how timocracy would make a place for itself. In such a state the rulers will not be pure in the sense that their souls will have not only gold and silver but also bronze and iron. They will be ambitious and would like to own money and private property and may also prefer to have private life. This will result in a lot of competition amongst them and consequently there will be no place for intelligence and wisdom. These virtues will be replaced by the virtue of courage, and subsequently auxiliaries will take over the rulers. As a result the internal balance of the ideal state will be immensely disturbed, and so justice of the state would be affected.

The individual corresponding to such a state would be a timocratic man. He will be brave and ambitious with the passion for physical exercise and hunting. He will be more inclined towards military achievements as compared to other intellectual pursuits. Since his soul will not be a balanced or 'just' soul, his character will be dominated by the spirit or the emotion and not by

the reason. This man according to Plato is ‘ambitious, energetic, athletic, but a prey to inner uncertainty.’

### **Oligarchy**

According to Socrates, the characteristic feature of an oligarchy is distinction between wealthy and poor. Naturally, all political power is concentrated in the hands of the rich. Here too, as in timocracy, people will look for more and more wealth until wealth becomes the criteria of honour in the sense of being the highly valued thing. One can see how the ideal state will go through the transition from timocracy to oligarchy. Socrates points out certain faults of the society, and says that the rulers will be chosen on the basis of their wealth alone without any surety of their consistency as rulers. Further, he says that there will be division in the society amounting to rich and poor classes, and there will always a rift between the two that would destroy not only the unity but also the peace of the state. The most disastrous aspect of such a society will be that most of its citizens will have nothing to do, and the poor will turn into beggars and criminals. As far as the oligarchic man is concerned, Socrates develops him from a timocratic man who supposedly loses in a war. He says when he returns home he will be exiled and his rights and properties would be taken back. The son of such a man will grow up in lot of insecurity. He will need to earn his own living. Surely, he will not have any values for honor and courage which his father had. His aim will be to collect as much money as possible over and above anything else. Therefore, he will lead a hardworking and ascetic life and will not succumb to his desires and impulses for otherwise he will lose all his wealth. To some extent he will be respectable person but this respect will not be a result of his moral conviction. It follows that only the desire for wealth will control this man’s character and personality. In other words there will be no place for reason or his spirited part in his trait. Such a character is described by Plato as one whose ‘sole object is to make money’.

### **Democracy**

In this description Socrates mainly refers to the city state of Athens which had a democratic regime. He starts by giving an account of the transition of the state from oligarchy to democracy. He says that since there will be a lot of wealth in the oligarchic state, the rich men will have a tendency to lend money on higher rates of interest. They would make such an arrangement that that their debtors spend all the money as fast as possible and again turn to

them for money. The entire mechanism will make the debtors go bankrupt and eventually they will revolt against their rich subjugators till they are defeated. As a result of this upheaval, everyone will get an equal right. This is how democracy will establish itself in the state. Once this happens, everybody will be free to behave the way he wants. There will be no compulsion to enter the public life nor will anybody be forced to obey the law of the land. The politician in the democracy need not have to be qualified or trained. At the most he will be a good friend of the citizens. Now the question arises regarding the characteristics of a democratic man.

We have seen how the man in oligarchy is ruled by the idea of money and wealth but he continues to be in place, i.e. to say he has control over his desires and other instincts. This man therefore is not expected to impart proper education to his son. Since the child will not know how to value other things, he will be easily influenced by any and every person who comes in his way. He will not have any sense of discrimination and won't be able to distinguish between the good and the bad. As a result he may mix the good pleasures or desires with the bad and so on. In other words he will live on his own terms. There will be no restrictions for anything in his life, and there will be no order either in his life. Plato describes the democratic man as 'versatile but lacking in principle,' his desires being both 'necessary and unnecessary'.

### **Tyranny**

So far, we have seen the transition of the ideal state into timocracy, oligarchy, and democracy. These transitions are all in the line of degeneration which is subject to the dominant feature of every society. What is most demanding in democracy is the desire for freedom, and, according to Socrates, this is the cause of the failure of democracy

He explains that a natural consequence of this sense of freedom is that children do not fear their parents neither do they have any respect for them. The same is true of students too. Now, the leaders of the democracy are appointed from the rebellion class who fought against their oligarchic masters. Some of them therefore are likely to have a criminal background. Their main job is to somehow retain their popularity, and they would go to any extent to please the people. In the process, they would even tend to rob the remaining few wealthy citizens, and in order to impress people they would distribute their (wealthy people) wealth to the masses. Of course, the majority it is held back by them for future use. Such matters would be reported in the popular assembly. This would give the democratic leaders an opportunity to call them (wealthy people)

reactionaries, and they would try their best to convince the masses against them. This would result in an outbreak of civil war and the masses will look up to the most popular among the democratic leaders for support. This man will then become very powerful and he will uproot the remaining wealthy citizens. But there is another aspect of this historical development too. The so called popular leader will need to protect himself because his opponents will always conspire against him. He will need a security cover all the time and so would ask for bodyguards and even a private army. For maintaining his army he will impose heavy taxes on the citizens but at the same time, to retain his power he will spend lavishly for the benefit of the citizens. He will soon run out of money and will start troubling his people who gave him the power to rule. This will bring in tyranny. He will become a tyrant. And his state would be the worst possible state because his core group will not have any intelligent person to advise him. There will be unhappiness all around.

Next, conforming to this state there will be the tyrannical man. Socrates evolves such an individual from the democratic man by imagining how his son would possibly behave. As we have seen in the description of the democratic man that this person indulges in all his desires, the good as well as the bad, equally. Now supposing such a man, says Socrates, falls into bad company, his life will be controlled not by the variety of desires that controlled his father but by lust. He will spend his entire life pursuing and satisfying his lust and in the process will tend to become more and more violent. Every individual, including his parents, will be used by this man as a means to satisfy his desires. He will not have any friends and his life will be the unhappy one. In Plato's words the tyrannical character has its 'essential similarity to the criminal type'.

It seems that while giving an illustration of the four unjust states, Plato basically intends to offer a criticism of the states that actually existed at ancient times. What comes out very prominently in his descriptions is the fact that all the states are tilted in one direction, thus making them unbalanced. None of these states has an enlightened ruler as portrayed in the ideal state. For example, soldiers rule the timocracy; the rulers of oligarchy have money and wealth dominating their minds; democracy is ruled by clever and popular leader; and the ruler in the tyranny rules by force and violence. Accordingly, we have four types of unjust men too, the worst of them being the tyrannical man. He is the most unjust one as he lives a disturbed life. Socrates then proceeds to put forward some arguments in order to explain Glaucon, Polemarchus and Thrasymachus that why a just man lives a better life than an unjust one.

Referring to the tyrannical society he points out that all the citizens of such a state are enslaved except for the ruler, i.e. the tyrant himself. He applies this structure of the tyrant state to analyze the tyrant himself, and explains that the better aspects of this tyrant are enslaved in a similar way by his worst aspects. In other words, his reason, emotions, and good desires are subject to his master passion, i.e. his lust. Such a man can never be happy, declares Socrates. On the other hand, the just man of the ideal state is the one who always acts as guided by his reason and wisdom. He is therefore much in control of himself, and displays right kind of emotions while selecting what course of action to follow. Thus, the just man is much happier as compared to the unjust man.

Next, he refers to the three parts of the soul and holds that correspondingly there are three types of men: the first one is controlled by his reasons and therefore seeks knowledge; the second type is dominated by the emotional or the spirited element and so he would seek honour and success; the third person is controlled by his desires and will always be looking for gains and satisfaction. Socrates categorises the first man as exemplifying the just man, the second one to be the timocratic man, and the last one to be a combination of the oligarchic, democratic, and tyrannical man. Now, if asked who is the happiest of them all, each would answer for himself. This would entail three categories of happiness or pleasures: firstly, the pleasures of knowledge followed by the pleasures of success, and lastly the pleasures of satisfaction. The obvious question now is which of these pleasures is better than the others? As per Socrates assessment, it is expected of the just man to have an experience of all the three levels of pleasures, so he would favour the pleasures of knowledge. Since the other two do not have the experience of all the three levels, so they are not qualified to pass a judgement on the issue. Consequently, it is but obvious that the happiness of the just man is the best kind of happiness as it is complete in every sense.

Finally, Socrates argues that the pleasures of the just man alone are to be acknowledged as the 'real' pleasures as it involves the pleasures of knowledge. All other pleasures are illusory, according to Socrates. They are subject to the demands of our various physical conditions. The pleasures of knowledge by contrast are genuine and positive and have nothing to do with our physical demands. Thus, he shows that the pleasures of the just man are the real pleasures and therefore he is happiest of all men.

He next attempts to show his disputers where the unjust man goes wrong. He argues that this man is starved or rather he has starved himself of that part which is considered as truly human, namely his reason. He has given a lot of importance to what is taken to be most inhuman, i.e. his lust. As a result he has inflicted a lot of injustice on himself which can never make a man happy. He insists that only the reason can guide one to lead a good and happy life. He also proposes that if a man's reasoning capacity is not strong enough then he should be open to be guided by the reasoning and intelligence of others. In this way Socrates is finally able to defend himself and answer the main issue of the *Republic*.<sup>56</sup>

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## **2.10: PLATO'S IDEALISM**

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Plato is justly called the father of idealism, western idealism in particular. Idealism has to do essentially with ideas and the importance of ideals and values. Both these senses of idealism find an expression in Plato's philosophy. But before we embark into a discussion of his idealism, we must understand his theory of knowledge because it serves as a foundation for his theory of ideas. Plato's epistemology starts on a negative note whereby he first refutes what he considers to be the false theories of knowledge. The first such theory that he attacks is the sophistic view that knowledge is perception. Basically, he rejects their claim that what appears to be true to an individual is actually true for that person. This was also the position of Socrates as we have seen earlier. Plato maintains that perception gives us contradictory impressions, and it is not possible to judge which of the impressions are true. So the question of a choice among the various perceptions to account for a true impression which could constitute knowledge seems redundant here. Moreover, he also points out that if all perceptions are taken as true then there is no difference between a child's impression and that of his teacher or parents. His main objection against this kind of a theory, like Socrates, is that it spoils the objectivity of truth thereby making the distinction between truth and falsehood meaningless. Thus, he claims that no knowledge can be formed on the basis of perception.

Plato explains that a perception is just like an isolated dot which alone cannot combine with other sensations to produce knowledge. These combining and comparing operations, he says, are performed only by the mind.

Next, Plato attacks the second false theory which asserts that knowledge is opinion. According to him, neither a right opinion nor a wrong opinion can be called knowledge. He says that although right opinion is belief, it does not form knowledge because, like his master, he believes that the knowledge can only be produced by reason.

Having refuted the above theories, he adopts Socrates doctrine which says that all knowledge is through concepts for the simple reason that a concept is fixed and cannot be changed according to the changing impressions of an individual. In other words, he endorses Socrates view that knowledge should be founded on reason since reason alone can provide us objective truth. He in fact goes a step ahead of his master to study the nature of reality through concepts. This results in his most acclaimed theory of ideas.

One needs to understand Plato's theory of ideas as the theory of the objectivity of concepts. This has been nicely brought out by W.T. Stace. The essence of the theory of ideas, according to Stace, is that the concept is not just an idea in the mind. It also has a reality which is independent of the mind. He expresses that Plato arrived at this doctrine by realizing that truth consists in one to one correspondence between one's idea and the fact of its existence. That is to say, thoughts inside our minds are reflections or images of things outside our minds. And this is what truth is. Now both Socrates and Plato, as we have seen, accept that the knowledge is the knowledge of concepts. From this, it follows logically that if by a concept one means true knowledge then the truth is due to or in virtue of its correspondence with something in the objective reality. Stace explains that from Plato's point of view to have a concept in mind is nothing but to have a copy of the concept outside the mind. To maintain otherwise will lead to a contradictory position and will not constitute true knowledge.

We have attempted to show in the course of this unit how starting from Cephalus to Thrasymachus, Socrates analyzes various instances of justice to arrive at the concept of justice and in the final analysis he identifies it with the concept of good. In this way he has tried to explain the objectivity of these moral concepts. He has thus tried to impress upon us that though there may be many just acts and as many instances of the good but ideally justice is only one and so is good. Ideas thus signify the objectivity of these concepts. It is therefore relevant here to mention the characteristics of 'ideas' as understood by Plato.

To begin with, he holds that ideas mean substances. Philosophically, a substance is something which is in itself and caused by itself. Thus, it has a reality of its own and does not require anything other than itself for its determination. That is, it is self-determined. Ideas are substances in this technical sense. According to Stace, they are absolute and ultimate realities. He states that ideas depend on nothing but all things depend on them. In this sense, they are also the first principles of the universe.

Next, since ideas represent concepts and all concepts are general therefore ideas are universals. They are not to be interpreted as particular things. Consequently, it follows that ideas are not things at all. Rather they are thoughts. But thoughts here do not mean subjective thoughts in the mind of an individual or for that matter in the mind of God. By thought, Plato only means those that have a reality of their own and hence are objective in nature.

Further, an idea connotes the sense of one and many whereby the many particulars participate in the one as we have seen in the case of justice and other concepts. It thus conveys unity.

Since ideas are not liable to change they are eternal and imperishable. Being so, they form the essences of all things and have a perfection of their own. Thus every idea is perfection personified.

Plato's theory of ideas with all its features and characteristics makes way for his dialectics. In a world of ideas there has to be some way to know the relations between these ideas, and also to connect and disconnect these ideas. This gives rise to a science of ideas namely dialectics. Plato contributed to dialectics to a great extent, which later became a very important part of Kant's philosophy.

It needs to be mentioned here that after all the exhaustive talk about ideas Plato maintains that there is only one idea that is supreme and that is the idea of the good. He says that it serves as the ground for all other ideas. He connects all ideas with the supreme idea of good, as we have seen while discussing about his ideal state or in locating the virtues of the state and the individual. Even his arguments for a philosopher king are linked with the supreme idea of the good. This explains the teleological character of his philosophy. Good is the answer to everything, all acts in the universe.

Plato's idealism is reflected in his account of the tripartite division of the soul. The highest part of the soul, he says, is the rational part which apprehends the ideas. It is therefore the

immortal part. The irrational part of the soul is mortal, and all sensuous appetites belong here. The immortality of the soul is explained through his doctrines of recollection and transmigration, and this is associated with his idealism.

Likewise, his views on individual ethics are touched by his idealism whereby he claims that morality has an intrinsic value and not an extrinsic one. He insists that virtue should be the end of right actions and the latter must proceed from a rational understanding of true values. He succeeds in proving to his people that the end of goodness consist in good itself by which he means happiness.

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## **2.11: RELEVANCE OF PLATO**

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Plato may easily be rated as one of the most outstanding philosophers of the world. This is not particularly because what he preached, but largely because of the fact that many important tenets emerge from his philosophy and find a place in contemporary discourse. The various sub-divisions of western thought clearly show Plato's ancestry. With good occupying the place of the highest end in every area, Plato's philosophy seems to have a soteriological side to it. In this sense, it is quite similar to Indian thought.

As far as his contribution to western thought is concerned, what appears to be most striking is his rationalism not only in epistemology but also in ethics. He claims that it is possible to have a rational knowledge of the universe. He sets forth the basic principle of rationalism namely that reason and not sense-perception is the source of knowledge. This does not mean that he completely discards experience because he admits that experiences are instrumental in generating a-priori ideas in us. We also find a mix of all the theories pertaining to the status of the world in Plato's philosophy. It displays realism, as Plato takes examples and analogies from the real world; it asserts idealism when he tries to portray the world to be essentially mental or an ideal world; one also gets a sense of phenomenalism when he claims that the world of sense-perceptions is an appearance of the real world, i.e. the ideal world; further it reflects dualism by maintaining that mind and matter are the two principles of the world; moreover, there is a lucid explanation of the immanence and the transcendence. Plato's writings are fundamentally ethical because he tries to emphasize that the ultimate end lies in knowing the good and acting according to it. His theories also have an influence on the subsequent political theories of the

world. We thus observe that Plato's philosophy is central not only to the world of philosophy, but also has a socio-political implication.

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## 2.12: SUMMARY

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Plato was born in 427 BC and died in 347 BC. Since the time of his birth and throughout his youth, the Peloponnesian war (between city states of Athens and Sparta) was in full progress which eventually culminated in the defeat of Athens. The defeat was attributed to the democratic form of government which accentuated the death of Socrates for whom Plato had deep-rooted affection and respect. There have been four major influences on Plato's philosophical temper. They are Pythagoras, Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Socrates. The *Republic* is by far one of the most popular and finest dialogues of Plato. Pure philosophy or metaphysics occupies a central place in the dialogue because Plato attempts to answer practical questions by constantly involving metaphysical. Socrates is asked if justice is good in itself, because the common view assume that injustice pays if one can get away with it. To answer this question, Socrates presents a picture of his ideal state that is also an ideal political community. The views on justice as presented and defended by Cephalus and his son Polemarchus projects 'justice' as a matter of conventional morality. Polemarchus's definition of justice claims that justice consists in benefiting one's friend and doing harm to one's enemies. This implies that in the name of 'right' we may actually end up benefiting our enemies and harming the good man. So, this view is also not acceptable. However under the influence of Socrates Polemarchus makes a further change in his definition. He finally holds that justice is to benefit those friends who are in fact good and to harm those who are in fact bad people. Socrates wants his listeners to believe that to harm anyone in any sense is not good. Socrates tries to analyze and examine their views but fails to arrive at any conclusion regarding the concept of justice. He therefore uses another approach to understand this concept. This is based on his assumption that it is always easier to study things on a larger scale and then apply them to analyze the relevant particular cases. With this assumption, he makes an attempt to first study justice within the context of state and subsequently applies it to understand the same with regard to the individuals.

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## 2.13: KEY TERMS

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- **Spatiotemporal:** It means having both spatial and temporal qualities
- **Ontology:** Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence, or reality, as well as the basic categories of being and their relations.
- **Epistemology:** Epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge.
- **Hypothesis:** A hypothesis is a proposed explanation for a phenomenon. For a hypothesis to be a scientific hypothesis, the scientific method requires that one can test it.
- **Doctrine:** Doctrine is a codification of beliefs or a body of teachings or instructions, taught principles or positions, as the body of teachings in a branch of knowledge or belief system.

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## 2.14: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- In what ways does Plato find similarities between a state and an individual?
- What is the significance of the allegory of the cave?
- How does Plato prove to his contenders that only a just man can lead a happy life?
- Discuss Platonic theory of State.
- Discuss theories of government given by Plato?

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## 2.15: FURTHER READINGS/ENDNOTES

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30. Desmond Lee, Plato The Republic, pg. 115.
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## **UNIT-3: INTRODUCTION TO ARISTOTLE**

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### **Structure**

- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Aristotle
- 3.4 Political Theory of Aristotle
- 3.5 Aristotle's theory of Citizenship
- 3.6 Aristotle's Work
- 3.7 Classification of Sciences
- 3.8 Logic
- 3.9 Physics
- 3.10 Summary
- 3.11 Key Terms
- 3.12 Self Assessment Questions
- 3.13 References

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### **3.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- Aristotle's political theory
- Various works of Aristotle

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### **3.2: INTRODUCTION**

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Aristotle is the last amongst what is considered to be greatest philosophical trio of all times; the two other philosophers being Socrates (470-399 BC) and Plato (427-347 BC). For this reason, many consider him to be the last important figure of the well- distinguished Greek philosophical tradition that was initiated by Thales (600 BC).

But it is wrong to make such claims as Greek philosophy ended with Aristotle, for it continued in the various schools of the Epicureans, Sceptics, Stoics, even in Plato's Academy, and Aristotle's Peripatetic school across several countries for many centuries. All the three figures

contributed immensely to the philosophical activities that dominated Athens during the fourth and fifth century. The Socratic tradition was carried forward by Plato, his most sincere follower. But Aristotle, the most brilliant student of Plato's academy, debated his master's ideologies and was successful in laying foundations for a new philosophical tradition.

As far as Socrates and Plato are considered, they are truly Athenians, i.e. they were born and spent their entire lives in Athens. This was not the case with Aristotle. In order to have an insight into his life, five periods have been identified, each corresponding to the place where he lived. Besides, there is another way by which one can trace his life and works. This consists of analyzing and understanding the various stages of his intellectual growth.

Aristotle was born in Stagirus, a Grecian colony and seaport on the coast of Thrace, in 384 BC. He spent the first seventeen years of his life in this city – state. His father Nicomachus, was a court physician to the Macedonian king Amyntas II. He is supposed to have spent some time in Macedonian palace, thus establishing contacts with the Macedonian monarchy, which lasted throughout his life. Nicomachus died while Aristotle was still a child and Aristotle was subsequently brought up by Proxenos, a family relative. The latter's son was later on brought up by Aristotle himself. Since there is insufficient information on Aristotle's childhood, it is difficult to assess the major influences during the formative years of his life. Since his father was a physician and member of the Asclepiadae medical guild, his interest in biology and the empirical approach that he takes towards any enquiry are greatly owed to him. This claim is unanimously supported by scholars. It is said that the members of the guild used to carry on empirical research with the help of dissections and trained their sons accordingly. Therefore, it was natural for Aristotle to develop a strong interest in studying the phenomenon of living things. Moreover, his surroundings where he spent his childhood provided him with ample opportunity to study the environment, including plants, animals, and marine life. This polished his inquisitive mind further.

At the age of eighteen he was sent to Plato's Academy to complete his studies. He stayed there for twenty years until the death of Plato. It seems what attracted him to the academy was the life of philosophy that was practiced therein. It provided him with all research endeavours that suited his level of intellect. He is said to have shared with Plato, some of the main tenets of Platonism both as his student and later as an associate in the school. He is in fact considered to

be the 'most genuine student of Plato' by Diogenes Laertius. From the early writings of Aristotle, one can make out his general adherence to Platonism. This is reflected in his way of writing too. Like his master, he chose dialogue as a medium to conduct philosophical inquiry. Even the issues that he discussed in his early writings were Platonic in the sense that they concerned education, immortality of the soul, nature of philosophy, and so on. At the same time however he also deviated from the views of his teacher wherever he felt it necessary. Thus, from those of Aristotle's works which clearly reflect Platonism, one can identify a particular stage of his life during which he was an ardent follower of Plato.

Following Plato's death, Aristotle left the academy in 347 BC. After some years in 342 BC, he was invited by king Philip of Macedon to tutor his thirteen years old son Alexander. Although it is not clear as to what Aristotle taught the young Alexander who became famous as the conqueror of the world, most scholars agree that he introduced the latter to politics and probably wrote a couple of books to this effect. Aristotle continued his association with Alexander till the latter died, but their association was not a close one because both of them professed opposite objectives in life. Aristotle favored a contemplative life, whereas Alexander opted for an action-filled life with the sole motive of building an empire. Aristotle contended against the war as the final end of human life. This is evident in his remark, 'It is possible to perform noble acts without being ruler of land and sea'. But here it is important to mention, as reported by scholars, that both Alexander and his father harbored a larger interest beyond their policies of warfare and empire building, and it was the unification of the eastern world.

Aristotle moved to Stagira and stayed until Philip died and Alexander took over as the king, i.e. 340 BC to 336 BC. Thereafter, he once again returned to Athens and stayed there for some time. This second phase of his life which he spent in Athens turned out to be the most productive years of his life, as he wrote some major philosophical treatises during this period. In Athens he found that the Academy was run by Xenocratus and that Platonism was getting established as the dominant philosophy. So he founded his own school with some financial support from Alexander at a place called Lyceum. In 323 BC Alexander died suddenly amidst his triumphs. At that time Athens was governed by a pro-Macedonian party. Subsequent to Alexander's death, this party was overthrown and there was a general reaction against

everything that was Macedonian. Alexander's position in Greece was much like Napoleon in Europe a century ago. Entire Greece lived under a constant fear of invasion as long as Alexander lived. With his death, however, there was an overall outburst of feeling against Macedonia. Consequently, the party that came into power was also anti- Macedonian party. As far as Aristotle was concerned, he was always taken as representative of the Macedonian court. Thus, he was charged of impiety and a possible prosecution was in the offing. These developments compelled him to run away to Chalcis in Euboea. He did not want the Athenians to commit another sin against philosophy as they had done with Socrates. He was taken over by a serious illness from which he could not recuperate, and eventually died in 322 BC at age of sixty three.

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### **3.3: ARISTOTLE**

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Aristotle's works are divided into logic, physical works, psychological works, philosophical works and works on natural history. The Peripatetic school of philosophy groups Aristotle's writings on 'logic' under the title '*Organon*', which means instrument because they considered logic to be the chief instrument for scientific investigation. However, Aristotle considered 'logic' to be the same as verbal reasoning. He believed that to gain knowledge of an object, people ask certain questions, and he classified words into substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, situation, condition, action and passion, arranged in the order in which the questions are asked. Obviously, 'substance' is considered most important including individual objects and the species to which these objects belong.

In his works on philosophy, Aristotle first traces the history of philosophy. He believed that philosophy grew as a result of wonder and curiosity which were not fully satisfied by religious myths. At first there were only philosophers of nature such as Thales and Anaximenes who were succeeded by Pythagoreans with mathematical abstractions. Pure thought was partly a contribution of Eleatic philosophers such as Parmenides and Anaxagoras. However, the complete level of pure thought was reached in the works of Socrates. Socrates was able to express general concepts in the form of definitions. Aristotle was of the opinion that metaphysics dealt with the early principles of scientific knowledge and the final conditions of all existence. It was concerned with existence in its basic state. In contrast, mathematics dealt with existence in the form of lines, angles, etc.

In his works on psychology, Aristotle defined the soul as the expression or realization of a natural body. He accepted the existence of a relationship between psychological states and physiological processes. He regarded the soul or mind as the truth of the body and not as the outcome of its physiological conditions.

The activities of the soul are manifested in specific faculties or parts corresponding with the stages of biological development: nutritional faculties (characteristic of plants); movement-related faculties (characteristic of animals) and faculties of reason (characteristic of humans).

Aristotle viewed **ethics** as an attempt to find out the highest good or the final purpose or end. Most ends of life merely help us to achieve other ends, there is always some final goal or pursuit that we aspire for or desire. Such an end is usually happiness, which must be based on human nature, and must originate from personal experience. Thus, happiness must be something practical and human, and should exist in the work and life which is unique to humans. It lies in the active life of a rational human being or in a perfect realization and outworking of the true soul and self, throughout a lifetime.

According to Aristotle, the moral ideal in political administration is merely a different aspect of what is applicable to individual happiness.

Humans are social beings, and the ability to speak rationally results in social union. The state develops from the family through the village community, which is just a branch of the family. Although originally formed to satisfy natural wants, the state exists for moral ends and also to promote higher life. The state is a genuine moral organization that advances the development of humans.

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### **3.4: POLITICAL THEORY OF ARISTOTLE**

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Political science is the body of knowledge that practitioners will use in pursuing their tasks. The most important role played by the politician is that of lawgiver, the one who frames the appropriate constitution comprising laws, customs and a system of moral education for the citizens. It is the responsibility of the politician to take measures to maintain the constitution and introduce reforms whenever the need arises and to prevent situations that may undermine the power of the political system. This is the field of legislative science, which according to Aristotle is more important than politics.

According to Aristotle, a politician is similar to a craftsman. Just like a craftsman produces an object making use of the four causes discussed earlier, namely formal, material, efficient and final causes, a politician also works with the four causes. The state comprises several individual citizens, who form the material cause out of which the city-state is created. The constitution forms the formal cause. The city-state cannot exist without an efficient cause, that is, the ruler. In the absence of the ruler, the community, irrespective of its type will be in disorder. The constitution acts as this ruling element.

All communities are established with the aim of achieving some good. This is where the final cause comes in. The community with the most authority and the one that contains the other communities has the most authority of all, aims for the highest good. This explains the existence of politics for good life or happiness.

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### **3.5: ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF CITIZENSHIP**

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Aristotle gives his general theory of citizenship in *Politics* III. He distinguishes citizens from other inhabitants, such as resident aliens, slaves, even children, seniors and ordinary workers. According to him a citizen is a person possessing the right to participate in 'deliberative or judicial office'. Citizens were those who had the right to be part of juries, the assembly, the council and other bodies as was the case in Athens, where the citizens were directly involved in governance. However, full citizenship was not given to women, slaves, foreigners, etc. The city-state according to Aristotle comprised several such citizens. He considered the constitution as a tool for organizing the various offices of the city-state. The governing body is defined by the constitution (comprising either the people in a democratic set-up or a chosen handful in an oligarchy).

The benefit that is common to all in forming a city-state is the attainment of noble life. Aristotle also states that an individual can rule over another in many ways depending on his own nature and the nature of the subject. The master-slave relationship represents despotic rule wherein the slaves cannot function without a natural master to instruct or direct them. It is a form of rule which exists primarily for the master and is only incidental for the slaves who are born without the skill of self-governance.

The second form of rule, paternal or marital, asserts that the male possesses more leadership qualities than the female. Similarly, children lack the ability to rationalize and cannot do without

the supervision of adults. Aristotle firmly believed that paternal or marital rule was necessary for the sake of the women and children, a thought that was criticized by many modern thinkers. However, Aristotle was somewhat right in believing that the rule that benefitted both the ruler and the subject were just whereas the rule that was advantageous only to the ruler was unjust and inappropriate for the community consisting of free individuals. Going by this logic, the case of a single ruler is just if it is a kingship and unjust if it is a tyranny. Similarly, in case of a few rulers, aristocracy is just whereas oligarchy is certainly unjust. In case of several rulers, polity is correct while democracy was considered deviant by Aristotle.

According to Aristotle, the city-state is not a business enterprise concerned with wealth maximization. It is not an association promoting equality and liberty either. The city-state, in fact, attempts to achieve good life. Therefore, aristocracy, he felt, was the best option wherein political rights could be assigned to those who could make good use of it in the interest of the community. His ideal constitution comprised fully virtuous citizens.

Aristotle divides knowledge into *practical*, *theoretical* and *productive knowledge*. While theoretical knowledge is aimed at action, productive knowledge addresses daily needs. Practical knowledge deals with knowledge related to how to live and how to act. It is possible to lead a good life by making use of practical knowledge. Both ethics and politics are considered practical sciences and are concerned with human beings as moral agents. While ethics deals with how human beings act as individuals, politics deals with how human beings act in communities. However, Aristotle felt that both ethics and politics influence each other. According to him, abstract knowledge of ethics and politics is useless because practical knowledge is useful only if we act on it. Both should be practiced to attain goodness or to become good.

In his works Aristotle mentions that it is not for a young man to study politics because he lacks experience. Also, he rightly states that youngsters act according to emotions instead of reason. Without reason it is impossible to act on practical knowledge, therefore, young students are not equipped to study politics. Very few possessed the practical experiences of life and the mental discipline to gain from a study of politics, which is why a very low percentage of the population in Athens was given the benefits of citizenship or political participation.

Political and moral knowledge cannot possess the same level of precision or certainty as mathematics. For example, there cannot really be a fixed and accurate definition of 'justice'.

However, many things in geometry or mathematics such as a point or an angle can be defined precisely. These definitions will not change either. This is probably why Aristotle refrains from listing set rules to be followed for making ethical and political decisions. Instead, he expects readers of his works to become people who know what is the correct thing to do or the right manner to act in a situation when faced with it.

Ethics and politics are interlinked because of the ultimate purpose they serve. Human beings also have a purpose which they need to fulfill. This ultimate aim Aristotle feels is 'happiness'. However, happiness cannot be achieved without leading a life of virtue. A person who chooses to do a particular thing because he feels it is the right thing to do will lead a flourishing life. An individual can be happy and also possess a high degree of moral values only if he is placed in a political community that is well-constructed. A well-constructed political community will encourage and promote the right actions and ban the wrong ones and educate people about what is right and what is wrong. This is where the link between ethics and politics becomes clear.

Aristotle saw the political community as a partnership of citizens who pursue a common good. It is the responsibility of the city-state to help its citizens attain good. Each individual will try to achieve his individual goal or purpose, that of happiness. In this way, all the individuals put together will achieve happiness or goodness.

Aristotle brings us face to face with the truth that we as individuals need to figure out how best to lead our lives together in a group. To figure this out, human beings, unlike animals, use the ability to reason and talk. Using this ability, they create laws that help practice justice and facilitate survival. People, in groups, all pursuing virtuous lives, together form a city. In the absence of this city and justice, human beings would be as good as animals. The most important element of a city is not the pursuit of security or wealth and riches but the pursuit of virtue and happiness.

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### **3.6: ARISTOTLE'S WORKS**

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In *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, Stace reports that Aristotle is said to have written nearly four hundred books. Here a 'book' is intended to mean a chapter in a treatise. It is said that more than three quarters of his writings were found in a mutilated form. Particularly, it is claimed that his treatise on metaphysics was unfinished. One of the chapters of this treatise ended in the middle of a discussion and others were available in a wrong order. It was more or

less same with his other writings. They lacked final revisions and for this reasons it had been very difficult and challenging for scholars to develop a chronological sequence of Aristotle's works. Therefore, as reported in *A Companion to Aristotle*, edited by Georgios Anagnosto, scholars resorted to innovative methods in order to understand the chronological order of Aristotle's works. These methods included cross references within his works. According to this method (introduced by Ross), if there is a reference of one work in another, then the former would be assessed to have been written before the latter.

The second method included references to historical events in Aristotle's works. Accordingly, any reference to historical events would give a clue that a particular work must have been written after the event.

The next method is based on philosophical views, or pre suppositions. Thus, scholars tried to determine the chronology of his works by observing whether or not a particular position elaborated in one work was also presupposed in another work. This would give an idea as to which of the compositions was written earlier.

Lastly, stylometry, is a method that focuses on linguistic features of a text. This method works by comparing the statistical data of the linguistic features of various works. Using this method, one could derive the chronology of Aristotle's works relative to the position of others. These are some of the ways to determine the order and chronology of Aristotle's writings.

If we compare Plato and Aristotle in terms of their writings, we will find that Aristotle composed most of his works during his second phase of stay at Athens, i.e. when he was more than fifty years of age. In that sense, his writings are more mature and fully developed. This view is supported by Y. Masih in *A Critical History of Western Philosophy* (Greek, Medieval, and Modern) where he writes that Aristotle was quite different from Plato in his mental constitution and orientation. Looking at the vast variety of areas that he touched upon in his voluminous writings, he was aptly called an encyclopedic genius. His extensive understanding of logic and biology greatly impacted his thinking.

For the sake convenience, his works have been categorized as early and late. This has been done keeping in mind Plato's influence on him. Accordingly, amongst his early works we have *Organon*, *Physics*, *De Anima*, *Eudemian*, *Ethics*, and *Metaphysics*. The later works comprise of *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*, and the *Rhetorics*. In this unit we shall mainly deal with his logic, physics and metaphysics. Since he classifies them under the broad category of theoretic

sciences, it is relevant first to give an account of how he classifies the sciences. This will be followed by a detailed discussion on his logic, physics and metaphysics.

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### **3.7: CLASSIFICATION OF SCIENCES**

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We have already stated in the earlier section that Aristotle was an encyclopedic genius. This is because he is said to have contributed to almost every branch of knowledge. He was thus a ‘man of universal learning’, as Stace puts it. Therefore, it is not considered proper by many scholars to call him a philosopher in the restricted sense of the term. With the kind of background he had, he was naturally inclined towards the field of physical science. But he intended to know about everything including the existing sciences of his time. Where science was not available he went ahead to lay the foundations of new sciences. He is credited with founding two sciences, namely logic and biology.

With Plato and Aristotle being two prominent philosophical figures during that time, it was expected that one should either be a Platonist or an Aristotelian in spirit. However, this does not imply that Plato and Aristotle had contrasting viewpoints. According to Stace, Aristotle was the greatest of all Platonists. He carried forward Plato’s idealism by making it free from all of its shortcomings. Stace points out that Plato’s idealism was crude and untenable, for he was the founder of idealism, the first proponent. Aristotle took it upon himself to correct Plato’s idealism from its crudities, and supplemented it with an acceptable philosophy. Thus, the difference between them, as it appears, is mostly a superficial one, except that Aristotle believed in facts, whereas Plato had no regard for facts or for that matter the objects of senses.

Aristotle accepted the idealistic and teleological presuppositions of Plato, particularly his view that the world was an ideal one with eternal and unchangeable ideas that he called the forms. He further agreed with the view that these ideas were very much a part of the world and immanent in it, thus giving it a form and life. But being the son of a physician, he was fascinated by the sciences, which is reflected in his later approach towards philosophy. He believed that knowledge did not consist in merely being acquainted with the facts but also in investigating their reasons and causes. This is what makes up for the definition not only of philosophy but also of science. Both are concerned with the study of the ultimate or first cause of things. He named this course of investigation as ‘first philosophy’ which we now call metaphysics. Thus, from Aristotle’s point of view, metaphysics is the science which studies the

being (Aristotle considered the being to be the first principle or the first cause). All the other sciences dealing with other parts of the being were partial sciences and therefore he called them second philosophies.

He broadly divided the sciences into three main categories:

- i. Theoretical sciences dealing with mathematics, physics and metaphysics.
- ii. Practical sciences concerning ethics and politics.
- iii. Creative sciences that studied mechanical and artistic productions.

His area of interest was physics, metaphysics, and practical sciences to which he added logic.

Describing the theoretical sciences, he first talks about physics. According to him, the subject matter of physics comprises of the class of natural and physical things, and they all possess the internal principle of motion and rest which explains why these things either move or remain stationary in a particular place. Their movement can be gazed in terms of their growth and decrease in size, and also in terms of qualities which they either generate or pass away. Therefore, the natural and physical things include plants and animals as well as their parts. According to Aristotle, the subject matter of physics can never be purely formal because it essentially concerns the nature which is always dynamic. The principles of physics are thus framed on the basis of the change in the physical things, through induction.

The subject matter of mathematics, Aristotle maintains, comprises of numbers, lines, points, surfaces, and volumes. Although these properties are treated as physical properties in various branches of physics, they are treated differently by the mathematicians. This is because, although it is unimaginable to conceive these properties in the absence of matter and motion, mathematicians conceive them in abstraction. In fact, the possibility of mathematics, it is said, depends on its ability to give an abstract treatment to 'quantity' which is one of the physical properties of things.

Finally, Aristotle talks about the forms that not only exist apart from matter and motion but are also known independently of them. This constitutes the subject matter of the first philosophy or metaphysics. It is for this reason metaphysics is accepted as dealing largely with the issue of the being. Firstly, it enquires into the ultimate principles of knowledge, this also includes an examination into the ultimate causes of existences and change. Secondly, it investigates the principles which determine the interconnections between various aspects of the universe.

Thus, Aristotle differentiates between physics, mathematics, and metaphysics, the three theoretic sciences on the basis of a general differentiation of their respective subject matters and form. In this context, it is further brought up by Richard Mckeon in his *Introduction to Aristotle* that all the above three mentioned theoretic sciences, irrespective of their subject matter, emphasise on the necessary rather than what is contingent. In other words 'it is by virtue of this characteristic in their subject matter that their propositions are necessary and not merely probable'.<sup>1</sup> He explains that this necessity may be either simple or absolute or it may be even be hypothetical. The propositions of metaphysics which are treated as universal, and deal with the essence or definition of a thing exemplify simple and absolute necessity. On the other hand, the propositions of mathematics and physics involve a lot of hypothetical reasoning which ultimately leads to necessity. He writes: 'Necessity in metaphysics must be sought in essence, in mathematics, in the postulates, in physics in the matter; in all three the problem of discovering the necessary is the problem of definition and causes'.<sup>2</sup>

As far as the practical sciences are concerned Mckeon says that they are differentiated from the theoretic sciences by their purposes or ends. Where on one hand the end of theoretic sciences is knowledge, the end of practical sciences on the other hand not only consists in knowledge but also acting or behaving on the basis of that knowledge. It is the dissimilarity of the purposes of these two sciences that makes the subject matter and method of one distinct from that of the other. It is further clarified by Mckeon that since the subject matter of practical sciences are contingent things as compared to necessary connections that we find in theoretic science, the inquirer is not concerned with the precision which is needed in the theoretic sciences, particularly in mathematics and physics. Since its subject matter is not one 'nature' or one 'substance', but the way a man grows, reproduces, perceives, or thinks his definition will therefore be different and would be based on the functions of his nature. On the other hand, his virtues, the social and political institutions that he adopts in his life, the objects of his appreciation, etc. depend on his customs and practices that are prompted by his actions which he has performed and control or guidance he has experienced in life.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike the various theoretical sciences where there are sharp distinctions, the case with ethics and politics, which are the practical sciences, is different. Mckeon claims that ethics is but subdivision of politics, and we study human conduct in both. In ethics, this study is done from the point of view of personal morality along with acknowledging the fact that an individual's

actions are also influenced by political institutions. Likewise, in politics, human conduct is studied with reference to his associations and institutions. Along with this it is also admitted that the character of an institution is established by the traits of the people who compose them. There is, however, the need for a natural foundation in both the sciences, to assess the ends of actions and associations. In ethics, it is found in the habit of a man and in politics it consists in habits subject to man's needs and is related with his good living<sup>4</sup>.

Coming to the productive sciences, these are demarcated in terms of their products. Mckeon claims that nature has minimal role to play here because it cannot impose any lines to separate the arts and kind of artificial things. Thus, the three categories of the sciences discussed herewith are differentiated from each other on the basis of their subject matter, the ends they pursue and the principles they follow. Yet Mckeon says that each one of them is relevant to the other in terms of subject matter and the principles they employ. Aristotle is credited with arranging and organising the three sciences with absolute perfection and clarification. The subtlety with which he has segregated the subject matter, principle, and purposes of the three sciences is extremely significant. It provides us with an immediate effect, a sharp distinction between artistic, moral, and theoretic considerations. At the same time, he also allows a way by which a single object or an action can be a subject of enquiry of either of these sciences. And finally, it also makes way for the possibility to reduce the various sciences to theory, practice, or even art<sup>5</sup>.

With the understanding of the classification of the three categories of sciences, we shall proceed to take a look at Aristotle's physics and metaphysics. Both these sciences as we have seen are part of theoretic science. But before we do that, we must stop briefly to look at Aristotle's logic, for his logic is considered to be an essential pre-requisite in understanding his physics and metaphysics. This is because the issue of proof or cause marks its beginning in his logic.

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### **3.8: LOGIC**

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Aristotle's writings on logic are grouped in six treatises. These are collectively given one name – *Organon*. The six works on logic are *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, *Prior Analytics*, *Posterior Analytics*, *Topics*, and *Sophistical Refutation*. Hence, it is significant to deliberate upon each of these six works individually.

To begin with his first work *Categories*, it is said that the issue discussed therein is about the relation between uncombined terms. These relations are derived from the basic things that exist in world, and the interrelations between them. According to Aristotle, every uncombined term

communicate to something in the ten most universal kinds of categories. These categories are: substance, quality, quantity, relative, place, time, position, having, doing, and being. They represent the senses of being per se. In other words, with these categories Aristotle wants to communicate that there are as many senses of being as there are categories. However, he maintains that what exist primarily are the primary substances. He separates these primary substances from their accidental categories, and further tries to show how the category of substance itself is divided into primary and secondary substances. For example, when we say ‘Socrates is a man’, Socrates here represent the primary substance and man represent the secondary substance. In other words, this means that secondary substances are said of the primary substances, or they can be predicated of the primary substances either as names or definitions. So secondary substances do not have an independent existence apart from the primary substances to which they belong. The primary substance, on the other hand, does not need anything else for their existence. Hence, from an ontological point of view they are basic.

Coming now to *On Interpretation*, it offers explanation of statements or assertions that are considered to be meaningful expressions. Prior to Aristotle, Plato claimed that a simple statement is composed of only a name and a verb. For example, ‘Radha sings’. Further, it was said that they also include general categorical statements symbolized by the letters A, E, I and O:

- A represents ‘all men are mortal’.
- E represents ‘no men are mortal’.
- I conveys ‘some men are mortal’
- O conveys ‘some men are not mortal’.

Further, he tries to show the logical relation between these propositions by proposing a square of opposition. We all must remember that these logical relations are relations of opposition that holds between the four above mentioned categorical propositions. These are:

- Contrary relations between A & E
- Sub-contrary relation between I & O
- Contradictory relation between A & O and E & I
- Subalternation relation between A & I and E & O

Moreover, in this work, Aristotle also discusses a theory of true conditions for all statements whether they affirm anything or deny anything.

*Prior Analytics* introduces one to logic as a formal discipline. This work attempts to offer a complete system, at least virtually, of logical inference which is also known by the term ‘syllogistic’. In this work, Aristotle has used the categorical propositions that he introduces in *On Interpretation*. He develops a syllogism with the help of three categorical propositions. Two of these are the premises and the third one is the conclusion. This work thus shows which of the two categorical propositions should yield the conclusion. It gives an exposition of the valid forms of syllogisms in terms of their figures and moods. Thus, the prior analytics show that inferences, proofs, or syllogisms must necessarily consist of combinations of three terms. The syllogisms also reflect deductive reasoning because a particular conclusion is derived from universal premises. Induction is the opposite process where a conclusion is derived from a number of particular premises.

As far as the *Posterior Analytics* is concerned, it shows an attempt to extend the syllogism of prior analytics to the sciences and scientific explanations. As we know, scientific knowledge is always aimed to discover the ‘why’ rather than knowing ‘that’. Hence, it consists of a deductively ordered body of knowledge. This means that the premises of scientific syllogism must be necessary, that is they must represent established truth. As a result, conclusions are made to depend on the premises but not vice-versa. Each premise is known independently of the conclusion. These, therefore, serve as axioms from which conclusions are derived through proper demonstration.

Thus, from *Posterior Analytics*, one derives the idea that a demonstration, which consists of scientific proofs, involves reasoning. This is because all scientific demonstrations are based on true and necessary propositions that serve as their starting points. So the idea of the first cause or the first principle which Aristotle tries to investigate in physics and metaphysics has its roots in his logic.

*The Topics* deals with dialectical reasoning. The premises of such reasoning are not the scientific premises, but accepted opinions of people.

Finally, *Sophistical Refutation* is concerned with thirteen fallacies. Such arguments arise from opinions that are accepted generally but are not so. They also seem to have their roots in the opinions that are usually accepted or at least appear to be accepted generally.

If we run through the subject matter of each of these works then one thing becomes evident that out of the six works that compose *Organon*, his *Prior Analytics* and *On Interpretation* together contains the fundamental elements of scientific or deductive logic.

One may raise a question here that why did Aristotle explain or talk about logic, at all? If we look at his classification of sciences into theoretical, practical, and productive science (as discussed earlier), we will observe that logic does not find a place in any one of them.

This actually came up as a problem during his time. In an attempt to find a solution to this problem, Alexander of Aphrodisias, a great Aristotelian scholar, held that logic was an instrument of science, particularly the theoretical one<sup>6</sup>. Since then the science of logic has been interpreted as an important instrument for the acquisition of genuine knowledge. Though Aristotle himself was not satisfied to treat it as *Organon*, he nevertheless acknowledged and conveyed the fact that rather than a part of some special science, it should be prior to the study of the special sciences. He suggests that one should not even attempt to undertake the study of the first philosophy or the science of the essence of things, unless one is familiar with the analytics. (He uses the term analytic to refer both to the *Prior Analytic* and *Posterior Analytic*). It is important, for the clarification of the students that in the classification of logic, Aristotle's logic is considered as traditional logic. The mathematical logic of twentieth century emerging from Gottlob Frege's works comprises modern logic; and the logic of recent years namely, the logic of necessity and possibility, is modal logic.

Continuing further with Aristotle's logic we will observe that in *Prior Analytics*, he deals with syllogisms. Syllogisms are arguments having one or more premises and a conclusion. Aristotle uses natural language to form the syllogisms. The statements that he uses for premises and conclusions are assertion or statements which are either true or false. Further, these statements are not disjunctive or conditional statements. They are categorical statements with a subject and a predicate. The subject refers either to a particular or a universal, but the predicate refer only to universals. These universals cover a wide range including man, animal, substance, horse, good, line, number, wisdom, and so on.

According to Aristotle, the natural way of connecting the subject and predicate of a categorical statement is by a copula which is a verb in the English grammar. This is written as S is P, where S is the subject and P represents the predicate. In the *Prior Analytics*, Aristotle forgoes the natural mode by favouring the three artificial idioms:

- i. P belongs to S
- ii. P is predicated of S
- iii. P is said of S

The categorical statements are of four types. They are distinguished from one another in terms of their quantity, quality, and modality. In terms of quality, a categorical statement is either affirmative or negative; quantity wise, it may be universal or particular; and from the point of view of modality, it is either necessary or possible. Based on the above distinctions, the four types of assertoric categorical statements are:

- i. Universal affirmative (P belongs to every S), i.e. all S is P
- ii. Universal negative (P belongs to no S), i.e. no S is P
- iii. Particular affirmative (P belongs to some S), i.e. some S is P
- iv. Particular negative (P does not belong to some S), i.e. some S is not P.

These are represented by customary four vowels a, e, i, and o.

It is evident from the above description of the categorical propositions that singular propositions and indeterminate statements are not included among the categorical statements.

Next, he discusses the relations between the four categorical statements. He has deliberated on these relations in *On Interpretation*. Summarizing these relations, Aristotle is quoted in Devid Keyt's article 'Deductive Logic'<sup>7</sup> thus: 'I call an affirmation and a negation contradictory opposites when what one signifies universally the other signifies not universally, for example, every man is white and not every man is white or no man is white and some man is white. But I call the universal affirmation and the universal negation contrary opposites. For example, everyman is just and no man is just. So these cannot be true together, but their opposites may both be true with respect to the same things for example, not every man is white and some men are white'.

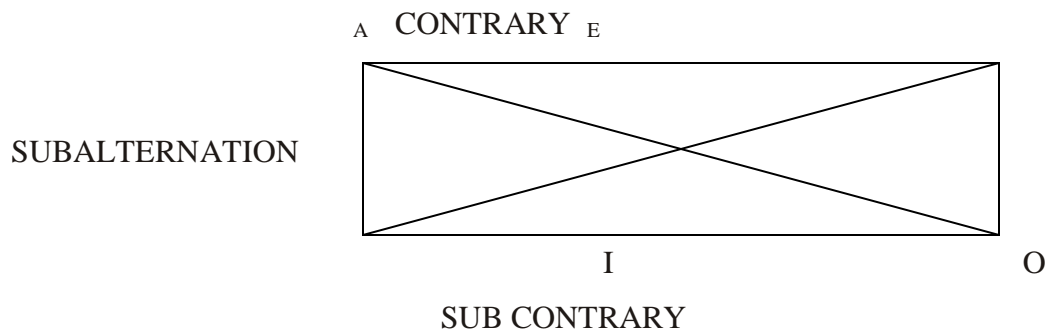
It follows from the above, that A and O propositions and E and I propositions have opposite truth-values, and so they have 'contradictory relations' between them. Similarly, the

corresponding A and E statements are ‘contrary opposites’ that is to say they cannot be true together though they can both be false. Their contradictories can however be true together. In other words, I and O propositions can be true together. For instance, some diamonds are precious stones (I) and some diamonds are not precious stones (O) can both be true together. Thus, the corresponding I and O propositions, according to Aristotle, have the sub-contrary relation of opposition amongst them. This implies that they cannot both be false, although they can be true together.

Thus, one can derive the following logical facts from the above discussed relations of oppositions. These are:

1. That statement A is contradictory of the corresponding O statement.
2. That statement E is contradictory of the corresponding I statement.
3. That A and E statements are contraries.
4. That I and O statements are sub-contraries.

These relations of ‘oppositions’ are represented with help of the square of opposition as shown in the figure given below:



**Fig. 2.1** Relations of ‘Oppositions’

Apart from these opposite relations, there is another type of opposition that holds between two universal propositions and their corresponding particular propositions. This is the relation between A & I and E & O. It is known as subalternation relation.

Eight types of immediate inferences are drawn from these relations which are as follows:

- i. Given A as true, E is false, I is true, and O is false.
- ii. Given E as true, A is false, I is false, and O is true.

- iii. Given I as true, E is false, while A & O are undetermined.
- iv. Given O as true, A is false, while E and I are undetermined.
- v. Given A as false, O is true, while E and I are undetermined.
- vi. Given E as false, I is true, while A and O are undetermined.
- vii. Given I as false, A is false, E is true, and O is true.
- viii. Given O as false, A is true, E is false, and I is true.

We may mention in this context that the process of inference involves deducing the conclusion from one premise through the mediation of another premise. Immediate inferences are those in which conclusions follow directly from one premise without the mediation of the second premise. The eight inferences following from the square of opposition are immediate in this sense.

Another important feature of deductive logic is the concept of figure and mood in the syllogisms. David Keyt quotes Aristotle defining a syllogisms as ‘an argument in which:

- i. Certain things having been supposed.
- ii. Something different from the things supposed.
- iii. Results of necessity.
- iv.** Because these things are so.’<sup>8</sup>

The first phrase refers to the premises of syllogisms. The word ‘things’ clearly indicate more than one premise. The second phrase refers to the conclusion of the syllogisms.

The third phrase emphasizes the fact that there is a relation and necessity between the premises and the conclusion. The last phrase shows that no element external to the argument is needed to fulfil the necessary relation between the premises and the conclusion in a given argument.

One can draw some obvious and inherent implications from the above definition of a syllogism. Firstly, that Aristotle rules out the possibility of immediate inferences from the scope of a syllogism. Secondly, the relation of ‘necessity’ between the premises and the conclusion presents the possibility of a logical fallacy. Thirdly, it shows that only valid arguments can be called as syllogisms.

Thus, we can say that a valid argument is an extension of a syllogism. But Aristotelian logic puts its central attention only on one type of syllogism, i.e. the one consisting of three

categorical statements sharing three terms and each term occurring twice throughout the argument. In fact, he restricts the application of the term ‘syllogistic’ only to refer to arguments that exemplify the above stated structure. Such arguments alone constitute what he calls a ‘basic syllogism’. In order to further examine the syllogistic arguments, Aristotle introduces the concepts of ‘figure’ and ‘mood’. The arrangement of the three terms used in the argument determines its figure; whereas the quality and quantity of the proportions that are employed in the syllogism determines its mood. Aristotle coins specific names for the three terms that are used in the argument. The term that is commonly shared by both the premises is the ‘middle term’, and the other two terms which he calls ‘extremes’ (in *Prior Analytics*) are the ‘major’ and the ‘minor’ terms. Basically, the ‘predicate’ of the first premise is the major term, and the subject of the second premise is the minor term. The major and minor terms of a syllogism are determined corresponding to the subject and predicate of the conclusion. The figure and mood together make the ‘form’ of an argument.

All the books on formal logic, present us with four different types of figure. But it is important to mention here that Aristotle gave recognition to only three of them

The fourth figure was not considered by him. These figures are as follows:

M P	P M	M P	P M
<u>S M</u>	<u>S M</u>	<u>M S</u>	<u>M S</u>
S P	S P	S P S P	
1 <sup>st</sup> Fig.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Fig.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Fig.	4 <sup>th</sup> Fig.

Now let us consider an example of syllogism:

- All criminal actions are wicked deed
- All prosecutions for murder are criminal action.
- Therefore, all prosecutions for murder are wicked deed.

The subject of the conclusion is the phrase ‘prosecutions for murder’ and the predicate is ‘wicked deeds’. Thus, the former is the ‘minor’ term and the latter is the ‘major’ term of the syllogism. Now both the premises share ‘criminal action’. This makes it the ‘middle’ term. The

mood of the syllogism is AAA because all the three statements are universal affirmative. And with regards to the position of the middle term, its figure is first figure. Therefore the form of the syllogism is AAA-1.

Aristotle recognizes 192 forms of syllogistic arguments. Out of these, only fifteen forms are valid. The students are expected to be familiar with these forms. So Aristotle's analysis of the logical form occupies a very significant place in the *Prior Analytics*. Its conceptual basis is imbedded in his distinction between the form and matter. Although, the word 'matter' is not directly used in *Prior Analytics*, Keyt tries to show that the concept of 'matter' is used in a close sense to signify premises, when Aristotle writes in *Physics* that 'the hypotheses (are matter) of the conclusion'. However, the way he uses the concept of figure in *Prior Analytics*, comes very close to what he means by form, but it does not fully characterize the form of an argument.<sup>9</sup>

After conversing about the important feature of deductive logic, Aristotle proceeds to distinguish between 'perfect' and 'imperfect' syllogism. According to him, as quoted by David Keyt, a syllogism is perfect, 'if it stands in need of nothing else besides the things taken in order for the necessity to be evident; I call it imperfect if it still needs either one or several additional things which are necessary because of the terms assumed, but yet were not taken by means of premises.'<sup>10</sup> Keyt points out that for Aristotle the imperfect syllogisms are the 'potential syllogisms' which need to be unveiled. The perfect syllogisms on other hand are 'transparently valid'.

Keyt explains that in order to make perfect an imperfect syllogism, its conclusion needs to be deduced from its premises, through a series of valid steps. This implies that the premises and conclusion should be the initial and final stages of a deduction. Four types of perfect syllogisms are enumerated by Aristotle, in the first figure, namely, Barbara, Celarent, Daril and Ferio. According to Aristotle, there are fifteen valid forms of arguments. In order to show that the other forms are invalid, he uses the method of counter examples. Counter examples are arguments forms with true premises and a false conclusion, and hence are essentially invalid. Besides deducibility, he also gives importance to the soundness and completeness of all arguments types, i.e. syllogistic arguments, categorical arguments, and arguments in general. The categorical syllogism, as commented by W.T. Stace, is the fundamental type of reasoning, and all forms of deduction are ultimately reduced to it. Thus, Aristotelian logic offers all that is basic and

essential to its study. Starting from judgment or statements or proportions, and moving on to, syllogisms and fallacies, valid and invalid syllogisms, and even definitions, it is a complete package of the facts of reason. To use Stace's words, 'Whoever knows common logic and the text books, knows the logic of Aristotle'.<sup>11</sup>

In *Posterior Analytics*, he mainly talks about the theory of demonstration in scientific knowledge. It serves as the source not only of several distinctions and the technical terms that he uses, but also as the source used by later logicians to develop their theories on scientific method. In *Posterior Analytics*, he makes an attempt to formulate the problem of scientific proof which, he says, is at the centre of two processes. These are instruction and inquiry.

He claims that all instructions involve argument and therefore proceed from pre-existent knowledge. To quote his words: 'All instructions given or received by way of argument proceeds from pre-existent knowledge.' All arguments, deductive, inductive, and even the scientific proofs, according to him, are essentially concerned with the principles of sciences and inferences from the principles. He therefore makes an attempt to prove that each science has first principles that are proper to it and an infinite regress of these premises is not possible. As a result he holds that predication must terminate in both upward and downward direction. That is to say in the upward direction it must end in generality and in the downward direction it must end in particularity. In between there must be a finite number of steps between the most universal and the most particular.

As far as inquiry is concerned, he holds that it is into facts and causes. From this point of view scientific proof must be concerned with the relation between definition and proof. He also tries to show how the causes constitute the middle term in scientific demonstration.

Aristotle believes that science depends on demonstrations. It involves an analysis not only of the structure of knowledge but also of the connections of things. In fact, for him, demonstration is nothing but 'scientific syllogism'. He claims that we possess science only in virtue of possessing scientific syllogism. Scientific syllogism, according to him, is a process of demonstration of scientific knowledge; and he claims that scientific knowledge is possible when we know the cause.

The summary of Aristotle's theory of demonstration, as stated by Robin Smith in 'Aristotle's Theory of Demonstration' is as follows:

1. Science or demonstrative science is knowledge that consists in possessing a demonstration.
2. A demonstration is a syllogism with immediate (indemonstrable) premises.
3. Possessing a demonstration requires finding premises to be more intelligible than its conclusion.
4. Every truth either is itself an immediate proposition or is deducible from immediate proposition.
5. Knowledge of immediate proposition is possible through some means other than demonstration. (Aristotle owes an explanation for this).<sup>12</sup>

Aristotle maintains, as is evident, that not all knowledge is demonstrative. With regard to the knowledge of the immediate premises, he particularly claims that their knowledge is independent of demonstration. He argues that since we must know the prior premises from which the demonstration is drawn and since the regress must end in immediate truths, those truths must be indemonstrable. But here he also adds that the same things cannot be both prior and posterior to one another. So he makes it very clear that demonstration must be based on premises prior to and better known than the conclusion. In other words, Aristotle does not entertain the idea of ‘circular demonstration’.

Moving ahead, he says that demonstrative knowledge is only present when we have a demonstration. Therefore, he interprets demonstration as a kind of inference from necessary premises. But in order to find out the characteristics of these requisite premises he makes an attempt to analyse different kinds of attributes. These are ‘true in every instance of its subject’, ‘essential’ attribute, and ‘commensurate and universal’ attribute. The first type of attributes is truly predicable of all instances and at all times. For example, he explains that if animal is truly predicable of every man then if it be true to say ‘this is a man’, it will also be true to say ‘this is an animal’. As far as ‘essential attributes’ are concerned, he considers four different possibilities. Firstly, according to him ‘essential attributes’ are those that belong to their subject as elements in its essential nature just as line belongs to a triangle or a point belongs to a line. Secondly, while they belong to certain subjects, the latter are contained in the attribute’s own defining formula. For instance, straight and curved both belong to the line and so on. Thirdly, that which is not predicated of a subject other than itself. Here he adds that things predicated of

a subject are accidental or coincidental. And lastly, that which is consequentially connected with anything is also an essential attribute, and that which is not so connected, Aristotle calls it 'coincidental'. For instance, he takes the statement 'while he was walking it lightened'. Here, says Aristotle, the lightning was not due to his walking. It was a mere coincident. Now, coming to the third type of attribute, he says that 'commensurately universal' attributes are those which belong to every instance of its subject and that too essentially and as such. From this he derives that all commensurate universals are necessarily inherent in their subjects. For example, he expresses that a point and straight belong to line essentially because they belong to the latter as such.

What Aristotle tries to convey is that an attribute belongs commensurately and universally to a subject if it could be shown to belong to any random instance of that subject. Moreover, he maintains that the subject should also be the first thing to which it could be shown to belong.

He contends that the errors that we make are largely because of the fact that our conclusion is not primarily and commensurately universal in the sense stated above. He enumerates certain situations that contribute to our committing such errors: when the subject is an individual or individuals with no universals; when the subjects belong to different species, and there is a higher universal but it has no name; and when the subject which the demonstrator takes as a whole is only a part of a larger whole. In the last case, the demonstration would be restricted only to individual instances within the part. It will not be true of the subject primarily, commensurately and universally.

Thus, Aristotle shows that demonstrative knowledge must have basic truths as their starting point. He argues that the object of scientific knowledge cannot be other than it is. He asserts that the attributes that attach essentially to their subjects attach necessarily to them. Thus, he derives that premises of the demonstrative syllogism must exhibit essential connections. In other words, he wants to communicate that all attributes must inhere essentially in the subject, or else they become accidental attributes which, according to him, are not necessary to their subjects.

He maintains that the fact that demonstration proceeds from necessary premises is further authenticated when we often reject a professed demonstration on the ground that one of its premise is not a necessary truth. He cautions that basic truths of a demonstration are not

constituted of popularly accepted truths. For example, the sophist declaration that to know is the same as to possess knowledge is only an assumption and does not constitute a basic truth.

Further in this context, he tries to assert that where demonstration is possible, if one fails to give an account of the cause then one cannot have scientific knowledge. He sums up by saying that ‘...demonstrative knowledge must be knowledge of a necessary nexus, and therefore must clearly be obtained through a necessary middle term; otherwise its possessor will know neither the cause nor the fact that his conclusion is a necessary connexion. Either he will mistake the non-necessary for the necessary and believe the necessity of the conclusion without knowing it, or else he will be ignorant whether he actually infers the mere fact through middle terms or the reasoned fact and from immediate premises.’

It ensues from the above that in demonstration one cannot pass from one genus to another. Aristotle says, for example, that we cannot prove geometrical truths by arithmetic. According to him every demonstration has three elements in it. The first is what is proved that is the conclusion. This is an attribute which must essentially inhere in a genus. The second is the axioms which make up for the premises of the demonstration; and the third element is the subject-genus whose attributes that is the essential properties are revealed by the demonstration. Aristotle admits that the axioms or the premises of the demonstration may be identical in two or more sciences. But he states that if the genera are different as in the case of geometry and arithmetic then we cannot apply arithmetical demonstration to the properties of magnitudes unless the magnitudes are given in numbers. What he tries to imply is that all the sciences have their own genera. Therefore, if the demonstration is to pass from one sphere to another, then the genus must be either absolutely or to some extent the same. If it is not so then Aristotle holds that no transition from one genus to the other is possible. This is because he reasons that the extreme and the middle terms must be derived from the same genus or else they will be just ‘accidents’.

Thus, we observe that Aristotle tries to interpret the indemonstrable premises in terms of ‘universal’. He claims that scientific knowledge concerns the universal and that science is nothing but knowledge of the universals themselves. He also adds that if the premises from which the syllogism proceeds are commensurately universal then the conclusions of such demonstrations must also be eternal. Thus, he tries to assert what can be considered as the most

debatable point between him and Plato. He rejects Plato's claim that the universals have an independent existence.

Aristotle's view of science, as is shown by Robin Smith, is a visit back to Plato's claim on science. Plato maintained that the objects of science have a necessary existence and so they are different from perceptible objects. These necessary existences constitute the causes of things. This further leads him to account for innateness of the knowledge of the universal. Aristotle, on the other hand, maintains that what exists necessarily, that is the universals, are very much significant. They do not have a separate or independent status from this world and the perceptible objects. Consequently, he denies Plato's view on having an innate knowledge of them. Thus, according to Aristotle, the universals exist as perceptible things.

Smith further explains Aristotle's universals as existing in our intellects. He says that the universals have causal powers by virtue of which they find a place in other individuals. He explains that when we perceive particular objects of the same class, then the universal presents in them cause the same universals to exist in our minds too. It is like the human form present in the parent, causing the human form in the child. In other words, he tries to convey that the intellect is capable of taking the form of the universal without its matter. Since knowing the universal is as good as knowing its essence or definition, it is equivalent to say that we know the universal by its 'through-itself predicates.'<sup>13</sup>

This fits into Aristotle's theory of demonstration being based on immediate premises. Thus, the universals are the immediate premises preceded by the intellect. We may correlate these 'universals' or what he calls the 'immediate premises', with the category of 'substance' which is the all-important category for him. And in this way, we can see, how he relates science with the ultimate principle of reality, i.e. the substance, or the universal or the being. This in a way also shows why an insight into Aristotle's logic is preliminary to the study of his physics and metaphysics.

With a fair understanding of Aristotle's logic, let us now move on to understand Aristotle's physics.

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### **3.9: PHYSICS**

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Aristotle conceives physics as the philosophy of nature. Consequently, its subject matter involves a study of the changes that takes place in the nature. These changes include the

inorganic as well as the biological and psychological changes. The inorganic changes are the ones that we study in astronomy, meteorology, chemistry, and physics, to name some of the sciences. It is held that Aristotle's contribution to physics has survived in a very narrow sense (a collection of merely four treatises). We briefly present here the main issues that he has discussed in these treatises.

As we have stated earlier that the theoretic sciences, as per Aristotle's classification, are aimed at studying the first principles. Therefore, in his *Physics* he makes an attempt to treat the principles behind the natural bodies and of natural motion. He tries to do this by analyzing the concepts implied in motion, for instance change, continuity, infinity, place, and time. In the process, he tries to set forth the various kinds and causes of motion, and finally relates all of them by tracing the causes of motion to an unmoved mover.

Next, in *On the Heavens*, another treatise on physics, he talks about the local motions of the bodies and attempts to differentiate these movements from those of the elements out of which heavenly bodies are made.

In his *On Generation and Corruption*, he talks of the causes of changes. These include change in substance whereby he discusses generation and corruption, change in quality or alteration, and change in size, i.e. growth and diminution.

Lastly, his *Meteorology* is an exposition of how the natural elements their mixtures and compounds cause rains, winds, dew, storms, lightning, earthquakes, thunder, rainbows, and other natural processes.

Of these four treatises on physics, Aristotle considers the first two as the proper physical treatises because he exclusively deals with the principles of natural changes and motion in them. But one may ask: what does Aristotle mean by the principle of motion? Aristotle explains that principles of motion do not imply any scientific proposition. He interprets the principles as representing the irreducible terms of the process of motion or change, which may help in forming the propositions of science. According to him, any change or motion is marked by an initial and a terminating point. These may be the place, quality, or quantity at which a process begins or ends. Moreover, there must be a subject too that undergoes the change or motion. Thus, there are three basic principles of the entire process of change namely, privation, form,

and matter. He claims nature to be the cause of all motion and distinguishes it from art on the one hand and chance and spontaneity on the other.

Thus, physics as conceived by Aristotle is chiefly concerned with nature and motion. It is distinguished from mathematics in the sense that the latter is an abstraction from matter and motion. Its difference from metaphysics lies in the fact that metaphysics essentially deals with being as such and is also concerned with the existence and essence of forms.

It follows that the significance of the word 'nature' is very crucial in understanding Aristotle's physics. Here nature has to do with growth. As Russell points out, when one says that the nature of an acorn is to grow into an oak, one seems to be using the word in the Aristotelian sense.<sup>14</sup> Thus the word 'nature' has a teleological implication in Aristotle's writings. He further claims that the 'nature' of a thing is its end. A thing exists precisely to achieve this end. It is in this context that he says that certain things exist by nature and others from causes. He specifies that those things that exist by nature have an internal principle of movement. For instance, animals, plants and simple bodies exist by nature as they all show an internal principle of movement which not only includes their locomotion, but also accounts for their qualitative change or change of size. Thus, nature is the source or cause of their being in the state of rest or of motion. And this is what constitutes their internal principle. The entire phenomenon is expressed in book II of *Physics*. He writes: 'Of things that exist, some exist by nature, some from other causes. By nature the animals and their parts exist, and plants and simple bodies.... All the things mentioned present a feature in which they differ from things which are not constituted by nature. Each of them has within itself a principle of motion and of stationariness ... which seems to indicate that nature is a source or cause of being moved and of being at rest in that to which it belongs primarily...'.<sup>15</sup>

It seems to follow from the above statement that 'nature is a source or cause of being moved or of being at rest in that to which it belongs primarily in virtue of itself and not in virtue of a concomitant attribute'.<sup>16</sup>

He further explains that the phrase 'according to nature' applies to all such things and also to their attributes. For instance the property of fire to carry upwards is according to its own nature or by its own nature. It is in this sense that Aristotle asserts that nature exists. In other words, he wants to convey that it is a self-evident principle and does not require any proof. According to

Aristotle, this is one sense of 'nature'. It implies the 'immediate material substratum of things which have in themselves a principle of change or motion.'<sup>17</sup>

Besides, Aristotle gives a second interpretation of nature when he says that 'nature is the shape or form which is specified in the definition of the thing.'<sup>18</sup> He explains that the word nature is applied to mean what is according to nature and what is natural in the same way we apply the word 'art' to mean what is artistic or what should be called a work of art. But he clarifies that what is only potentially present and has not attained a form according to its definition cannot be called its nature. This applies both in the case of art as well as natural compounds. He says there is nothing artistic about what is only potentially a bed. Similarly, he expresses that 'what is only flesh or bone has not yet its own nature, and does not exist by nature until it receives the form specified in the definition....'<sup>19</sup> Aristotle thus tries to convey that shape or form is 'nature' as long as it has a source of movement in itself to reach the end which it is expected to attain.

According to Aristotle, it thus follows that the nature is in form rather than in matter. This is because he maintains that a thing is more properly said to be what it is when it attains fulfillment and not when it exists potentially.

Aristotle further states that nature of a thing is also exhibited in the process of its growth by which its nature is attained. In this sense, he says that nature is not like doctoring because the latter does not lead to any art but to health. So growth is not from what it grows but to which it tends to lead.

It appears then that nature has two senses, namely the 'form' and 'matter'. Aristotle says in the process of nature it is the form which impels and matter which retards and creates obstruction. In his *Physics*, he only introduces these two categories as a preliminary to his *metaphysics* with which he deals later on. Hence, we will not discuss these principles here. We shall take them on in our next section on *metaphysics*. At the most, he examines the question: Out of the two principles with which the physicist is concerned? Or whether he is concerned with a combination of the two? Referring to his predecessors, he feels that physics must deal with 'matter'. But after a little reflection it occurs to him that if art imitates nature and if it belongs to the same discipline to know form and matter up to a certain point then, it falls within the scope of physics to know the nature in both these senses. Moreover, matter being a relative term,

Aristotle again holds that the physicist would know the form only up to a certain point. With these preliminary thoughts, Aristotle sets to examine the causes in terms of their numbers and nature.

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### **3.10: SUMMARY**

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Aristotle considered logic to be the chief instrument for scientific investigation; according to him logic and verbal reasoning were similar. Aristotle classified words into substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, situation, condition, action and passions; questions asked by human beings to gain knowledge were asked using words belonging to these classes, arranged in the order in which the questions were asked. Aristotle believed that philosophy grew as a result of wonder and curiosity which were not fully satisfied by religious myths. Aristotle believed that everything in nature existed to fulfil a purpose or an end. Aristotle divides knowledge into practical, theoretical and productive knowledge. While theoretical knowledge is aimed at action, productive knowledge addresses daily needs. Practical knowledge deals with knowledge related to how to live. Both ethics and politics are considered practical sciences and are concerned with human beings as moral agents. Aristotle believed that youngsters act according to emotions instead of reason, and without reason it is impossible to act on practical knowledge, therefore, young students are not equipped to study politics. Aristotle is the last amongst what is considered to be greatest philosophical trio of all times; the two other philosophers being Socrates (470-399 BC) and Plato (427-347 BC). In *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, Stace reports that Aristotle is said to have written nearly four hundred books (by book, he meant chapter). For the sake of convenience, his works have been categorized as early and late. This has been done keeping in mind Plato's influence on him. Accordingly, amongst his early works we have *Organon*, *The Physics*, *De Anima*, *Eudemian*, *Ethics*, and *Metaphysics*. The later works comprise of *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*, and the *Rhetorics*. Aristotle intended to know about everything including the existing sciences of his time. Where science was not available he went ahead to lay the foundations of new sciences. He is credited with founding two sciences, namely logic and biology. He broadly divided the sciences into three main categories: Theoretical sciences dealing with mathematics, physics and metaphysics. Practical sciences concerning ethics and politics. Creative sciences that studied mechanical and artistic productions. Aristotle's writings on logic are grouped in six treatises. These are collectively given one name – *The Organon*. The six works on logic are *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, *Prior Analytics*, *Posterior*

*Analytics, Topics, and Sophistical Refutation*. In *Categories* the issue discussed is about the relation between uncombined terms. *On Interpretation* offers explanation of statements or assertions that are considered to be meaningful expressions. *Prior Analytics* introduces one to logic as a formal discipline. *Posterior Analytics* shows an attempt to extend the syllogism of prior analytics to the sciences and scientific explanations. *The Topics* deals with dialectical reasoning. *Sophistical Refutation* is concerned with thirteen fallacies. Aristotle conceives physics as the philosophy of nature. Consequently, its subject matter involves a study of the changes that takes place in the nature. Theoretic sciences, as per Aristotle's classification, are aimed at studying the first principles. Therefore, in his *Physics* he makes an attempt to treat the principles behind the natural bodies and of natural motion. In *On the Heavens*, another treatise on physics, he talks about the local motions of the bodies and attempts to differentiate these movements from those of the elements out of which heavenly bodies are made. In his *On Generation and Corruption*, he talks of the causes of changes. *Meteorology* is an exposition of how the natural elements their mixtures and compounds cause rains, winds, dew, storms, lightning, earthquakes, thunder, rainbows, and other natural processes.

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### 3.11: KEY TERMS

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- **Metaphysics:** Metaphysics is a traditional branch of philosophy concerned with explaining the fundamental nature of being and the world that encompasses it, although the term is not easily defined.
- **Chronology:** Chronology is the science of arranging events in their order of occurrence in time.
- **Stylometry:** Stylometry is the application of the study of linguistic style, usually to written language, but it has successfully been applied to music and to fine art paintings as well.
- **Encyclopedic:** It means having a lot of information about a wide variety of subjects; containing complete information about a particular subject.

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### 3.12: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- How does Aristotle differentiate between theoretical sciences, practical sciences and the productive sciences?
- How is a syllogism defined by David Keyt? What implications can one draw from this definition?
- Briefly state Aristotle's theory of demonstration as given in *Posterior Analytics*.
- How does Aristotle connect the immediate or the indemonstrable premises with the universals?
- 'Nature belongs to the class of causes which act for the sake of something'. Explain.
- How does Aristotle explain chance and spontaneity?
- Aristotle says that there are four different ways by which things come into being. In this context how he differentiate art from nature?

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### 3.13: REFERENCES

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## **UNIT-4: CONTRIBUTION OF ARISTOTLE**

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### **Structure**

- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Aristotle's the cause: Its Nature and Kinds
- 4.4 Chance and Spontaneity
- 4.5 Metaphysics
- 4.6 Aristotle's Theory of Causation
- 4.7 Form and Matter
- 4.8 The Position of God-Unmoved Mover
- 4.9 Plato and Aristotle: Similarities and Differences
- 4.10 Critical Estimate of Aristotle's Philosophy
- 4.11 Summary
- 4.12 Key Terms
- 4.13 Self Assessment Questions
- 4.14 References

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### **4.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- Aristotle's theory of Causation
- Position of God
- Similarities and difference between Plato and Aristotle

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### **4.2: INTRODUCTION**

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Aristotle was born in 384 BC in Stagira, Chalcidice, about 55 km (34 miles) east of modern-day Thessaloniki. His father, Nicomachus, was the personal physician to King Amyntas of Macedon. While he was young, Aristotle learned about biology and medical information, which was taught by his father. Both of Aristotle's parents died when he was about thirteen, and Proxenus of Atarneus became his guardian. Although little information about Aristotle's childhood has survived, he probably spent some time within the Macedonian palace, making his

first connections with the Macedonian monarchy School of Aristotle in Mieza, Macedonia, Greece. At the age of seventeen or eighteen, Aristotle moved to Athens to continue his education at Plato's Academy. He probably experienced the Eleusinian Mysteries as he wrote when describing the sights one viewed at the Eleusinian Mysteries, "to experience is to learn". Aristotle remained in Athens for nearly twenty years before leaving in 348/47 BC. The traditional story about his departure records that he was disappointed with the Academy's direction after control passed to Plato's nephew Speusippus, although it is possible that he feared the anti-Macedonian sentiments in Athens at that time and left before Plato died. Aristotle then accompanied Xenocrates to the court of his friend Hermias of Atarneus in Asia Minor. After the death of Hermias, Aristotle travelled with his pupil Theophrastus to the island of Lesbos, where together they researched the botany and zoology of the island and its sheltered lagoon. While in Lesbos, Aristotle married Pythias, either Hermias's adoptive daughter or niece. They had a daughter, whom they also named Pythias. In 343 BC, Aristotle was invited by Philip II of Macedon to become the tutor to his son Alexander.

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### **4.3: ARISTOTLE'S THE CAUSE: ITS NATURE AND KINDS**

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Aristotle says that man by nature thinks that he has no knowledge of a thing until he has grasped the 'why' of the thing. Therefore, he expresses that since the object of our inquiry is to know about the physical change, i.e. how things come into being and pass away, we must also know their principles that is their causes. He enumerates four different types of causes in this context.

First, 'that out of which a thing comes to be and persists, is called "cause"<sup>20</sup>. This is the material cause. Aristotle seems to imply that material cause of a thing is the matter out of which it is composed. It indicates the raw material which is made into something, for example, the bronze of the statue and the silver of the bowl.

The second type of cause according to Aristotle is 'the form or the archetype that is the statement of the essence, and its genera...'<sup>21</sup> By this cause, Aristotle seems to mean the formal cause. For example, he talks about the octave, the relation of 2:1, numbers, and also the parts in a definition while explaining the formal cause. We know that the essence of a thing is captured in its definition or concept. Thus, the formal cause is the concept of a thing in the sense that it

accounts for the shape and design of the thing. If we remember in the first unit, both Plato and Socrates identified a concept with an idea. Aristotle revisits both of his predecessors in explaining the formal cause.

He defines the third cause as ‘the primary source of the change or coming to rest’<sup>22</sup>. For example, according to him the father is the cause of the child, and a man giving advice is also the cause. That is to say what causes change of what has changed fall under this category of the cause. Thus the third type of cause connotes the moving cause or the efficient cause that is instrumental in bringing about a change in a body. It can be a change of any sort and not particularly restricted to change of place. For example, in the case of the bronze statue it is not the bronze that makes the statue; it is the sculptor who changes the bronze into a statue.

The final cause, according to Aristotle, is the cause ‘in the sense of end or that for the sake of which a thing is done’<sup>23</sup>. For instance, he mentions good health as the cause of people going out for walks. The final cause is therefore the end towards which a thing is directed. In other words, by the final cause Aristotle means the purpose towards which a thing is directed. It includes all the intermediate steps that serve as means to arrive at an end.

Thus, Aristotle shows the various ways in which the term ‘cause’ is used. Moving ahead, he makes an important observation in the context of the cause. He points out that since there are several senses of the cause it follows logically that there must be several causes for the same thing. For example, he says in the case of the bronze statue, the art of the sculptor and the bronze are the causes of the statue; one is the material cause and the other is the efficient cause. He further says that there are some things that cause each other reciprocally. For example, hard work causes fitness and vice-versa. But here again Aristotle shows that one is the end while the other is the origin of the change. Yet another situation explains that the same thing is the cause of contrary results. Aristotle explains that the presence of a thing may bring about one result, and its absence may lead to an altogether contrary result. He says, for instance, that wreck of a ship is ascribed to the absence of its captain and its safety is ascribed to his presence<sup>24</sup>.

Next, Aristotle elaborates on the various modes of causation. He expresses that within the same kind one cause may be prior to the other. For example, both the doctor and the expert are the cause of good health. Another mode of causation, according to him, is the ‘incidental and its genera’. For instance, he says that both *polyclitus* and the ‘sculptor’ are the cause of the statue.

This is because he reasons that being *polyclitus* and sculptor are conjoined incidentally. Further he asserts that all causes are proper as well as incidental, and may be interpreted as potential and actual. Having assessed the variety of modes of the causes, Aristotle declares that in all they are six in number. He writes: ‘cause means either what is particular or a genus, or an incidental attribute or a genus of that, and these either as a complex or each by itself; and all six either as actual or potential.’<sup>25</sup> He holds that the cause that are actually in operation and exist cease to do so once the effect is produced. He also suggests that while investigating a cause it is important and necessary to seek what is most precise. Thus, he says that man builds because he is a builder, and a builder builds because in virtue of his art of building. Thus, the last cause in this case, according to Aristotle, is prior. He concludes the issue by stating that particular effects should be assigned to particular causes, generic effects to generic causes, and so on. On the whole, what Aristotle wants to convey is that nature belongs to the class of causes which operate for the sake of something. Therefore, he next touches on the factors of chance and necessity and tries to show how these factors also contribute to form a cause.

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#### **4.4: CHANCE AND SPONTANEITY**

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Aristotle recognizes chance and spontaneity among causes. This is because he opines that many things are said to come to exist due to mere chance and spontaneity. For this reason, he feels, it is of concern to know in what ways chance and spontaneity occupy a place in the understanding of cause and whether they are real or not. Such a thought is provoked by a general opinion of people who try to locate a cause even in what happens by chance.

Citing the observations of some people he says that some people maintain that nothing happens by chance, and whatever one ascribes to be a chance or spontaneity must have a cause. However, Aristotle maintains that there are also cases that do not happen by chance and spontaneity. But people, in spite of ascribing them a cause, speak of them as happening by chance. He therefore expresses his surprise as to why physicists failed to take a note of the concept of chance. As far as Aristotle himself is concerned, he admits that most of the parts of animals came to be by chance.

At the same time, he also talks of others who believe that chance is a cause but they also admit that human intelligence cannot scrutinize it. Therefore, he insists on an enquiry into ‘chance’ and ‘spontaneity’.

He begins by saying that there are some things that come to exist and then pass away in the same manner. These are things to which one cannot apply chance or the effects of chance. They happen out of necessity.

Next, he says that there are some events that are for the sake of something, while others are not. The former according to him are subject to deliberate intentions. These are things outside the realm of the necessary and the normal. Such things, when they pass incidentally, are said to be by ‘chance’ or to be ‘spontaneous’, according to Aristotle. The following example from Mckeon’s *Introduction to Aristotle* may be cited here to clarify the position further. The example cites a man who is engaged in collecting subscriptions for a feast. He would have gone to such and such place for the purpose of getting money if he had known. He actually went there for another purpose, and it was only incidentally that he got his money by going there; and this was not due to the fact that he went there as a rule or necessity, nor is the end (getting money) a cause present in himself. It belongs to the class of things that are intentional and the result of intelligent deliberations<sup>26</sup>.

Aristotle explains that when the above conditions are satisfied one may say that the man went there by chance. Had he gone there, says Aristotle, with the purpose of collecting funds and as a part of his normal and routine visit then he could not have been said to have gone there by chance.

Aristotle conveys that chance is an incidental cause in the sphere of those actions which are for the sake of something and involve a purpose. Thus, he claims that intelligent reflection and chance fall in the same sphere because ‘purpose implies intelligent reflection’. Elaborating further, he says the causes of what passes as chance are indefinite. Therefore, ‘chance’ belongs to the class of indefinite cause. For the same reason, he explains that chance is beyond the comprehension of man, thus prompting the notion that nothing occurs by chance. According to Aristotle, a chance is an incidental cause, ‘but strictly it is not the cause—without qualification—of anything’. For instance, he says that a house builder is the cause of a house with qualification

but a flute-player is so only incidentally. He concludes by communicating that chance is indefinite because its causes are indefinite and so a chance is also contrary to a 'rule'<sup>27</sup>.

Aristotle attempts to connect chance with moral actions. He says that chance and what entails from chance are applicable to moral agents. This is so because the moral agents are capable of good or evil fortune. So he assigns chance to the sphere of moral actions.

Coming to spontaneity, Aristotle claims that it is to be found in the lower animals as well as in the inanimate objects. He describes spontaneity thus: '..events which (1) belong to the general class of things that may come to pass for the sake of something,(2) do not come to pass for the sake of what actually results, and (3) have an external cause may be described by the phrase "from spontaneity"'. He further expresses that these spontaneous event may be said to be 'from chance' if they are also the objects of deliberate intentions. He declares them to be the mode of causation as they, in some way, also constitute the source of change. Because he maintains that some natural or some intelligent agent is always the cause of things. The summary of the above explanation can be stated thus: 'spontaneity and chance are causes of effects which, though they might result from intelligence or nature, have in fact been caused by something incidentally'. Now since nothing which is incidental is prior to what is per se, it is clear that no incidental cause can be prior to a cause per se. Spontaneity and chance, therefore are posterior to intelligence and nature. Hence, however true it may be that heavens are due to spontaneity, it will still be true that intelligence and nature will be prior causes of all this and many things in it besides.'<sup>28</sup>

Aristotle expresses that the physicist must know the four causes essentially in order to assign the 'why' in the way befitting the science, i.e. in terms of the matter, the form, the mover, and 'that for the sake of which'. He thus implies that the 'why' is answered by referring to the matter, to the form, and to primary moving cause.

As far as 'necessity' is concerned, he explains the necessary in nature in terms of matter and the changes in it. He says that the physicist must take into account both the causes and particularly the end. This is because, according to him, the end is the cause of the matter. We shall discuss more on this in the following section on Metaphysics. For the time being we should focus on what Aristotle says about the end. For him, the end is nothing but 'that for the sake of which'.

Now, apart from nature, form, matter, causes that we have discussed above we all know that physics also deals with the notions of motion, space, and time. Therefore, Aristotle considers it equally important to dwell upon these basic concepts of physics too. To start with, he interprets motion as the movement or passage of matter into form. He talks of four such types of movements. These have been aptly brought out by Stace in his book, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*. He says that the first type of motion is one that affects the substance of a thing, its origination and deacease. Second is the movement which brings about qualitative change. The third type of motion results in the change of quantity whereby there is an increase and decrease and finally there is locomotion that implies change of place. Out of these Aristotle considers the last one to be the most basic and important.

As far as space is concerned, Aristotle does not seem to agree with the definition of space as the void. For him empty space is an impossible notion. This is reflected in his rejection of Plato's and Parmenides's claim that elements are composed of geometrical figures. In a similar manner, he also repudiates the mechanical hypothesis that quality is based on quantity that is on the composition and decomposition of its elements. He asserts on contrary that quality has an independent existence. Further, Aristotle is also not comfortable with the view that space is a physical thing. He objects that on this view there would be two bodies occupying the same place at the same time that is the body itself and the space it occupies. Thus, he conceives space to be a limit. He defines it as the limit of the surrounding body towards what is surrounded. In some sense it indicates that in his view space is not infinite.

Coming to the notion of time, he defines it as the measure of motion in regard to what is earlier and later. So time is dependent on motion for its existence. Time is understood with respect to all the changes in the universe. Had there been no change, we would not have any idea of time. Since time involves a measuring or counting of motion, Aristotle argues that its existence also depends upon a counting mind. Thus, he tries to convey that had there been no minds there could be no time either. According to Aristotle, there are two essential elements in time, namely change and consciousness.

Aristotle also answers Zeno's proposal regarding the infinite divisibility of space and time. He opines that space and time are potentially divisible in the above stated sense. But actually they are not so divided because we do not experience them as infinitely divided.

Having commented on the notions of physics, he takes on the scale of being. This composes the main subject of physics for him. Calling it also as the scale of values, he asserts that the higher in the scale has more worth in it as the principle of form. Moreover, by way of the scale of being, Aristotle also proposes a theory of development along with a theory of evolution. Hence we shall now study about the scale of being and see how it also harbours in it the aforementioned theories.

The bottom line of the scale of being is well expressed by his statement that the lower develops into the higher. He declares that the process is not time-bound. It is, he insists, a logical process. Consequently, the development that he talks about is to be seen as a logical development.

Aristotle explains that the lower always contains the higher, potentially, and the higher contains the lower, actually. So what is implicitly present in the lower gets explicitly reflected in the higher. In other words, that which is latent in the lower form becomes more and more realized in the higher form. According to Aristotle, there appears to be no difference between the higher and the lower except that the former is a more evolved state. In terms of form and matter the higher is the form whereas the lower is the matter, or we can also assume from this that the latter serves as the foundation of the former. Thus, Aristotle attempts to show how the entire universe is one continuous chain. It is not a time bound process but an eternal process in which the one ultimate reality is eternally exhibited in every sphere of development.

There is another side of the scale of being which Aristotle tries to explain with the help of the distinction between the organic and the inorganic. He says that nature is the first to provide us with this distinction. The inorganic matter is located at the bottom of the scale, and its end lies external to it. Therefore, the essential function of the inorganic matter is to move in space in the direction of its external end. In the present time we call such a movement as gravitation. On the other hand, he claims that the form of a thing involves its organization. That is to say that the higher in the scale is more organized than the lower. From this he derives that if the end of the inorganic matter is external to it, the end of the organic matter has its end internal to it. In other words, Aristotle wants to assert that every organic matter has an inward self-developing principle. It is very crucial to mention here that by organic matter the philosopher means an organism. This will become clear as we proceed further. Now, he points out that the activity of the organic matter consists in spatial movement. Likewise, he holds that the activity of the

organic matter comprises of its internal growth. By internal growth, Aristotle means inward organization which is definite and constitutes the principle of the form.

He calls this inward organization to be the life or the soul of the organism. Human soul is also a likewise organization of the body. So from organism, Aristotle arrives at the idea of the living soul. He interprets the living soul as having lower and higher grades of being. The higher grade concerns a higher realization of the principle of form. He expresses that the self-realization is also expressed in the form of self- preservation. This means preservation of the individual, and occasions two very important functions namely nutrition and propagation.

Accordingly, Aristotle classifies in the lowest grade those organisms whose functions are to nourish themselves, grow, and propagate their kind. He places the animals next to the plants in the scale of being. Since the higher contains the lower, as we have stated earlier, the animals share with the plants the functions of nutrition and propagation. But at the same time, the higher exhibits a further realization that is peculiar to its form. The characteristic that places the animals above the plants is the possession of sensation. Thus sense-perception is the special function of the animals. They therefore possess both the nutritive and the sensitive souls. Along with the sensations, the animals also possess the power of locomotion. This is because sensations come in the form of pleasure and pain. This generates the impulse to avoid the pain and seek the pleasure which is achieved only by the power of locomotion. Plants do not possess the power to move, subject to the sensations of pleasure and pain. After the animals it is the position of man in the scale of being. Man as a higher organism has in him all the principles of lower organisms. He nourishes himself, grows, propagates his kind, moves around, and is gifted with sense-perception. But what is his special function that raises him above the plants and animals? According to Aristotle, it is his reason that advances man beyond the animals. Thus, the soul of man is not only nutritive and sensitive but also rational.

Moving ahead, he classifies human consciousness into lower and higher grades as he did in the case of the soul. By grades, he means the different stages of consciousness and not the various 'parts' of soul as Plato had interpreted. These stages are the different aspects of the activity of the same being and represent different stages of its development. Aristotle interprets them as 'faculties'. The lowest faculty, according to him, is the sense-perception. Above this is the common-sense. Next in the upward direction is the faculty of imagination, the power of forming mental images that everyone possesses. The next faculty is memory by which past sense-

perceptions are copied. Beyond the memory is the faculty of recollection by which memory-images are deliberately evoked. Finally, from recollection there is a passage to the faculty of reason. Even in the reason he locates two grades, a lower and a higher. The former is passive and the latter is active. When the reason is passive, mind is like a wax and when the reason becomes active, the mind begins to think. The sum total of all these faculties constitutes the soul, as per Aristotle. He asserts that the soul has no existence without matter in the same way in which form is inseparable from matter. Thus, he denies Plato's doctrine that the soul reincarnates itself in new bodies. He holds that since the soul is the form of the body, it is not separable from it. Thus, the connection between them is essentially organic and not just mechanical. Soul for him is the end or the function of the body.

In this way, Aristotle tries to connect the study of soul as a part of his physics. He relates the soul to the organic body just as actuality is related to potentiality. It, therefore, acts as the 'substance' of the organic body. It corresponds to the definition of the essence of the organic body the way he explains that the essence of an axe is to facilitate the act of cutting.

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## **4.5: METAPHYSICS**

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It is important to mention at the outset that the term 'metaphysics' was invented by Andronious, one of the early editors of Aristotle's works, to serve a title for a group of treatises which he placed after the physics. It is in this sense that we use the term metaphysics now. As far as Aristotle is concerned he used the phrase 'first philosophy' to describe the subject matter of metaphysics, which concerns the first, highest, or most of general principles of the universe. In other words, metaphysics deal with the discovery of ultimate principles, or the ultimate cause of the world. It is the science of the highest order, according to Aristotle, since it deals with the general principles. All other sciences, he says, are lower than metaphysics in a logical sequence because they deal with one or other aspect of the being.

Aristotle constructs his metaphysical theory by criticizing the views of Democritus and Plato on the issue of the first cause of the world. The former asserted that the moving material atoms were the first principles whereas the latter talked about transcendent ideas. We shall confine ourselves to Aristotle's polemic against Plato's theory of ideas, since we have discussed Plato in the first unit of the book.

## Aristotle's Rejection of Plato's Theory of Ideas

The first point that Aristotle debates in Plato's theory of ideas is the fact that his ideas do not explain the existence of things. Just by merely having an idea of whiteness, Aristotle claims, one cannot derive the existence of white objects. Thus, the explanation of the world or reality which is the main issue or problem of philosophy has not been successfully done by Plato's theory of ideas.

Next, Aristotle points out that Plato has failed to explain the relation of ideas to things. He only says, as we have seen in the *Republic*, that things or particulars are copies of ideas which are universal. Aristotle views such explanations as mere utterances of poetic metaphors. He says that these do not give a real account of the relation between ideas and things. He writes: 'And to say that they are patterns and the other things share in them is to use empty words and poetical metaphors....And anything can either be, or become, like another without being copied from it, so that whether Socrates exists or not a man like Socrates might come to be; and this might be so even if Socrates were eternal. And there will be several patterns of the same thing ... again the Forms are patterns not only of sensible things, but of Forms themselves also...therefore the same thing will be pattern and copy.'<sup>29</sup>

Third, Aristotle points out that Plato's theory of ideas fail to explain motion or movements of things. He says that the ideas themselves being immutable and motionless, cannot explain a world of motion as a copy of these ideas. Thus the picture of world portrayed by Plato's theory of ideas is at best, a static world. But in reality, the world is a world of change, motion, and becoming. Aristotle points out that if one deduces white object from a mere idea of whiteness, it cannot explain why these objects arise, decay, and cease to exist. That is to say the theory of ideas does not explain the movement in things in terms of their growth and decay.

Next, Aristotle contests Plato's claim that ideas are non-sensuous. He points out that for Plato there is no difference between the horse and the idea of the horse; or between man and the idea of a man. Aristotle finds the expressions 'in itself' or 'in- general' to be nonsensical and meaningless. He charges Plato for employing these expressions with every object only to make them appear as something different. Aristotle criticizes him by bringing out that the ideas are nothing but hypostatized things of the sense. For him Plato's ideas are like 'anthropomorphic gods of the popular religion'.

Aristotle also uses his ingenious ‘third man’ argument to attack Plato’s theory of ideas. He says that Plato uses ideas to explain what is common to a number of objects. Ideas are thus derived from these common elements. But apart from this, he says that there is a common element between an individual object and the idea of that object. This further produces another idea, which he calls the ‘third man’. Likewise, the process goes ad infinitum, which makes the theory of ideas redundant.

Finally, the most important and serious objection that Aristotle levels against Plato’s ideas is the latter’s assumption that ideas are the essences of things, and the claim that these essences exist outside the things themselves. Aristotle argues that essences must inhere in the things and not outside of them. So, whereas Plato places his ideas as universals in a mysterious world, Aristotle holds that universals (ideas) must exist in the particular only. He explains that the universal horse is not something different from the individual horses. Plato on the other hand tries to give an impression that besides the individual horses, there is also a horse-in-general. Aristotle finds this a highly contradictory position. He brings out that Plato’s theory of ideas first tries to portray that the universals are real and particulars are unreal; and then end up degrading the universals into the particulars through ‘participation.’ On the basis of this objection, Aristotle derives the fundamental principle of his philosophy. He claims not only that the universal is the absolute reality, but also that the universal exists in the particular.

Now, the primary concern of every metaphysician is to examine what is reality or what is substance? So Aristotle tries to assess which among the two, the universal or the particular, fits into definition of substance.

As we have seen, in his *On Categories*, Aristotle tries to convey that a substance is that which has an independent existence of its own, that is never a predicate, but to which all predicates are applied.

First, he takes the universals and declares that it alone cannot constitute a substance because a universal is a predicate common to all the members of a particular class. For instance ‘humanness’ is a predicate common to all man. As per the above definition, substance itself cannot be a predicate. Therefore, universals which are common predicates cannot replace the ‘substance’. Consequently, we cannot ascribe ‘humanness’ as the status of a substance. But then one can ask: what about the particular? Even in this regard, Aristotle maintains that since a particular is not isolated and absolute, i.e. it does not have an existence of its own. And

therefore, it cannot be called a substance. For instance, he says that ‘humanness’ cannot exist apart from man and man also has no existence if taken away from ‘humanness’. So the individual man cannot fit into the category of substance.

It appears therefore that neither the universal nor the particular alone can constitute a substance. Hence, substance must be a combination of the two, i.e. a substance must be, according to Aristotle, the universal in the particular. This way of defining a substance, makes the substance not only real and existent, but also absolute. In other words, the universal and the particular are not conceivable apart from one another. This is what he has tried to highlight in his criticisms against Plato’s theory of ideas. It is therefore significant to study Aristotle’s views on substance in more detail.

### **Substance**

As we have seen while discussing Aristotle’s physics, and further it would be evident from his theory of causation, that Aristotle has primarily been focused on the issue of first principles and the first causes.

It may then be asked: what are these principles and causes of? Aristotle answers that the principles and causes are essentially of substances. He writes: ‘The subject of our inquiry is substance; for the principles and the causes we are seeking are those of substances. For if the universe is of the nature of a whole, substance is its first part; and if it coheres merely by virtue of serial succession, on this view also substance is first, and is succeeded by quality, and then by quantity’<sup>30</sup>. Thus, he claims that substance is the first principle or the first cause. In support of his position, he further states that there is no other category except the category of substance that can exist on its own. He refers both to his predecessors and ‘present day’ philosophers to show how they too gave primacy to the category of substance. As far as the early philosophers are concerned, he explains that they testified the primacy of substance because it was only of substance that they were seeking the principles, elements, and causes. By ‘present day’ philosophers, he mainly means Plato, Xenocrates and Speusippus and claims that they ranked ‘universals’ as substances. These philosophers talked about the genera. According to Aristotle, genera are universals which were described as principal and

substances by them. The old thinkers, he adds, ranked the particular things as substances like fire, earth, and so on.

We thus observe that substance, in the form of universal as well as particular, has been a prime concern of all thinkers.

Next, Aristotle divides substance into three kinds, sensible substances, substances that can be known by their elements, and immovable substances. He elaborates that the sensible substances are those that are divisible into eternal and perishable kinds. It is the latter that is recognized by all men and includes plants, animals, etc. The substances in the second category are those that can be grasped by their numbers. For instance, we say of these substances whether they are one or many. The immovable substances are those that, according to some thinkers, are capable of existing apart. Others divide it into two kinds, and there are still others who identify the forms and objects of mathematics with it. The first two, he says, belong to physics as they imply movement; the third type of substance belongs to some other science, according to him. Regarding the sensible substance, he maintains that they are changeable, and it is the 'matter which is the subject of change'. He enumerates four kinds of changes. These are with respect to quality, quantity, place and thisness. The change with respect to quality is alteration. With respect to quantity, it is 'increase and diminution'. The change of place is motion; and lastly, the change in respect of 'thisness' implies 'generation and destruction'.

Aristotle contends that all these change necessarily indicate that the change is always from the given states to its contrary. Since matter undergoes the changes so discussed, it must be capable of both the states, i.e. the given state and its contrary state. So what Aristotle tries to assert is that all things that change have matter. But at the same time, he holds that matter is different for different things. For example, eternal things that are not generable but movable do not have matter for generation but have matter for motion.. Thus, Aristotle concludes that the causes and principles are three fold. Two of these constitute the pair of contraries, of these one is definition and form and the other is privation, and the third one, according to him, is the matter.

It, therefore, follows that change implies not only form and privation, but also matter. He asserts that neither matter nor form comes into being. This is because, he explains, that

everything that undergoes a change is something, and is changed by something into something. That which brings about the change is the immediate mover, according to Aristotle, the one which undergoes the change is the matter, and that into which it is changed is the form. He also adds that whatever comes into being comes from a substance of the same kind and 'shares its name'. He talks of four different ways by which things come into being: these are by art, by nature, by luck, and by spontaneity. Of these, he says that art is the principle of movements in something (for e.g. artist, musician) and not in the thing moved. But nature, on the contrary is a principle of movement in the thing itself (for e.g. man begets man). Luck and spontaneity, according to Aristotle, are privation of these two.

Thus, there are three kinds of substances as claimed by Aristotle: the matter, which is a 'this' in appearance; the nature, which is the 'this' towards which the movement takes place; and lastly, the particular substance which is composed of these two. He specifies that in some cases the 'this' constituting the form, does not exist apart from the composite substance. For instance, the form of house does not exist apart from the art of building. However, he claims that if ever there is a possibility of form existing independent of the composite substance, it is in the case of natural objects. It is in this sense that he supposes that there is some validity in Plato's claim, when the latter expresses that there are as many forms (ideas) as there are natural objects. However, he alters his position as soon as he analyses the causes.

Aristotle holds, with regard to the causes, that the existence of moving causes precedes the effects. But there are also causes in the sense of definitions that exist simultaneously with the effect, for example we define a healthy man as one who is healthy. So, health is the cause and it exists simultaneously with the effect that is the health of a man. It is on this ground that Aristotle attempts to show that there is no necessity for the existence of ideas or form. He explains that, speaking naturally, a man is begotten by a man. This means that a human being is created by another human being. Similarly, in the context of arts, he says that medical art is the formal cause of health.

Further, Aristotle holds that things are composed of elements that are numerically different but are same in kind. These elements are causes. Apart from these, Aristotle says that everything also has something external which constitute its moving cause. In this way Aristotle tries to show that while 'principle' and 'element' are different, both are causes. Moreover, he

holds that something which is responsible for producing motion or rest is both a principle and a substance. Consequently, he asserts that analogically there are three elements and four causes and principles. Besides, he also maintains that things also have proximate and ultimate moving causes. The proximate moving causes, he claims, is different for different things. For example, the proximate moving causes for health, disease, and body is the medical art; for bricks, it is the art of building; and in case of natural things, like man, it is the man; and in the products of thought, it is the form or its contrary. These make up for three causes. But Aristotle claims that there are, in a sense, four causes because 'there is that which as first of all things moves all things'. These constitute the ultimate moving causes. Thus, Aristotle shows that all things have the same causes, because if there are no substances, then there are no modifications and movements either.

Aristotle goes ahead further in this context and contends that actuality and potency are also principles common to all things, but they apply differently in different cases. The division into potency and actuality stands in a definite relation to the previous division into matter, form, and privation. He explains that in some cases the same thing exists at one time actually and at another potentially. He gives the example of wine or flesh or man to support his position. He expresses that the form exists actually, if it can exist on its own, and so does the complex, which is formed out of the form and matter, as well as the privation like disease or darkness. Matter, says Aristotle, has a potential existence because it becomes qualified either by the form or by the privation.

But there also is another way, in which the above stated distinction is applicable. For this, Aristotle refers to cases where the matter of cause and that of effect is not the same. Besides, he also talks of cases where the form is not the same, but different. For instance, he takes the causes of man to be firstly the elements in man (comprising of fire and earth as matter, and the peculiar form); secondly, something else outside, namely the father; and lastly, the sun and its course, which are neither matter nor form nor privation of man, but are the moving causes.

Having said all these, Aristotle also asserts that the principles of all things are only analogous, and not identical. He expresses that they are analogous in the sense that:

1. Matter, form, privation, and the moving causes are common to all things.

2. The causes of substances may be said to be the causes of all things because when substances are removed, all things are removed
3. Which is first in terms of complete reality is the cause of all things.

But in the other sense, Aristotle insists that there are different kinds of first causes as the matters of different things are different. Thus, Aristotle clarifies how many principles of sensible things there are, and in what sense they are same and in what ways they are different.

Next, Aristotle's focus is on movement. In this context, he talks about the third type of substance which is the unmovable substance (the other two being the physical substance). He says that since movement must be eternal, there must be an eternal mover. He explains that we conceive the substances to be the first of existing things, similarly, one needs to assume that movement must have always existed. This is because we cannot think of movement as having come into being or ceasing to be. Movement is continuous and so is time. Time, like movement also must have always existed, otherwise there could not have been a before and an after. Thus, time is also continuous. And as far as movement is concerned, he particularly speaks about the circular movement that is continuous.

However, he insists that the essence of the eternal mover is its actuality and not potency because the former is prior to the latter. If something has the capacity to move all things or act on them, but fails to do so then there will be no movement at all. This is because 'that which has potency, need not exercise it'. He argues that even if we suppose that there are eternal substances, like those who believe in the forms, they do not serve any purpose unless they have in them some principle which could cause a change. Moreover, if there are substances other than the forms unless they act, they will not cause any movement. And even if they act, it would be out of potency and that would not be enough to bring about an eternal movement because what is potential, according to Aristotle, 'may possibly not be'. So, Aristotle emphasizes that if it is a principle, its essence ought to be actuality and not potency, and it must be without matter, if the principle had to be eternal.

Thus, we observe that movement and change are very central to Aristotle's philosophy. But when he talks in terms of the universal as a whole, he speaks about uniform change that is brought about by one principle, which acts continuously even though there may be variations in the actions. He expresses that if the principle acts in the same way, a constant cycle is

produced; but if it acts in different ways, the result is generation and destruction. The first is therefore the cause of perpetual regular motion, and the cause of variety is something else. Aristotle holds that when both these work together we have the cause of perpetual variety.

It follows from above discussion that there is an eternal mover. One may raise a question here that how does the eternal mover originate the movement. Aristotle contends that the eternal mover originates motion by being the primary object of desire. He spells out that it is a fact and not a mere theory that there is something which is always moved with an unceasing circular motion. Hence, there must be something which moves it. Now, Aristotle holds that which is moved and moves is intermediate.

There is something which moves without being moved. It is eternal, it is actuality and it is the substance. He says, only the object of desire and the object of thought move in this way, i.e. they move without being moved. The eternal mover, according to Aristotle, is thus the 'thinking' because desire is consequent upon opinion and thinking is the starting-point of opinion.

Thus, Aristotle interprets the eternal mover or the first mover as a substance which is eternal and unmovable and separate from sensible things. It is without parts and is indivisible. It is also impassive and unalterable because all other changes are posterior to it. Besides the prime mover or the first mover, Aristotle admits of a large number of unmoved movers. He says that there ought to be as many unmoved movers as there are simple motions that are involved in the movement of the planets.

Now, Aristotle wants to claim that object of such a thought must be the divine object itself. He says that the thought and the object of thought are never different when the object is immaterial. He explains that in theoretical sciences, the definition or the act of thinking is the object of thought. In other words, there is no difference between the act of thinking and the object being thought of, and also there is no room for any matter here. Thus, the divine thought and its object become the same. In other words, the thinking is one with its object. He adds that the object of divine thought is not composite either. If it were so, the thought itself would change while passing from part to part of the whole. Thus, he derives that thought that does not have matter is indivisible, as human thought. He claims this to hold true, throughout eternity, for the thought that has only itself as its object.

Now, last but not the least, he ponders upon the issue, that how the good is present in the universe both as the order of the parts, or their ruler. In other words, he wants to know the two ways in which the nature of the universe contains the good and the highest good, as something separate and by itself, or as the order of the parts.

Aristotle attempts to locate the answer by using the analogy of the army. He says the goodness of the army is found both in its order and in its leader, and more in the latter. Because the leader does not depend on the order, but the order depends on him. He expresses that all the things are ordered together. The world is not such that one thing has nothing to do with another. In fact they are all connected. Because all that are connected together have one end. He expresses that all things must come together to be dissolved into their elements. Moreover, there are functions also in which all share for the good and the whole. In this regard, Aristotle finds the views of other philosophers not too satisfactory. He concludes, ‘the rule of many is not good, one ruler let there be.’

We now come to another important feature of Aristotle’s metaphysics namely his doctrine of causation.

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#### **4.6: ARISTOTLE’S THEORY OF CAUSATION**

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One generally conceives of ‘causation’ as a theory involving cause and event as two distinct events, one following the other in the sequence of time and priority, and related to each other through a causal relation. Aristotle uses causation in its wider conception including both causes and reasons. The difference between the two is nicely taken up by W.T. Stace when he tries to analyze this issue. Stace maintains that the cause of a thing is not to be interpreted as the reason for the explanation of the thing; so cause does not explain anything. It is just a mechanism by which a reason explains its consequences. For instance, Stace says that there may be many causes of death, but that does not explain why there should be death at all in the world. Thus, the cause and reason are different, and Aristotle while analyzing ‘causation’ keeps an account of both these elements.

It is evident that by including ‘reason’ in the conception of cause, Aristotle makes an attempt to connect wisdom with cause. In the process he tries to differentiate between knowledge and understanding on the one hand, and experience on the other. He says that an individual’s wisdom depends on his knowledge and understanding rather than on experience.

This is because the former knows the cause and the latter does not. He writes: 'For men of experience know that the thing is so, but do not know why, while the others know the 'why' and the cause.'<sup>31</sup> He explains that the master workers in each craft are more honourable because they know the causes of the things that are done. In this sense they are 'wiser' too as compared to the manual workers. The latter simply act without knowing what they do. Thus, according to Aristotle, the master-workers of craft are wiser since they have a theory on the basis of which they act. They thus know the cause of what they are doing. In other words they have true knowledge of their work and are in a better position to teach their art than the man of experience.

Moreover, he states that we cannot regard any of the senses to be 'wisdom' although they provide us with the most authoritative knowledge of particulars. This is because, he claims, our senses do not tell us the 'why' of things. Senses only say that fire is hot; not 'why' it is so. By so connecting wisdom with cause, Aristotle, in a way, tries to show further how the theoretic sciences are superior to productive sciences. This is well expressed when he writes: '..... all men suppose what is called wisdom to deal with the first causes and principles of things; so that, .... the man of experience is thought to be wiser than the possessors of any sense-experience whatever, the artist wiser than the men of experience, the master-workers than the mechanic, and the theoretical kinds of knowledge to be more of the nature of wisdom than the productive. Clearly then wisdom is knowledge about certain principles and causes'.<sup>32</sup>

The next question is what kinds of causes and principles constitute that particular knowledge, which we call wisdom? In an attempt to answer this question, Aristotle analyses the possible characteristics out of which we develop the notion of a 'wise man'. He says, first, we suppose a wise man to be one who knows everything, as far as possible, though he does not have knowledge of each of them in detail. Secondly, he holds that a wise man is one who has the ability to learn things that are difficult and not easy for man to know. Next, he says, a wise man is one who is more exact and more capable of teaching the causes, in every branch of knowledge.

As far as the sciences are concerned, he maintains that the science which is desirable on its own account and for the sake of knowing comes closer to the nature of wisdom than the sciences which are desirable on account of their results. Thus, he asserts that the superior science itself adopts the nature of wisdom. He concludes by expressing that 'wise man must

not be ordered, but must order, and he must not obey another, but the less wise must obey him.’<sup>33</sup>

From the above stated various notions of the wise and the wisdom, Aristotle derives that one who has knowledge of the universals, knows that he has knowledge of everything because he knows, in a sense, all the instances that fall under the universal. Such a man is the wise man, in Aristotle’s perception, by virtue of the fact that he knows the universals that are not only farthest from the sense, but are also hardest for men to know.

Among the sciences, he says, that those which deal with fewer principles are more exact than those which involve additional principles. Accordingly, he declare that the sciences which deal mostly with the first principles are the most exact of the sciences. However, he gives a higher degree to that science which investigates the causes. Such a science is ‘instructive’. Similarly, he places the wise man on a higher plane because the he knows about the causes of each thing.

Continuing further, Aristotle expresses that when knowledge and understanding pursue what is most knowable, then it is proper to say that knowledge is pursued for its sake. And the ‘most knowable’, in Aristotle’s view, are the first principles and the causes, ‘for by reason of these, and from these, all other things come to be known.....’<sup>34</sup>

In the context of science, he holds that most authoritative among the science is the one, ‘which knows to what end each things must be done..... and this end is the good in the whole of nature.’ Aristotle concludes that it is the same science that investigates the first principles and the end, ‘for the good, i.e., the end, is one of the causes.’<sup>35</sup> Clearly, such a science cannot be the productive science because it is sought for its own sake, and not for any other advantage. It is a ‘free science’, because it alone exists for its own sake. But one may justly point out that such a science is beyond human power, because in many ways, human nature limited. Therefore, Aristotle calls it the most divine science dealing with divine objects, namely god because:

- God is thought to be the cause of all things and to be a first principle.
- Only god can have a conception of such a science.

He claims that all other sciences may be necessary, but are not better than this science. He therefore declares that the acquisition of such a science ends in our knowledge of the first cause, or the most original cause.<sup>36</sup>

If we take an overview of Aristotle's theory of causation, as it has been presented in his metaphysics, and the way he has analyzed causation in the context of nature, it would appear that he includes both mechanism and teleology to explain the cause. But even speaking from the point of view of mechanism, it is much wider in its scope than most of the scientific conceptions of causation. It is therefore necessary to compare Aristotle's views of causation with that of scientific causation. This comparison is elaborated by W.T. Stace in his *Critical History of Greek Philosophy*.<sup>37</sup>

Stace uses Mill's conception of cause to express the scientific position. Quoting Mill, he defines a cause as 'the invariable and unconditional antecedent of a phenomenon.' As is obvious, this definition straightaway rules out the possibility of final cause, because it only takes of the cause as an antecedent but not as an end. It does not consider the formal cause either, because the formal cause which should have been the 'concept' of cause is not included in this definition of cause. Thus, we are left with the material and the efficient causes. These correspond to the scientific notions of 'matter' and 'energy' respectively. Stace shows that the 'efficient cause' finds a place in the scientific definition, only in the sense of mechanical energy. Aristotle on the contrary uses it in the sense of an 'ideal force', operating from the end and not from the beginning.

It needs to be mentioned here that Stace's comparison of the Aristotelian and the scientific views of causation is not intended to assess the two positions to find out a better and tenable one. He says the science restricts itself only to the mechanical aspect of cause and leaves the formal and final side of the phenomena to philosophy. This is mainly because science takes the existence of things for granted whereas philosophy makes an attempt to explain why the things exist in the first place, in order to explain the rationality of their existence.

Next, in the process of building his theory of causation further, he reverts to the four causes that he discussed in his explanation of the nature. The purpose is mainly to convey, that prior to him, his predecessors have also employed the four causes in their respective analysis of the reality. Aristotle therefore wants to assess those view points, and he also intends to

communicate to the readers, how his theory has grown out of a critical examination of the views of his predecessors, on the issue of the first cause of the world.

To begin with, the earliest thinkers, namely the Ionics, he says, used material cause to explain the universe. Everything was explained with reference to matter in all its variations. For example, Thales described water to be the material cause of the universe. Anaximenes located the same in air. Similarly, Heraclitus talked about fire; Empedocles, the four elements; and so on. But as the thinking of philosophers became more and more matured and advanced, the need for a second cause was felt in order to explain, the motion or becoming of things. As a result, the idea of an efficient cause surfaced in the explanation of things. Although the Eleatics denied such a cause because they denied motion as such, Parmenides allowed it vaguely in terms of the hot and the cold. Empedocles supported the idea of efficient cause by talking about harmony and discord, love and hate, and so on as the moving forces. Similarly, Anaxagoras also used *nous* as a moving force. As far as the formal causes are concerned, these were acknowledged by the Pythagoreans. They believed numbers to represent forms. But they brought the forms or the formal cause to the level of material cause by declaring that things are made from numbers. After the Pythagoreans, the importance of a formal causes was emphasized by Plato in the form his ideas.

But since Plato acknowledged matter in the creation of things, he also admitted of a material cause. This means that Plato's system had both the formal and the material causes. It, however, lacked any principle of motion. So, there is no evidence of an efficient cause in Plato's philosophy. But then Plato connected everything with the supreme good, be it justice, knowledge, or education. Therefore, Aristotle feels that one finds the idea of the final cause pertaining to the 'end' in Plato's philosophy. As far as the final causes are concerned, Aristotle gives credit to Anaxagoras for introducing them into philosophy. He says that Anaxagoras assumes a world-forming mind in order to explain the design and purpose of the universe. But as his system developed, he used the concept of *nous* to explain the motion in the universe. Thus, the final cause was reduced to the efficient cause.

Aristotle's own analysis of the above view is that his predecessors did recognize all the four causes in some form or the other. But there was a dominance of the material and efficient causes over the formal and final causes.

Having discussed at length his theory of causation, the next step that Aristotle takes in his metaphysics is the reduction of the causes of 'nature' to the two principles of matter and form. The material cause is interpreted as the matter; and the efficient cause, formal cause, and final cause are all bottled up in the single conception of form. Aristotle proceeds step by step, to explain the entire process.

Firstly, he tries to show that the formal cause and the final cause are the same. As we have seen before, the formal cause represents or indicates the essence, concept, and idea of a thing. If we look at the final cause, we will observe that it indicates the end. In other words, the final cause is the realization of the idea of the thing in its actuality. This amounts to saying that what a thing aims at is actually its form. Therefore, logically the final cause or end of anything is its form. In this sense Aristotle identifies formal cause with the final cause.

But what about the efficient cause? Aristotle attempts to show that even the efficient cause can be identified with the final cause. He explains that efficient cause is the moving cause or the cause of becoming. Now, final cause being the end is also the end of the becoming, for it is what a thing becomes. Aristotle holds that the cause of the becoming is also the end which the becoming arrives at. Everything by nature strives towards an end and exists because of the end. In fact, he points out that the end is the cause of the motion or the becoming. Thus, he co-relates the final cause with the efficient cause.

The dilution of the efficient, formal, and final causes to the category or the principle of form is explained by Stace with the help of some example which Aristotle takes from nature. He expresses that the final cause or end of an acorn is oak. So, one may deduce the oak to be the cause of the acorn's growth. This growth, in other words, shows a movement that begins with the acorn and drives towards the appropriate end, namely the oak. Aristotle says that this kind of movement is possible in case of humans also. The only difference is that in nature, the movement is unconscious or instinctive, whereas in case of human production, i.e. when a thing is produced by human efforts, the movement towards the end is a conscious movement. For example, if we take the case of the sculptor producing a statue, we find that it is he who moves the brass or the bronze. But there is another factor that moves the sculptor and forces him to act upon, and it is the idea of the completed statue in his mind. So, idea of the end is the ultimate and actual cause of the movement when humans produce a work. The idea of the end is actually present in their minds. This is what motivates them to move towards the end. But where nature

is concerned, it is obvious that there is no mind that is conscious of the end. Nevertheless, there is a movement towards the end. This end then causes the movement. So, basically, it is the ‘form’ into which, the causes, other than the material causes, are reduced or moderated. The material cause is modified into the ‘matter’.

Thus, ‘form’ and ‘matter’ constitute the two fundamental categories in Aristotle’s metaphysics. The whole universal is explained with the help of these two principles. They are part of a single antithesis.

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#### **4.7: FORM AND MATTER**

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Aristotle proclaims at the outset that form and matter are inseparable, even though they appear as two distinct principles or categories. He adds that it is for the sake of our understanding that we think of them separately. But he insists that in reality these two seemingly opposite principles are not so.

He explains there is no form without matter and no matter without a form. Everything in this world is a composition of these two. He compares the inseparability of form and matter with the shape and material of a thing. Explaining this point further, he says that although geometry considers shapes etc. in abstraction or as existing by themselves, the truth of the matter is that there is nothing as a square or a triangle or a circle. We always speak of a square object, triangular object and a circular object. Thus, shape and matter are inseparable. And the same is true of form and matter. It is from this point of view that Aristotle attacks Plato who gave a distinct status to the forms, i.e. the ideas divorced from the matter or the material world.

One can deduce another feature of the form and matter from the thought that the forms communicate the ideas. The ideas are the concepts and therefore the universals; the ‘form’ too is the universal; whereas ‘matter’ is only the particular. Since we have seen that the form cannot exist without the matter, one can further derive that the universal co-exists with the particular. This is what Aristotle tries to convey by rejecting Plato’s theory of ideas.

Now, to maintain that the universal exists in the particular and vice-versa is to further imply that one flows into the other. In this sense matter and form are like fluid, and are relative concepts. Neither the matter nor the form can be taken as an absolute concept. Thus, whenever there is a change, it is the matter upon which the change takes place, and what it becomes, is the form.

Next, Aristotle holds that by considering matter and form as relative terms, we cannot restrict form, merely to mean the shape of a thing. This is because form includes more than a shape. It includes, as Stace points out, organization, relation of part to part, and subordination of all parts to the whole. So, form in this sense is the sum of the internal and external relations. It is the ideal framework into which the thing is moulded.<sup>38</sup>

Aristotle tries to convey that the form includes functions because a form is also the final cause. Besides the function, Aristotle also ascribes all the qualities of a thing to its form. This is simply because qualities are universals. Further everything possesses qualities. This shows the inseparability of a thing from its qualities and also of the qualities from a thing. Finally, all this again reflects that form and matter are not separable.

The matter is the substratum which underlies everything. It is devoid of any character. It is without any form either. So, the matter is featureless, indefinite, and without any quality. It is only the form that gives a thing a certain quality. All this basically indicate that there is no internal differentiation within the matter. So difference of quality should not to be mistaken as a difference of matter because, as Aristotle maintains, all qualities are inherent in the form. We thus observe that Aristotle's conception of matter is different from the scientific conception of matter, or the physical substance. The scientific usage of matter identifies the difference between brass and iron to be a difference of matter rather than a difference of quality. In this way, Aristotle makes it possible for the matter to acquire any form that is impressed upon it. Aristotle's concept of matter thus contains within itself the idea of 'possibility', although in actuality it is nothing because it is devoid of any quality or feature etc. It becomes something only by acquiring a form.

From the above explanation, another important antithesis is deduced by Aristotle, and that is the antithesis between potentiality and actuality. This means that matter is potential and form is actual. The matter has the potential or capacity to become something actual. This 'something actual' is nothing but the form it acquires.

With this antithesis, Aristotle claims to have solved the problem of becoming that had troubled his predecessors for a long time. The issue was how to explain 'becoming'. The Eleatics presented the problem in the following form. They said, that 'becoming' is not the

passing of one being into another because this does not involve any change. Moreover, they maintained that it is not even the passing of not-being into being because that is impossible.

Aristotle's antithesis between the potential and the actual addresses the above stated problem. First of all, he maintains that there is no sharp distinction between not-being and being. He uses the term 'potentiality' to mean not-being. As a result, he explains, the 'not-being', lose out on its absolute sense or absolute identity. The not-being at the most means 'actually nothing', but since he used the word potential for 'not-being', the 'not-being' becomes a potential being. Thus, part of the problem is solved by Aristotle because 'becoming', in this sense, no longer involves the impossible jump from nothing to something. It is transition from the potential being to actual being. This passage or transition is central to Aristotle's notion of change and motion. It is significant for Aristotle because he uses it to explain the formation of the world or the universe. Now we will see how he explains the world with the help of these two categories.

To begin with, Aristotle places matter and form in a hierarchy. Since the matter is an unrealized capacity, he puts it lower in the hierarchy. On the contrary, the form being the actuality, the realized end, it occupies a higher place in the hierarchy. He clarifies that in the order of time, matter comes first, but in the order of thought and in reality, it is the form which comes earlier. This is because, Aristotle explains, to say matter is the potentiality is to assume the end or the form towards which it is directed. In other words, the end is ideally present in the potential or it is already there in the beginning. By such a logic, Aristotle tries to assert once again, that end is the moving or the driving force or the true cause of the 'becoming'. And this is what produces motion in a thing. It is thus evident that by motion Aristotle does not mean any mechanical force which involves a push. He interprets motion as an ideal attractive force that draws a thing towards its logical end. So, the end itself acts as the driving force or moving force. It alone causes the movement that eventually brings about a change in Aristotle's philosophy. Thus, Aristotle shows how the 'form' which is the end is first in thought and reality.

Aristotle's assertion seems to be logically justified because cause is logically prior to its consequence. After a careful examination of Aristotle's position, it appears that there is fundamental similarity between his position and what Plato had said about the forms.

Aristotle, by declaring the 'form' or the end to be the cause of the movement of the universe, tries to communicate it to be the ultimate reality. It is therefore the source of the becoming and the first principle from which the entire universe flows. This form is what Plato conceives as the universal and the idea, and posits in it the source of everything in the world. Thus, idealism is advocated not only by Plato, but also by Aristotle when he claims that idea or reason is the foundation of the world. The only point of difference in Aristotle's theory is his denial of Plato's belief that these forms have an independent and distinct existence divorced from the matter.

Now, the question is whether such a theory is acceptable to the common man. The common man considers God to be the beginning of all creations. That is to say in the common man's perception God is the first principle, and so God must have been there before the world came into being. In other words, God or the absolute is the cause and the world is his effect. Being the cause God must precede the world, i.e. the effect in time.

But the way the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato describe the world, time does not seem to be real at all. It looks like a mere appearance. Therefore, Aristotle, while clearing the common man's notion points out that God's relation with the world is not a temporal relation that is brought about by the relation of cause and effect. It is only a logical relation. He expresses that God is a logical premise, and world is the conclusion derived from it. Thus, if God is there then world follows necessarily out of it. The relation between God and world is one of logical succession, and not temporal succession.<sup>39</sup>

Having settled the first principle of the world in the form of God, Aristotle attempts to describe the process of the formation of world as a continuous elevation or upward movement of matter towards the higher forms. This implies that the universe displays a gradual and continues scale of being. That which has the predominance of form occupies the highest level in the scale of being and the one in which matter dominates belongs to the lower level in the scale. So, Aristotle tries to show that in the bottom of the scale we have the formless matter, and at the top we have matter less form. It is, however, important to reckon at this stage that, as per Aristotle, matter and form are inseparable. Consequently, it follows that both the extremes, namely formless matter and matter less form are mere abstractions. However, he says, whatever exists, exist between these extremes. Every change or motion, explains Aristotle, is an effort to pass from the lower to the higher, under the influence of the force of attraction.

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## **4.8: THE POSITION OF GOD — UNMOVED MOVER**

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According to Aristotle, the absolute form, which has no trace of any matter at all, is God, and comes at the top of the scale. He ascribes the characteristics of God on the basis of the features of the form. As we have seen throughout our discussions on form and matter, form is ‘actuality’, therefore Aristotle considers God to be absolutely actual. He further explains, as we go higher up the scale the things by virtue of possessing more form tend to become more real. Consequently, at the highest level, God alone is real, devoid of any matter.

We have seen that Aristotle posits the formal, final, and efficient causes in the form. Thus, he claims that God has them all in his being. He expresses, as formal cause, God is the idea; he is the reason. As the final cause, God is the absolute end. All beings are ultimately driven towards him. This is to mean that all beings or everything in the universe is driven towards perfection as a final end which is nothing but God.

As an efficient cause, Aristotle maintains that God is the ultimate cause of all motion and becoming. In this sense, God is also the first mover, but he himself is unmoved. And this is again a necessity, Aristotle maintains, of God being the ultimate end and the ultimate form. Aristotle explains that there is no end beyond the absolute end. And this is what makes God the unmoved mover, because after God there is no higher form towards which God can be moved. It also implies, as per Aristotle’s logic, that the real and the ultimate causes are also unmoved.

Here one must realize that in Aristotle’s philosophy God is not a mechanical cause. This is because every mechanical cause has a cause of its own and this goes ad infinitum. Aristotle’s God, on the other hand, is the teleological cause that works from the end, but from a logical point of view it comes before the beginning of all. Hence, it is the first mover.

Further in the context of Aristotle’s God, Stace bring out that God can be conceived as thought. But what is the subject of God’s thought? Since he is absolute form, there is no matter in the conception of God. Therefore, God in the final analysis is the form of form. His matter is the form itself. And this is how Aristotle arrives at the celebrated definition of God as, ‘thought of thought.’ In other words, God is at once the subject and object of his thought. It is in this sense Stace maintains that God is also self- consciousness. God cannot think anything other than thought. Stace also points out that Aristotle, by way of using such

expressions, slides into the use of figurative language. And the use of this kind of language tends to convey the idea of a personality in his conception of God. Now, Stace expresses that 'personality' implies both an individual consciousness and an existent consciousness. Therefore, the question at hand is whether we can take God as an individual and whether he can be called existent? <sup>40</sup>

Stace explains that when Aristotle claims God to be an absolute form, the form here also implies the universal. Now, what is universal must have the particular in it too. The form, as universal, has no particular in it. Therefore, it cannot be an individual. Thus, God cannot be an individual. Further, as we have discussed earlier, Aristotle insists that form has no existence apart from matter. God as a pure form is without matter, and so he cannot be called existent, although he is absolutely real. Thus, Stace tries to show that Aristotle's God is neither existent nor individual. This naturally disqualifies him as a person. But a problem surfaces here that if God is not a person, then Aristotle's language is merely figurative. Stace solves this problem by holding that if there is any inconsistency, it is only in the language but not in Aristotle's thought.

A little introspection would reveal that the problem lies in assuming God as 'thought'. Stace clarifies that thought here does not imply or indicate subjective thought which exists in the mind of an individual, but the objective thought which exists independent of the mind and has its own reality. This then concludes Aristotle's metaphysics. It ends with God as the ultimate cause of the universe.

Since this unit of western metaphysics has mainly focused on Aristotle's logic physics, and metaphysics, it is important to locate a link or connection between the three sciences. In brief, this link may be stated in Richard McKeon's words as follows: 'An investigation of the problems of proof in logic, led back to the problem of the discovery of causes in scientific demonstration, and as inquiry in Physics had been found to consist in the search for causes, metaphysics is concerned with causes as such and it is described as the science of first principles and causes.'<sup>41</sup>

So, we observe that the problem of causes started with logic, went on to Physics and finally culminated in Aristotle's metaphysics in the latter's conception of first cause, unmoved mover and God.

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## 4.9: PLATO AND ARISTOTLE: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

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In the introduction where we talked about Aristotle's life and his works, we mentioned that Aristotle spent a considerable part of his life in the Academy. Thus, he had been under the spell of Plato and remained influenced by him up to the end. But Aristotle was also a genius in his own capacity, so he endeavoured to take on Plato's theory of ideas and tried to give further elaboration of the same. His criticism of his master's theory of ideas tends to give us the impression that the latter was not very friendly with Plato's philosophy. But this is only at a superficial level. Behind the scene there is much deeper resemblance between the two. Let us now look at these resemblances.

To begin with, both Plato and Aristotle accept idealism. This means both these philosophers give supremacy to the spirit and ideas over matter. In other words, thought are given priority over things. This assertion is evident in Plato when he claims that the idea of the good is the ultimate and the real idea because it drives the other ideas towards itself. In the same line, Aristotle maintains that *Actus Purus* or the prime mover causes everything to move towards the end, i.e. itself, without being moved itself. The *Actus Purus* is thus acts as the ultimate form of all forms and ultimate idea of all the ideas, (since form and idea have the same connotation). If we remember Plato, we shall realize that he too emphasized that the world of becoming constantly participates in the world of ideas. Now, since all ideas are thoughts, Aristotle derives that all things while striving to 'become' are potentially thought of. This is the basic tenet of idealism which is shared by both Plato and Aristotle.

Next, in their respective explanation of the world, both Plato and Aristotle reject mechanism and accept teleology. By considering good to be the supreme end or purpose of the world, Plato maintains that whatever has been created by God in this world has been done in order to achieve the goodness of the God. Even in the context of the philosopher king, we have seen that Plato has argued that they have the knowledge and understanding of the good; hence only philosophers ought to be the rulers. Similarly, Aristotle also maintains that there is a holistic tendency in every being to move towards its final end, i.e. towards the prime mover or the *Actus Purus*.

Even ethically, both Plato and Aristotle claim that the ethical end is the sole end of the universe. Both reject pleasures as good and accept happiness to be the end of moral life.

## Differences

Apart from the above stated similarities between Plato and Aristotle, one finds certain differences between them too. These differences are associated with regard to their background and orientation regarding the world. Aristotle being a logician and having a scientific background gives importance to facts. This aspect of the world is ignored by Plato, who, as we have seen, uses a language full of poetic expressions, myths, and allegories to explain the various concepts of the world.

Aristotle, as we have discussed, uses natural language in logic, and in his explanation of the world his language is precise. Rather than myths, he employs technical and scientific terms like change, motion, cause, actual, potential, and so on. Another important respect in which these philosophers differ is Aristotle's failure to discuss mathematics, which has been given importance by Plato.

If we compare both these philosophers, it appears that Plato's views are static whereas there is more activity and dynamism in Aristotle's position as he talks of change, motion, and transition. Plato's indulgence with myths and metaphors results in the concept of a 'personal God' as is shown by Y Masih. His ideas thus influenced the Christian theology; Aristotle's concept of the 'prime mover' has to do with nature rather than prayers and worships.

Moreover, as brought up by Masih, 'Plato has made philosophy subordinate to the stereological purpose of religion. But Aristotle kept philosophy as the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake'.<sup>42</sup>

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## 4.10: CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF ARISTOTLE'S PHILOSOPHY

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It has been maintained by many that Aristotle's philosophy is an improvement upon Plato's idealism. Being the founder of idealism, Plato's idealism exhibited many defects and crudities. For instance, he gave a transcendental status to the ideas. For him ideas as universal existed in a separate world altogether. He considered the ideas alone to be real, thus creating confusion between reality and existence. Aristotle, on the other hand, took it upon himself to clear his master's theory of its short comings. Whatever he could retain in Plato's theory of ideas, he did and developed his philosophy by a critical analysis of the rest.

Like Plato, he too held that the idea, form, the universal, or the thought was the ultimate reality, and the world was founded on them. But Plato gave a mental status to the universals, and claimed that they had independent existence divorced from the sensible world. Thus, he conjoined thought with the thing. Aristotle was not comfortable with this situation because it represented a degradation of the universals into a mere particular. He, on the contrary, believed that the universals, as real entities, have relevance only if they could be a part of this world. He analyzed them as formative principles of particular things. His philosophy, in this sense, is perceived to be more advanced than Plato's philosophy. In fact, as far as Greek idealism is concerned, many consider Aristotle's idealism to be more perfect and complete.

Aristotle is also given credit for producing the only philosophy of evolution that world has witnessed. Hegel is also said to have contributed in this area, but this was by following Aristotle's theory. Although the theory of evolution is considered to be Aristotle's original contribution, many of the elements of this theory were derived from his predecessors. The problem of becoming in the works of earlier philosophers laid the ground work for Aristotle's theory of evolution. We have briefly stated about this problem in the beginning of this unit. The predecessors including Heraclitus and others could not provide a concrete solution to this problem, since they failed to analyze the meaning of 'becoming'. For them becoming was not a development but only a change, that was endless and without any purpose. Aristotle dwelled upon this issue, rather deeply, and tried to show what 'becoming' means. His physics and metaphysics are largely revolves around the explanation of the 'becoming'. In the process, we have already seen how he rationally deciphered the world process which is the result of development towards rational end.

But as we all know, no philosophy can attain finality, so Aristotle's theory has also been tested on certain grounds to ascertain its validity. Firstly, the inseparability of the universal and particulars, of forms and matter, is questioned.

We must remember here that Plato maintained a gulf between them and it has been severely criticized. Aristotle attempted to surmount this dualism by asserting that they are separable only in thought but not in principle. Thus, it appears that in one sense he accepts Plato's dualism.

If we look deeper into the meaning of dualism, it appears that dualism emphasizes on a two-fold theory of reality. By this logic, form and matter both should have been shown as two

separate realities, one existing independently of the other. But Aristotle only considered the form to be absolute and real. Given this, everything else, including matter, must be derived from the form. But Aristotle fails to show this. Matter only conveys potentiality in his philosophy, which further explains why he failed to explain the origination of matter. So, Plato's dualism seems to be intentionally retained in his philosophy. Thus, it seems that Aristotle fails to explain that the world or matter is derived from the form.

Moreover, when Aristotle claims the form to be absolute, he also implies that the form constitutes a rational principle, but this is not explained properly by him. A rational principle has the element of necessity in it. But Aristotle does not succeed in showing the form to be a necessity. He shows it as an end that attracts everything towards it. But why is the form an 'end' is not explained properly by Aristotle. Moreover, the movement from matter to form, which consists of endless number of particular forms as one goes higher in the scale, is also said to be left unexplained by Aristotle. Consequently, he is criticized for not explaining the 'change'. He only states that as one moves from formless matter to matterless form, the lower form passes into the higher form or changes into the higher form. But the necessity behind such a change is not explained by him. Thus, the rationality behind the change remains unexplained by Aristotle.

It seems from the above that his theory of evolution is so named because evolution connotes movement towards the end. He demarcated various stages in the attainment of that end. But these stages were not rationally developed, nor were they properly explained.

In spite of the above stated shortcomings, Aristotle's philosophy continues to remain one of the greatest philosophies of the world and it has influenced the subsequent western thought considerably.

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#### **4.11: SUMMARY**

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According to Aristotle, the nature is in form rather than in matter. This is because he maintains that a thing is more properly said to be what it is when it attains fulfillment and not when it exists potentially. Aristotle says that man by nature thinks that he has no knowledge of a thing until he has grasped the 'why' of the thing. Aristotle recognizes chance and spontaneity among causes. This is because he opines that many things are said to come to exist due to mere chance and spontaneity. Aristotle holds that chance is an incidental cause in the sphere of those actions

which are for the sake of something and involve a purpose. Thus, he claims that intelligent reflection and chance fall in the same sphere because ‘purpose implies intelligent reflection’. Aristotle does not seem to agree with the definition of space as the void. For him empty space is an impossible notion. Aristotle used the phrase ‘first philosophy’ to describe the subject matter of metaphysics, which concerns the first, highest, or most of general principles of the universe. The most important and serious objection that Aristotle’s levels against Plato’s ideas is the latter’s assumption that ideas are the essences of things, and the claim that these essences exist outside the things themselves. Aristotle claims that substance is the first principle or the first cause. Aristotle holds, with regard to the causes, that the existence of moving causes precedes the effects. Aristotle holds that things are composed of elements that are numerically different but are same in kind. These elements are causes. Aristotle also asserts that the principles of all things are only analogous, and not identical.

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#### 4.12: KEY TERMS

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- **Idealism:** Idealism is the group of philosophies which assert that reality, or reality as we can know it, is fundamentally mental, mentally constructed, or otherwise immaterial.
- **Syllogism:** A syllogism is a kind of logical argument that applies deductive reasoning to arrive at a conclusion based on two or more propositions that are asserted or assumed to be true.
- **Assertoric:** An assertoric proposition in Aristotelian logic merely asserts that something is (or is not) the case, in contrast to problematic propositions which assert the possibility of something being true, or apodictic propositions which assert things which are necessarily or self-evidently true or false.
- **Subalternation:** Subalternation is an immediate inference which is only made between A (All S are P) and I (Some S are P) categorical propositions and between E (No S are P or originally, Not every S is P) and O (Some S are not P or originally, No S is P) categorical propositions of the traditional square of opposition and the original square of opposition.

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#### 4.13: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- How does Aristotle justify his belief that it is not necessary for ideas to exist?
- On what grounds Aristotle reject Plato's theory of ideas?
- How does Aristotle interpret motion?
- How does Aristotle's approach differ from that of Plato's?
- Attempt a critical assessment of Aristotle's ideas.
- Explain the idea of unmoved mover.

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## **BLOCK-2: MACHIAVELLI AND HOBBS**

Unit-1: Machiavelli: Child of Renaissance

Unit-2: Machiavelli's Contribution to W.P.T

Unit-3: Introduction to Thomas Hobbes

Unit-4: Contribution of Thomas Hobbes

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## UNIT-5: MACHIAVELLI: CHILD OF RENAISSANCE

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### Structure

- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 Niccolo Machiavelli
- 5.4 Background of his environment and reaction
- 5.5 Machiavelli: Child of Renaissance
- 5.6 Machiavelli: Conception of Human Nature
- 5.7 Summary
- 5.8 Key Terms
- 5.9 Self Assessment Questions
- 5.10 References

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### 5.1: OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- About Niccolo Machiavelli
- Machiavelli and Renaissance
- Conception on Human Nature of Machiavelli

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### 5.2: INTRODUCTION

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Niccolò Machiavelli was a philosopher, author and Italian politician whose ideas serve as the foundation of modern political science. He was a Renaissance man in every sense of the term, as the term implies someone who is a polymath. Niccolò Machiavelli was a diplomat, a political philosopher, a musician, a poet and a playwright, but the most important role that he played was that of a civil servant of the Florentine Republic.

Machiavelli, along with Leonardo da Vinci, is often cited as a prime example of the Renaissance Man. Machiavelli found renown mainly on the basis of his short political treatise called *The Prince*. Machiavelli's *Prince* lays down realistic political discourse. However, both *The Prince* and the *Republican Discourses* that dealt with more serious issues, were not published until after Machiavelli's death. Irrespective of his personal beliefs (still considered as controversial in some

aspects), Machiavelli is read widely and is considered to have astute intelligence. Machiavellianism represented the cold-blooded politics and treachery that was used to obtain and retain political power.

Thomas Hobbes was an English philosopher whose political theories became the foundation of modern political thought. Hobbes gave us a theory based on how social and political order could be maintained in the world. His theories are aimed at establishing peace in the society. He believed in delegating political authority to a powerful sovereign. He believed that in the absence of a sovereign, the state of nature will prevail. This could very well lead to a civil war. Hobbes has often been accused of having taken a ‘selfish’ view of human nature. In this unit, you will learn about the state of nature and the concepts related to it. The unit also describes the concept of natural rights, where you will learn at length about the relationship between the state of nature and natural rights. The unit also will deal with the concept of the law of nature.

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### **5.3: NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI**

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Machiavelli (1469–1527), born in Florence (Italy), had authored the well-known book, *The Prince*. He worked as the Secretary to the Second Chancery, the Government of Florence. During this job, he got the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of national and international politics. It was while working as an envoy for several years that he went to Paris, Rome and to the court of Ceasar Borgia. Machiavelli’s long experience gave him enough expertise of statecraft. In this capacity, he was at the centre of the political life of Florence. He completely rejects the feudal conception of a complex hierarchy of relatively autonomous entities. And for it, he substitutes an all-powerful central authority, which is supreme over all institutions within the region over which he has any jurisdiction at all. Machiavelli was the first exponent of power-politics. His concern was not only the internal life of the city, but, since its very existence depended on maintaining a balance in the ever-shifting relationships between the city states of Italy and the great powers beyond the Alps. He also contributed greatly in the direction of foreign affairs. In 1512, the republic came to an end and with it ended Machiavelli’s political career.

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## **5.4: BACKGROUND OF HIS ENVIRONMENT AND REACTION TO MEDIEVAL THOUGHT**

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Machiavelli had a keen observation and a sensitive disposition. The political and intellectual tendencies of the medieval age greatly influenced him. He exhibited these influences through his political philosophy. At the dawn of the 16th century, the Councilor Movement was stopped by the monarchist reaction. This movement propagated and supported democratic beliefs and a government that was based on an established set of principles of governance, both in the church and the state. The Pope re-established his supreme position over Church Councils. On the secular front, absolute monarchies reasserted themselves in all the important states and deterred the feudal assemblies and feudal aristocracy for the time being. However, this monarchic reconsolidation did not have much influence in Italy at the time. No ruler of the Italian states, namely, Venice, Naples, Milan, Florence and Papal State, could affect a consolidation of the whole Italian empire. The Italian politics during this period was influenced by constant intriguing by ambitious potentates, local as well as foreign. In this way, political turmoil became common in Italy, and so did internecine wars. The political leaders of Italy seemed to be more inclined to achieve their motives rather than care for public interests. Statecraft and the law of public morality became the main source of defence. Machiavelli was not able to keep himself aloof from the political situation in Italy, which had become alarmingly complicated and depressing. His main wish was to secure independence for Italy and restore prosperity to its cities. It was Machiavelli's firm belief that the basis of contemporary politics was selfish political seizure and violence and not good Christian ethics. Though Papacy was successful in maintaining some law and order, the Holy Roman Empire continued to disintegrate, and international relations continued to become chaotic.

### **Spirit of Renaissance**

In addition to feeling deeply pained about the chaotic politics of Italy, the growing spirit of the Renaissance in Italy and the wave of unrestrained intellectual freedom from the hold of scholastic dogmas and ancient beliefs strongly influenced Machiavelli. This comprised of a pre-Christian attitude towards religion and morality. During the Middle Ages, the functions of the church and the state were closely linked, and the church dominated the state and influenced its political philosophy to a great extent. With the advent of the Renaissance, men began to

challenge the clerics' points of view, and to formulate political theories of a secular bent. Machiavelli became the chief exponent of this new thinking.

### **School of Thought**

Machiavelli's period was the transition stage between the middle and the modern ages. Spirituality, salvation and God dominated the dogmatic Christian theology, and the idea of social morality being governed by free thoughts was incomprehensible to most. The Renaissance influenced man, and sharpened his dignity and individualism. There was less focus on God and religion that were the chief entities and subjects of study earlier. The Renaissance guided the era of the rationalists who viewed God, man and nature from the standpoint of reason and not faith. After incidents of geographical discoveries, international conflicts propelled the development of nationalism and nation-state which stood in opposition to medieval universalism of church and state. Self-assertion, individualism and disregard of conventional morality were promoted by these new conditions. Machiavelli genuinely represented his times. A strong reflection of his representation was seen in his mental processes, in the core of his research, in his aims and ideals, in his realistic viewpoint, in his hedonistic morality, in his empiricism and in his nationalism. Machiavelli, like the medieval scholars and thinkers, his imagination was influenced by the great Greek philosopher, Aristotle. He criticized the rigid version of the Christian scriptures, the church's version of these scriptures, the rampant corruption in the church and the way the church and the state wrestled for power and dominion with each other. According to Machiavelli, human problems were deeply linked to the basics of human nature. Human nature was essentially the same everywhere every time, and Machiavelli manifested this phenomenon by understanding the present with the help of the past.

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### **5.5: MACHIAVELLI'S METHODS: CHILD OF RENAISSANCE**

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As a child of Renaissance, Machiavelli was not concerned with medieval problems and had no use for medieval postulates, Christian principles of justice and morality and deductive methods of study employed by medieval thinkers. Medieval appeal to authority and scriptures and a priori reasoning did not suit him. He got his inspiration from Aristotle. Like Aristotle, he preferred to generalize from particulars. He followed the empirical method of observation that was

reinforced by historical method. He conducted a deep study and analysis of contemporary politics, came upon conclusions and made his conclusions more effective with the support of historical evidence. Ancient Roman history offered him the most convenient parallels and political truths. He relied on history because he believed that one, who desires to foresee what is going to take place, should consider what has already taken place. Machiavelli provides modern examples in *The Prince* and cites several examples from ancient history in *The Discourses*.

Machiavelli specifically believed in the historical method, because he preferred practical rather than speculative politics. As a realist in politics, he did not care much for the philosophy of politics. Machiavelli's works set forth a theory of the government and actual working of its machinery rather than the state and the abstract principles of constitution. Machiavelli looks at things from the viewpoint of a ruler rather than from that of the ruled. For Machiavelli, a deed which may be immoral for an individual would be moral for a ruler, if it is in the interest of the state. It was his belief that public morality and private morality were different, based on circumstances. In his writings, Machiavelli rejected the doctrine of natural law. His view was that a man's virtue is a collective measure of his power, fame and intellect. Hence, for 'virtue' it is inappropriate to impose any restraints by general principles which natural law implies. He revolted against medievalism and the doctrine of natural law by refusing to accept the coexistence of the clerics and the secularists.

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## **5.6: MACHIAVELLI'S CONCEPTION OF HUMAN NATURE**

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Machiavelli was similar to John Calvin and Thomas Hobbes, as he did not subscribe to the school of thought that believes in the essential goodness of human beings and human nature. He held that man was an uncomfortable blend of bravery, folly and weakness, who was easy to hoodwink and lord over.

It is not difficult to understand why some thinkers choose to give so less credit to human nature. Men are not generally rational and their emotions often dictate their actions. His belief that men were wicked and essentially selfish, was similar to that of Hobbes. Human conduct is governed by motives such as selfishness and egoism. Men are 'ungrateful, fickle, deceitful, cowardly and avaricious'. Being good is more of a necessity than a choice. Men have no general inclination towards goodness and are more easily corrupted than reformed. They are good by necessity and are compelled to form societies in order to live in security provided by the laws of society. The

element of fear dominates life more than love. Fear should therefore be personified by a prince. A prince who is feared knows his true position among his subjects. He should be able to create fear in their minds, without the presence of hatred or contempt.

‘Love of wealth and ambition and enemy are powerful motives of human action. Men always commit the error of not knowing when to limit their hopes. Man is acquisitive and wants to add to what he already enjoys. He wants secularity. He also desires liberty that is independence of others and feels that the best way of ensuring liberty for him is by establishing dominion over others. Men are constantly ambitious and discontented with their lot. This leads to strife between men and societies. Machiavelli does not give a systematic exposition of human psychology as was done by Hobbes who drew largely on Machiavelli for his conception of human nature.’

Machiavelli’s concept of human nature has, inevitably, coloured his theory of the state, the ends of the state and his views regarding the methods of achieving those ends. It leads to divorce between Ethics and Politics. His concept goes against the Aristotelian view of the essential sociability of man and leads to the conclusion that the state is not a natural organism, but a contrivance against the evil nature of man. It must be pointed out that his concept of human nature is empiric. It is not based on any scientific or rational analysis.

There are similarities between Machiavelli’s theory of human nature and John Calvin’s doctrine of Original Sin. Machiavelli does not subscribe to the idea of man’s moral evolution. According to him, man’s moral and ethical conduct is not mutable. In a similar vein as Hobbes, Machiavelli did not present human nature in a very positive light. His political ideas are based on his analysis of human nature.

Before Machiavelli, political thought centred around one problem, i.e., the end of the state. Political power of the state was only a means in the service of a higher end, i.e., securing of good life. Machiavelli’s thought is based on the concept that power is an end in itself. Machiavelli, therefore, addresses himself to the discovery of means to ‘acquire, retain and expand power’. Machiavelli was the first thinker to use the word ‘state’ in its modern connotation.

### **The Prince**

*The Prince* by Machiavelli has twenty-six chapters. These chapters are divided into three divisions. The first division comprises of a general introduction that dwells upon the different types of absolute governance. The second division criticizes the prevailing system of mercenary troops and furthers the cause of the establishment of a national army. The third division of the book is the most essential part as it carries the substance of Machiavelli's philosophy. This part offers ways to a prince to learn statecraft and the rules of state governance. Machiavelli is specifically addressing the 'new prince', i.e., one who was a usurper of power or a leader of men who had seized a state with force or craft.

*The Prince* is based upon two important premises that have been chiefly derived from Aristotle. The most essential of these premises is that affiliation to the state is the highest form of the social human condition, and that the state should be directed towards the promotion of human welfare. Machiavelli maintains that all individuals who constitute a state should merge themselves in the state so that an individual is able to attain his best self. Therefore, it is essential that state welfare should take precedence over individual or group welfare. Another premise is that individual and public actions are governed by material forces. Thus, when it comes to governing a state, the ruler or the prince must pursue self-interests. There is essentially no need to consider the ethical dimension of these interests. Machiavelli ends up identifying the state with the ruler.

For Machiavelli, similar to ancient Greeks, virtue lay in functional excellence. These characteristics (cunning, deceit, and ruthlessness, energy, boldness, shrewdness and unflinching will) were virtuous for a prince who was adept in yielding success and power.

In *The Prince*, a handbook on government, Machiavelli lays down certain guiding principles for the ruler. The ruler must not only be strong, but must exhibit his strength when necessity arises. 'A Prince must not mind incurring the charge of cruelty for the purposes of keeping his subjects united and faithful'. He ought to try to be both feared and loved. He must, however, see to it that neither cruelty nor fear is used for its own sake. A ruler must keep a watchful eye on the dissidents and the disaffected. He must not be weighed down by conventional moral standards. 'It is necessary for a Prince who wishes to maintain himself to learn how not to be good'. A prince must always retain the initiative and power of decision with himself and in everything.

One of the most effective means wherewith a prince maintains himself in power is by clearly using the sentiments of the people, particularly the religious sentiments. Men are generally tradition bound. A prince, while introducing reforms, must keep the people's love of tradition in mind. He must keep up appearances of old institutions while changing them.

Chapter XVIII of *The Prince* expresses Machiavelli's notion of the qualities that were to be inherent in a successful prince. 'Virtue' in the 16th century did not have the moral import, which is attached to it nowadays; it only meant 'qualities' of a man. In theory, integrity may be preferred and valued over deceit and connivance, but in the practical world, craftiness and ingenuity prove to be more helpful. Law and force are two essentials that the state can depend upon for its success. A prince should be both rational and brutal, the latter in turn representing a judicious combination of the lion and the fox. A ruler needs the qualities of a lion in organizing and undertaking military expeditions and stirring men to action. He needs fox-like qualities in diplomatic and administrative affairs. By fox-like qualities, he can create and maintain a lion-like image of himself. A prince who is prudent is not required to keep his words and promises when they conflict with his own interests and 'when the reasons which make him bind himself no longer exist'. Hypocrisy is a positive quality for a prince, and he must be as clever as a fox. He should have the dexterity to hide his real motives and inclinations from his subjects. To Machiavelli, it was *raison d'être* to preserve the state of monarchy. For a prince, all his neighbours are potentially his enemies, and so, he should always be cautious. A clever prince will attack his enemy without being prepared. He will consolidate and be aware of the internal unity of his state, not by surrendering his powers to the people but by establishing thorough despotism. Since the human conduct is fundamentally associated with economic motives, a prince should be focussed on all that is required to keep his subjects from experiencing economic problems. A prince might execute a conspirator, but he should never confiscate his property. Confiscation would be considered more of a serious issue by the affected family rather than execution.

A prince must avoid being condemned or hated. He will be condemned if he builds a reputation of being variable, inconsistent, effeminate, cowardly or irresolute. He should show in his actions grandeur, courage, gravity and determination. A prince should be a good dissembler and should seem to be merciful, faithful, human, religious and upright. Machiavelli believed that a prince should not be emotionally disturbed, but he should be prepared and have the capability

of using other people's emotions. A prince must be a cool and calculating opportunist. He should have the ability of opposing evil with evil. If the interest of the state demands, he should be prepared to commit any sin without hesitation. His purpose should not be deterred by any other trace of emotion except love for his state, for which he should be prepared to sacrifice his soul too. As far as state is concerned, a prince need not feel burdened by any childish consideration of justice or injustice, good or bad, right or wrong, mercy or cruelty and honour or dishonour. He advises the prince to use subtlety to deal with the affairs of the public. He believed that dishonesty is the best of polity. It is a fact that Machiavelli considered himself a physician of the state. The ethics of his patient's public actions were not his concern. He was only concerned with offering ways in which the state could be maintained at all costs, but he did not consider why it was necessary.

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## 5.7: SUMMARY

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Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) was an Italian Renaissance political philosopher, historian, diplomat, and writer. His most famous work, "The Prince," is a treatise on political power and leadership. Machiavelli's ideas are often associated with a pragmatic and cynical view of politics, emphasizing the pursuit and maintenance of power as the primary objective for rulers.

In "The Prince," Machiavelli offers advice to rulers on how to acquire and maintain power, often advocating for strategic use of deception, manipulation, and ruthlessness. He argues that rulers should prioritize practicality over moral considerations, and that the ends justify the means in the pursuit of political success. Machiavelli's approach to politics is characterized by a realistic assessment of human nature and a focus on the dynamics of power. While his ideas have been controversial and criticized for their perceived amorality, "The Prince" remains a significant work that has influenced political thought and leadership strategies for centuries.

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## 5.8: KEY TERMS

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- **Machiavellianism:** Refers to the use of cunning, deceit, and manipulation to achieve political goals. The term is often used pejoratively to describe individuals or actions that prioritize self-interest and the pursuit of power without moral constraints.
- **The Prince:** Machiavelli's most famous work, "Il Principe" in Italian, where he discusses the qualities and behaviors that a ruler should adopt to be successful in politics. It is considered a foundational text in political philosophy.

- **Political Realism:** Machiavelli is often associated with political realism, the idea that politics should be analyzed and practiced based on practical considerations rather than moral or idealistic principles.
- **Fortuna:** Machiavelli's concept of fortune or luck, which he emphasizes as a significant factor in politics. Rulers must be adaptable and responsive to changing circumstances to navigate the uncertainties of political life.
- **Virtù:** Machiavelli's concept of virtù is not necessarily moral virtue but refers to qualities such as strength, skill, and cunning that a ruler should possess to be effective in politics.

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## 5.9: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- When did Machiavelli write *The Prince*?
- Why did Machiavelli believe in the historical method of politics?
- How was Machiavelli similar to John Calvin and Thomas Hobbes?
- How did Machiavelli break away from the tradition upheld by Plato, Aristotle and other medieval thinkers?
- Discuss Machiavelli's background and his reaction to medieval thought.
- Explain Machiavelli's concept of the human nature.

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## **UNIT-6: MACHIVELLI'S CONTRIBUTION TO W.P.T**

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### **Structure**

- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Introduction
- 6.3 Separation of Politics from Ethics and Religion
- 6.4 Machiavelli's Erastianism
- 6.5 Classification of Government
- 6.6 Doctrine of Aggrandizement
- 6.7 Machiavelli's Modernism
- 6.8 Summary
- 6.9 Key Terms
- 6.10 Self Assessment Questions
- 6.11 References

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### **6.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- Machiavelli's separation of ethics and politics
- Classification of govt. of Machiavelli
- Doctrine of Aggrandizement

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### **6.2: INTRODUCTION**

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Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) was an Italian Renaissance political philosopher, historian, diplomat, and writer. Born in Florence, Machiavelli is best known for his seminal work, "The Prince" (Il Principe), written in 1513 but published posthumously in 1532. His ideas in "The Prince" have had a profound impact on political thought and have sparked extensive debate and interpretation over the centuries. Machiavelli lived during a time of political turmoil in Italy, witnessing the rise and fall of various city-states and the dominance of foreign powers. His experiences as a diplomat and public servant deeply influenced his views on power, leadership, and statecraft. Machiavelli's writings reflect the pragmatic and often cynical perspective he developed through his observations of political machinations.

"The Prince" is Machiavelli's most famous work, and it is a treatise on political theory and governance. In the book, he offers advice to rulers, particularly princes, on how to acquire and maintain political power. Machiavelli's approach is often associated with *realpolitik*, emphasizing the ruthless and practical aspects of leadership, even if it means making morally questionable decisions for the greater good of the state.

For many years he served as a senior official in the Florentine Republic with responsibilities in diplomatic and military affairs. He wrote comedies, carnival songs, and poetry. His personal correspondence is also important to historians and scholars of Italian correspondence. He worked as secretary to the second chancery of the Republic of Florence from 1498 to 1512, when the Medici were out of power. After his death Machiavelli's name came to evoke unscrupulous acts of the sort he advised most famously in his work, *The Prince*. He claimed that his experience and reading of history showed him that politics have always been played with deception, treachery, and crime. He also notably said that a ruler who is establishing a kingdom or a republic, and is criticized for his deeds, including violence, should be excused when the intention and the result are beneficial to him. Machiavelli's *Prince* has been surrounded by controversy since it was published. Some consider it to be a straightforward description of political reality. Others view *The Prince* as a manual, teaching would-be tyrants how they should seize and maintain power. Even into recent times, some scholars, such as Leo Strauss, have restated the traditional opinion that Machiavelli was a "teacher of evil".

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### **6.3: SEPARATION OF POLITICS FROM ETHICS AND RELIGION**

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Machiavelli broke away from the tradition upheld by Plato, Aristotle and medieval thinkers which looked at the state in terms of its ethical purpose of making men happy and good. Machiavelli did not pay much attention to ethics in his political theory about the state. The state is manifested as an entity that has its own interests. State-power was an end in itself and not a means to a higher moral end of promoting special welfare. Machiavelli justified the actions of the state by focussing on its interests. According to him, laws were to be created by the state and individual ethics did not apply to the actions of the state. Machiavelli prescribed double standards of conduct for the ruler and for individual citizens. These double standards were based on the theory that it is the duty of the ruler to form the law as well as determine the moral obligations of the subjects. The law must sustain these moral obligations in the best way

possible. As such he is above both. The state will be ruined if the prince allows his individual morals to interfere in public affairs upon which the external and internal security of the state depends. There was a difference in the public and private standards of conduct. In the case of an individual, it was always wrong to lie. However, it was often important and favourable for a ruler to do so in the interest of the state. The state is a non-ethical entity. Machiavelli's belief was the same as that of Thrasymachus who stated that the sovereign would do well in establishing justice in the state. After all, the safety of the state held supreme importance.

It was Machiavelli's belief that the state was the highest form of human association, and that man was primarily obligated to the state. His belief also stated that the state should be considered more important than any ethical considerations. Public interests held the highest degree of potential than any other motive for political action. The standards of action for the public were not the same as private standards. It was not right for a subject of the state to kill another, but the state is justified in killing an individual in the form of punishment for his crime. A murderer is hanged by the state to ensure public safety as public interests should be protected first and foremost over private interests, and are more important than the private interests of the criminal. Private interests of ethics are not related in any way to public conduct and neither to that of the criminal. Private interests of ethics are not related to public action. Public conduct cannot be called inherently good and neither can it be termed as bad. It is good if its results are good. It is possible for a good citizen to be a bad man in the form of one who values nationalism and patriotism. A citizen acts only for his own self, whereas the state acts for everyone and hence the same principles of conduct are not applicable to both. The state is neither moral nor immoral but has no moral. It is not a moral entity like the individual and, therefore, individual ethics do not apply to it.

This scheme of thought suggests that Machiavelli did not give much importance to ethics, or for that matter, for religion in his system of political philosophy. This was the main factor which differentiated him from the medieval writers. Though Aristotle was one of the early scholars to distinguish ethics from politics, still he had not separated the two concepts, whereas Machiavelli completely separated the two entities. He valued moral virtues, but these found no resonance in his political philosophy. Machiavelli agrees that qualities like liberalism, mercy, fidelity, courage, chastity and sincerity make a good man and adds, 'I know that everyone will confess that it would be most praiseworthy for a prince to possess all the above mentioned qualities which

are held to be good.’ Again, ‘one cannot call it a virtue to murder one’s fellow citizens, to betray one’s friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion.’ Here the word virtue is used by Machiavelli in the conventional sense. Morality was not denied but was treated as secondary to politics, and hence, Machiavelli ‘was not immoral but unmoral in his politics’. To Machiavelli, there is no absolute good or evil. That which serves the interest of the individuals and of the community and which brings security is good. Machiavelli, like the Jesuits, has the same definition for means as those that justify the end. Machiavelli may be called the ‘founder of utilitarian ethics’.

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#### **6.4: MACHIAVELLI’S ERASTIANISM**

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Erastianism is a doctrine that states that the state should have supremacy over the church in all ecclesiastical matters. Machiavelli did not believe in a supernatural end. Men value material prosperity, power and fame, etc., disbelieving in a supernatural end. Machiavelli has no use for the divine law. Machiavelli not only separated morality from politics, but also relegated religion to a very subordinate position in his political system, and it is because of this that we think that the modern study of politics begins with Machiavelli. For centuries, politics and religion had been intertwined. Politics was, in fact, the handmaid of religion. Some of the best medieval thinkers subordinated the state to the church. As a political realist, Machiavelli realized that passive Christian virtues, like gentleness and meekness, had little bearing on the sordid Italian politics of the day where success followed only the pagan virtues of courage, audacity, cunning and duplicity. Italy had no place for Christianity for, as represented by papacy, it was deliberately impeding the realization of Italian unity. Once again, Machiavelli was not irreligious, but non-religious. He was more attracted to the propagandist utility than to the doctrinal virtue of Christianity. Machiavelli knew the public utility of the binding force of religion without which the state could not exist. He looked upon devotion to religion as a useful weapon in the hands of statesman to be skilfully used in furtherance of the ends of the state. He took a pagan rather than the medieval ecclesiastical view of religion. To Machiavelli, the church was a department of the state and not independent of it. The church had a place within the state but not above or beside it. Properly used, it could reinforce a citizen’s sense of duty to the state. Machiavelli must be reckoned as the last of the great line of medieval secularists who urged the subordination of the church to the state.

A good deal of criticism attaches to Machiavelli for his cynical disregard of morality and religion. Machiavellianism has become a byword for unscrupulousness. Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* and *The Discourses* primarily from the point of view of the preservation of the state, every other consideration being secondary. The growing success of men like Caesar Borgia and the active contact of Machiavelli with him reacted strongly on the mind of the philosopher in favour of the 'strong man', capable of other's emulation. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli tries to idealize Borgia. On the other hand, Machiavelli had been very unfavourably impressed by the collapse in Florence of Savanorla's regime which was based on the shaky principle of moral excellence, unsuited as it was to the Italy of his day. Morality and religion had very little touch with the actual Italian politics in the days of Machiavelli, who in this respect was a mere creature of his time. Machiavelli, when he discarded morality and religion from his political philosophy, acted like a realistic painter, for he had more of the Aristotelian than the Platonist about him. The onrushing wave of Pagan Renaissance had greatly weakened the hold of Christianity and Christian morality on the minds of the people. It appeared then that Christianity had ceased to function and that new standards of conduct based on self-interest were necessary, and therefore, justifiable. It was not surprising then that morality or religion has no place in Machiavelli's political theory. Ethics and religion were social forces, working within the state, not above it.

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## **6.5: CLASSIFICATION OF GOVERNMENT**

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For a thinker of his capability, Machiavelli classified the forms of government in a rather disorganized way. He accepted the way Aristotle classified the government as monarchy, aristocracy and constitutional democracy, with tyranny, oligarchy and democracy being their perversions respectively. He also endorsed the ideas of Polybius and Cicero who called for a mixed type of constitution with proper checks and balances is the best and the most suitable constitution for a state. But his definition of the balance was economic or social but not political. Machiavelli held his belief in economic determinism, and he connected wealth with political power. An economic interest existed behind this struggle for political liberty. Machiavelli was inclined to be a republican more than a monarchist. According to him, a republican form of governance was the most suitable for a political community, where there was a general economic equality. A republic is capable of maintaining its traditions and reconcile to new changes in a better way than a sentimental prince. In order to ensure more

streamlined and universal material prosperity, a republican system of government is preferred, as a republic government can provide equal opportunities to all the subjects. A republican system has a higher level of endurance and is more liberal than most monarchies. In a group, people exhibit more prudence and judgment qualities and are able to choose officers of a better type, than a prince who is influenced by the court.

An aristocracy, specifically a landed aristocracy, could often lead to unnecessary feuds and chaos, and would oppose the formation of a state. Machiavelli neither endorsed a republic nor a monarchy. He had no preconceived preference for majority or minority rule. His prime concern was an efficient state. To achieve this motive, he suggested the need for an extra-legal sovereign. He knew that a state needed to have different kinds of governments at different points of time. Machiavelli was of the opinion that in the Italy of his day, an elective monarchy would be more suitable than a republican form of state. The most important requirement of Italy then, was deliverance from the foreigners (German, French and Spanish) and a wise and strong elective prince suited this requirement better than a republic. Machiavelli held his belief in the cyclical character of the forms of government.

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli makes a strong plea for monarchical absolutism whereas in *The Discourses*, he pleads for democracy or popular share in government. The fact is that he admired both monarchical despotism and popular government as suiting different conditions and situations. Despotism was more suited than democracy in his founding of a new state by revolution or in the reforming of a corrupt state. But once the state has been founded, it can become stable only if there is popular support to it arising from popular participation in the government. A monarchical state becomes stable only if the ruler rules in accordance with law and respects the property and other rights of the people. Thus, despotism is good when the need is to find a new state by force or cleanse a corrupt one by revolution, while democracy is good in settled states.

Machiavelli's administration for despotism and democracy were not consistent and can only be explained on the basis that he had 'one theory for revolutions and another for government'. Despotism is suitable for revolutionary times and popular government is suited to peaceful, well-settled states.

## **Law-giver and law**

Machiavelli assigns an important position to law-giver and law in his scheme of things. Force, fraud and fear are no solid foundations for the society and the state, and their use by the ruler needs to be reinforced by some force which has a greater appeal to man and which is law. Law is indispensable for the society and the state. It moulds the national character of the people. It inculcates moral and civic virtues in individuals. These virtues are good for all states, but are indispensable for republics.

‘In view of the selfish nature of man, law is the most effective means of holding the society and the state together because it compels the egoistic individual to honour his moral obligations. For this reason a wise law-giver is of supreme importance. He is the architect not only of the state but of society as well, with all its moral, religious and economic institutions.’

## **A realist in politics**

Machiavelli, with his sensitive mind and clear insight, saw clearly the direction of political evolution in Europe towards an absolute monarchy, supreme within the state and independent of control by any external universal authority. He realized that medieval institutions had become defective and that nationalism was becoming a vital force. He saw clearly the moral and political corruption all around him. He wrote on the basis of the realities of his own day.

Machiavelli mainly studied practical and not speculative politics. Being a realist in politics, he did not care much for political philosophy. He concentrated on the preservation and strengthening of the state, and he was not bothered about the excellence of its constitution. He writes about almost nothing except about practical politics, statecraft and the art of war. He divorces them almost wholly from religious, social and ethical considerations. He writes about the means by which the state could become strong, about politics by which they could expand their territories and power and about factors which cause political decay and destruction. He judges state and ruler, not by the ethics of their public action, but by the degree of success or failure attending these actions.

The political realism of Machiavelli is apparent from his classic, *The Prince*. It is not an academic treatise or a book on political science or political philosophy as such. It is one on

practical politics. It is a treatise on the art of government suggesting the means that might enable a ruler to achieve political success and stabilize power for him. As a realist in politics, Machiavelli recommends to the ruler those virtues which bring success such as cunning, deceit and ruthlessness. Like a practical realist, he points out that ‘Men always commit the error of not knowing where to limit their hopes’. The political realism of Machiavelli is apparent from the fact that the means, which he suggests for the preservation and strength of monarchical states, are not the same as those for republican state.

Machiavelli writes as a realist painter, mirroring the conditions and trends of his own day when there was almost a constant struggle for power between Italian rulers. His realism is well brought out by his doctrine of aggrandizement, which he advocates both in *The Prince* and *The Discourses*. Machiavelli insists that everything can be justified by interests of the state. The safety of the state was supreme law. By his political realism, Machiavelli brought political theory in line with political practice.

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## **6.6: DOCTRINE OF AGGRANDIZEMENT**

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In *The Prince* and *The Discourses*, Machiavelli insisted on the necessity of expanding the realms of the state. Both monarchies and republics exhibit an overwhelming inclination to expand. His theory of extending the dominion of a state did not mean ‘the blending of two or more social or political organisms, but as consisting in the subjection of a number of states to the rule of a single prince or commonwealth’. According to Machiavelli, a state must either grow or eliminate and it was easier to extend the dominion in one’s own country, because common language will only help the subjects of the conquered state to assimilate with the subjects of the prince’s land. Machiavelli held his belief on the Roman state and its policy of expansion in the form of an idea. The use of force was essential for political aggrandizement and for the perpetuation of state. However, force should have a judicious combination of statecraft. The doctrine of aggrandizement is a highlight of Machiavelli’s political philosophies, and emphasizes the hints of moral apathy that most of his theories can be said to contain. It must be realized that so rational a thinker as Montesquieu supports Machiavelli when he writes, ‘The right of natural defence sometimes involves the necessity to attack, if one nation notices that a longer lasting peace would put another one in the position to destroy her.’

Both *The Prince* and *The Discourses* are expressions of Machiavelli’s theories pertaining to the perpetuation of the state. When a prince wants to perpetuate monarchy, he must try to uphold the

traditions and customs of the people, because these are dearer to his subjects than even liberty and life. When the use of force and fear has been made for the establishment of the government, a prince should have a well- trained army of his own subjects. He should draw on the spoils of war more than on the regular public treasury. He must be enterprising and promise his subjects that he will build a grand empire. The imposition of heavy taxes is strictly prohibited. It is also important for the prince to be a patron of art and literature. For Machiavelli, an ideal prince is an enlightened despot who is without morals. In a republic, it is very important for the constitution to be flexible. The law of the land should change in keeping with other changing aspects of the republic. Machiavelli justified occasional dictatorship and party strife in a republic.

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## **6.7: MACHIAVELLI'S MODERNISM**

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Machiavelli was hardly a political theorist. His writings are directed more towards how to govern a state rather than offering a philosophy of the state. Niccolò Machiavelli is often termed as the father of modern political theory. There are several modern theorists whose theories are based upon Machiavelli's theories. He had used the term 'state' in a different context as compared to the context in which it is used now. Its use now is something that has a defined territory, population, government and sovereignty of its own. Bodin and Grotious' theory of legal sovereignty was built on Machiavelli's concept of a sovereign and territorial secular state. This was formulated properly by John Austin and Thomas Hobbes, who borrowed the concept of human nature from Machiavelli. Hobbes believed that man is a brute with a huge ego and his actions are motivated by fear. Machiavelli can rightly be placed among the first modern, totalitarian thinkers.

Machiavelli reinforced the precedence of material interests over spiritual ones. He deified the state and supported the theory that individuals should be completely absorbed by the state. Machiavelli's ideas were similar to the ideas of Hegel, who established a parallel between the state and the God on earth. Machiavelli's theory of aggrandizement resembles the modern theory of power-politics on which thinkers like Nietzsche, Treitschke, Bernhardi and others have written a lot.

Modern thought is based on the inapplicability of medieval concepts to modern society, transformed by the Renaissance and the Reformation. Due to the Universalism of the Papacy and the Empire, there was no concept of territorial sovereignty in the Middle Ages. Sovereignty

is the authority of a state to govern itself. The first need of the modern period now that the papacy and the Empire had been discredited was to evolve a concept of sovereignty which could withstand the tendencies of feudalism to divide the state into smaller units and the weak pretensions of papacy and empire. This was done by Machiavelli and after him by Bodin, Grotius and others. Machiavelli is responsible to a great extent for the way we perceive state in the modern times. Machiavelli rejects the notion of universal authority. For him, the 'state is the nation'. He has freed the state from the medieval bondage of religion.

The problems of Machiavelli's prince are of everlasting interest because they are the problems of efficient government. Even the ethics of Machiavelli are not out of debate in the modern world which relies on material forces rather than moral ones. Machiavelli is the father of realpolitik. He refuses to idealize anything. He writes about men and affairs as they are and not as they should be.

It has been said that Machiavelli's theories are aimed at preserving states, rather than being mere theories that only theorize. So, his theories have a specific purpose, i.e., the preservation of states and state power. Machiavelli was a political realist rather than a political philosopher. His thoughts are related to the conditions and needs of the Italy of his day. Machiavelli was not interested in political philosophy or political ideals as such. Italy, of his day, was torn among petty states, almost constantly at war with each other and with constantly changing frontiers. Machiavelli called upon to suggest ways and means of preserving the state from internal revolutions and foreign attacks which were the order of the day.

Neither in *The Prince*, nor in *The Discourses*, does Machiavelli expound his views about the state as such and its various attributes. He does not directly deal with concepts such as sovereignty, separation of powers, etc. He is interested in political maxims rather than political ideals. Often, he takes his principles or maxims for granted instead of giving a systematic exposition of them. He was a pragmatist, and the theory of the state as such did not interest him.

The influence of Machiavelli on modern political science and practice has been tremendous. Princes like Frederick the Great were essentially Machiavellian though Frederick had the boldness to repudiate Machiavellianism in his *Refutation Prince de Machiavelli*. Machiavelli contributed in one of the many ways by bringing political theory on the same plane as political practice. It must be noted that in the Middle Ages, the two were, on the whole, out of harmony

with each other. Machiavelli can rightly be termed as a political scientist who gave more importance to the ends, and not the means. At the same time, his theories were inherently non-idealistic. Machiavelli employed an empirical approach to most issues. He combined political theory and political practice in his approach. Pragmatism was inherent in all his political philosophies. This realism of Machiavelli is well illustrated by the doctrine of aggrandizement. Aggrandizement was the order of the day in Machiavelli's Italy. Absorption of other states or by other states was the order of the day. This doctrine of aggrandizement must have carried weight later on with government and with princes like Frederic the Great and Henry VIII of England, etc. Jesuits in the century stood for Machiavellianism in the realms of Ethics and Politics.

Sabine characterizes the political thought of Machiavelli as narrowly local and narrowly dated. There is a certain measure of truth in this observation, which, however, is too categorical to be completely correct. Machiavelli's thought is local because it reflects and was provoked by the conditions and needs of Italy of his day. Machiavelli wrote as an impassioned Italian patriot, practically ignoring the world outside Italy. His thought was local also in the sense that it was not in consonance with contemporary European thought outside Italy. It was, however, not narrowly local in the sense that it reflected only conditions and needs of Italy. The conditions in other European countries, particularly Germany, were not very different from those obtaining in Italy. The same observation may be made regarding Machiavelli's thought being 'narrowly' dated. Writing before the Reformation and Counter-Reformation movements, Machiavelli wrote on the basis of separation of politics and religion. He could treat religion with contempt in Italy of his own times when papacy had reached its lowest depth of degradation. His thought, based on divorce between politics and religion, became inapplicable during the next two centuries. It must be pointed out, however, that his thought was not 'narrowly' dated because from the middle of the 17th century, political thought readopted Machiavelli and became secular. A good deal of Hobbe's thoughts is based on Machiavelli's thinking. Modern thought, based on a secular, sovereign, national and territorial state, borrows from Machiavelli. In this sense, Machiavelli is a modern thinker, and it will not do to characterize his thought as 'narrowly' dated.

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## 6.8: SUMMARY

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Niccolò Machiavelli was known as the father of modern political theory. Machiavelli was a Florentine, and therefore, he was geographically at the core of the larger Renaissance movement. In addition to *The Prince*, all that Niccolò Machiavelli wrote was fairly orthodox and fitted into the conventional mould of the Renaissance. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli presents a view about how drastically different is the governance of a state from that of humanists of his time. To Machiavelli, a successful ruler was one who could make people happy, irrespective of what he really was inside. He said that ‘it is sometimes better to seem good than to be good’. In *The Prince* and *The Discourses*, Machiavelli insisted on the necessity of expanding the realms of the state. *The Prince* reflects Machiavelli’s concept of real monarchy and *The Discourses*, that of a republic. Machiavelli’s writings were directed more towards the art of governance rather than on the philosophy of state.

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## 6.9: KEY TERMS

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- **Medievalism:** The spirit or the body of beliefs, customs, or practices of the Middle Ages
- **Liberalism:** A political theory founded on the natural goodness of humans and the autonomy of the individual and favoring civil and political liberties, government by law with the consent of the governed, and protection from arbitrary authority
- **Oligarchy:** Government by a few, especially by a small faction of persons or families
- **Democracy:** Government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives
- **Economic determinism:** A doctrine that states that all cultural, social, political, and intellectual activities are a product of the economic organization of society
- **Reformation:** A 16th-century movement in Western Europe that aimed at reforming some doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church and resulted in the establishment of the Protestant churches
- **Feudalism:** A political and economic system of Europe from the 9<sup>th</sup> to about the 15th century, based on the holding of all land in fief or fee and the resulting relation of lord to vassal and characterized by homage, legal and military service of tenants, and forfeiture

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## 6.10: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- Define Machiavelli's Erastianism.
- Write a note on the spirit of the Renaissance
- How did Machiavelli separate politics from ethics and religion?
- How did Machiavelli differentiate between the law and the law-giver?

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## 6.11: REFERENCES

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## **UNIT-7: INTRODUCTION TO THOMAS HOBBS**

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### **Structure**

- 7.1 Objectives
- 7.2 Introduction
- 7.3 Brief Life Sketch
- 7.4 The State of Nature
- 7.5 The Human Nature
- 7.6 The Natural Rights
- 7.7 Summary
- 7.8 Key Terms
- 7.9 Self Assessment Questions
- 7.10 References

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### **7.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- The brief life sketch of Thomas Hobbes
- State of nature of Thomas Hobbes
- Views of Thomas Hobbes on Human nature

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### **7.2: INTRODUCTION**

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Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) was an English philosopher, political theorist, and one of the most influential figures in the early modern period. Born in Westport, Wiltshire, England, Hobbes lived during a tumultuous time marked by political upheavals, including the English Civil War. His works, particularly "Leviathan," have had a lasting impact on political philosophy and social contract theory. Hobbes' political philosophy is grounded in a materialistic and pessimistic view of human nature. He believed that in their natural state, humans are driven by self-interest, fear, and a desire for self-preservation. Hobbes famously described this natural condition as a "state of nature," where life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." In this state, individuals pursue their own interests without regard for others, leading to a constant state of conflict. To escape this chaotic state, Hobbes proposed the idea of a social contract—a mutual agreement among

individuals to create a sovereign authority or a commonwealth. According to Hobbes, individuals willingly surrender some of their natural rights to a sovereign authority in exchange for protection and the maintenance of order. The sovereign, in Hobbes' view, should have absolute power to maintain control and prevent the return to the state of nature. Hobbes' magnum opus, "Leviathan," published in 1651, is a comprehensive exploration of his political philosophy. In addition to political theory, Hobbes also made contributions to various fields such as ethics, epistemology, and theology. Despite the controversies and criticisms surrounding his ideas, Hobbes' works remain essential for understanding the development of political thought and the foundations of modern political philosophy.

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### **7.3: BRIEF LIFE SKETCH**

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Thomas Hobbes, one of the greatest political thinkers in the history of political thought, was born on 5 April 1588 near Malmesbury in Wiltshire, England. He was born in a poor family and was the son of a clergyman. His uncle had brought him up. He was a talented student. His intelligence can be assessed by the fact that while he was still in school, he could master a number of languages, which included Greek, Latin, French, English and Italian. He began to translate many original works into Greek, Latin and English. He translated Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* into English in 1629. He also translated Euripides' *Medea* from Greek to Latin. He studied at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, and went on to work as a tutor to the son of the Earl of Devonshire. At Oxford University, Hobbes learned logic and physics, but gradually, he began to dislike the education imparted at Oxford. He termed scholasticism as a collection of absurdities. After his University education, he got an opportunity of recruitment in the family of William Lord Cavendish which was an aristocratic family. In the beginning, he was a tutor but later he became a secretary. He spent the rest of his life in the employment of this family or its neighbours and cousins. He got an opportunity to tour various parts of Europe with the son of Lord Cavendish. This gave him a unique opportunity to meet various personalities that included renowned politicians and intellectuals. These meetings expanded his intellectual horizon. The great personalities like Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655), Galileo Galilee (1564–1642) and Marin Mersenne (1588–1648) had a profound influence on him. It was Mersenne who induced Hobbes to write his critical observations on the *Meditations* of Descartes.

The intellectual career of Hobbes was very much significant because he disagreed so roundly and radically with the prevailing orthodoxy of his time. In the later days, he was inspired by the new scientific methods being applied in fields such as medicine and cosmology. He thus set out to rewrite political theory and to create a true science of man. The scientific approach dominated his thought and can be regarded as the foundation of his political theory.

The social and historical context of the period when he was born was very much significant. It was a tumultuous situation when England was witnessing a civil war. Hobbes started writing since late 1630s. In 1651, he published *Leviathan*, his masterpiece. It was published in the midst of constitutional upheavals of the civil war and the commonwealth. His aim throughout was to warn against the consequences of political conflict, the only cure for which, he thought was an absolute and undivided sovereignty. During the course of the English civil war in which he was identified with the royalist cause, he became tutor in mathematics to the young Charles, Prince of Wales. At that time, he was exiled in France in the late 1640s. He served the Cavendish family faithfully for more than four generations. However, in his old days he was not treated properly and in 1679, he died of paralysis having lived beyond the age of ninety. He was influenced by the new developments in the physical sciences and by the works of Francis Bacon, Kepler and Galileo. He regarded power as the end of knowledge and an instrument to harness the forces of nature. He pointed out that all individuals are equal, but differences arise due to their varying capacity for knowledge. He was a voracious reader, and read anything that he came across. He was conscious of being a self-taught philosopher.

Thomas Hobbes' contribution and interests range from history, geometry, physics of gases, theology, ethics, general philosophy to political science. Many of his theories such as seeing man as a self-centered entity still find resonance in the domain of philosophical anthropology. Hobbes can also be credited with integrating materialism with philosophy.

Thomas Hobbes authored significant philosophical works, which he broadly divided into sections and even published at three different times. These are *De Cive* (On the Citizen), a work that was further developed and later published under the title *Leviathan*; *De Corpore* (On the Body); and *De Homine* (On Man). Hobbes' philosophy had a deep impact on the political thinkers of England and those outside it. Hobbes' *Leviathan* is often considered by many to be his masterpiece.

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## 7.4: THE STATE OF NATURE

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The idea of state of nature is one of the fundamentals aspects of Hobbes' political philosophy. The state of nature means a situation where men live or would have lived without the authority of civil law, state or political control. In the state of nature, there was no industry and no systematic production. Man was totally dependent on the nature for his survival. The behaviour of man was largely governed by his inner impulses. According to Hobbes, some sort of natural law existed. The man had not recognized rights, although he said that they had some natural rights. He draws out a very gloomy and sordid state of nature. In the state of nature, human relationship was based on mutual suspicion and hostility. There was no law, no justice, no notion of right and wrong in the state of nature. The force and fraud were not the principle virtue of man. In his opinion, the life of man was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. There was constant conflict among men. The main reasons behind this conflict were competition, diffidence and glory. Basically, men invaded for gain, safety and reputation. While competing, men desire to become master of and own other person's property, spouse, children and cattle. Fighting a battle for safety means that men want to defend themselves against opposing forces, whatever they might be. When men fight for glory, they want to continue their legacy and desire trifles such as a word, a smile, a different opinion, or any other sign of value, either directing their persons or by reflection in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name. The state of nature degenerated into a state of war, 'a war of every man against every man'. Thus, the state of nature was a condition when political authority failed. For Hobbes, it was the option of 'faith' or 'trust' and not the presence of an evil quality of man that cause human misery in the natural state.

The state of nature is a natural corollary of Hobbes' concept of human nature. When he was describing the state of nature, he was obviously not referring to an actual historical process of the development of human society. The conditions in which men lived were of their own making. His concept of the state of nature is thus based on man's basic psycho-physical character, his sensations, emotions, appetites and behaviour. He said that man is primarily a body governed by the law of motion. He pointed out that there are two kinds of motions in animals –vital motions and voluntary motions. He defines vital motion as the automatic movement of the physiological mechanism, which goes within our organism from birth to death without our knowledge. Examples of these kinds of motions are the circulation of blood,

breathing, digestion and excretion. On the other hand, voluntary motion is first born in our mind and is caused by the impact of external stimuli on our sense organs. The two original motions or emotions are generated such as desire and aversion. From these motions, Hobbes says the emotions like hope, diffidence, glory, courage, anger and benevolence are formed. According to Hobbes, the desire and aversion, which are the two principal motions or emotions, are the two cause of conflict in the state of nature. Everybody in the state of nature was guided by their natural impulse of self-preservation to desire and possess the objects or goods that are conducive for their survival. As everybody was roughly equal in strength, and the goods or objects of desertion were limited, it led to competition and conflict of interest. As a result, the state of nature became the ground of struggle for power among all.

The individuals in the state of nature, according to Hobbes, were essentially emotional creatures driven by their desires and physical appetites. All human emotions or passions, he maintained, spring from two basic kinds of motives – desires or aversions. Desires are potential motions or movements towards an object, whereas aversions are potential motions or movements away from an object. However, while human actions are primarily determined by emotions springing from these motives, human beings are also combinations of passions and reason. The role of reason is to offer guidance about how best to satisfy one's desires. Moreover, in his view of human nature, he emphasized to overriding emotions. The first of these is the fear of death, especially of violent death, which he considered to be a basic psychological and biological disposition inherent in the human condition.

'Might is right' was the order of the day. Every man was enemy to every man. It was a state of total insecurity. Men were free to take what they could, and to rob whenever they could. There was no law to prevent or contain the 'law of the jungle'. Thus, the state of nature was a state of perfect anarchy. According to him, there can be no morality and consciousness of duty or obligation in the state of nature.

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## **7.5: THE HUMAN NATURE**

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Thomas Hobbes, a 17th-century English philosopher, is best known for his political philosophy and his work in social contract theory. Hobbes had a pessimistic view of human nature, which significantly influenced his political theories. His most famous work, "Leviathan" (1651), explores his ideas on the nature of humanity and the formation of political societies. According

to Hobbes, human nature is characterized by a relentless pursuit of self-interest and a natural state of war. In his hypothetical "state of nature," Hobbes argued that without a strong and centralized political authority, life would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." In this state, individuals would be in constant conflict over scarce resources, and life would be chaotic and violent. Hobbes believed that the only way to escape this harsh state of nature was through the establishment of a social contract. In his view, individuals voluntarily surrendered some of their natural rights and liberties to a sovereign authority in exchange for security and order. This sovereign authority, often represented by a powerful government or ruler, would maintain peace and enforce laws, preventing the chaos that would prevail in a state of nature.

Hobbes' political philosophy was driven by a deep skepticism about the inherent goodness of human nature. He argued that without a strong governing authority, individuals would be driven by their self-interest and engage in a constant struggle for survival, leading to a state of perpetual conflict. It's important to note that Hobbes' views were a product of the historical and political context in which he lived, particularly the tumultuous period of the English Civil War. His ideas have sparked significant debates and have been both criticized and influential in the development of political philosophy and theories of governance.

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## **7.6: THE NATURAL RIGHTS**

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Hobbes begins by explicating his concept of the 'right of nature'. This implies that all individuals share the common right to all objects that exist in the state of nature. Prior to the appearance of any form of political order, 'every man has a right to everything; even to one another body'. This signifies that individuals have the right to all actions that guarantee their self-preservation. The state of nature is explained by Hobbes as a 'condition of war of every one against every one; in which case everyone is governed by his own reason; and there is nothing he can make use of that may not be a help unto him, in preserving his life against his enemies'. In a nutshell, this implies that all human actions are justifiable in the state of nature and that all individuals are free to choose the way they act. Each individual is free to act or not act and this freedom does not place restrictions on others or on the individual right holder, in the form of duties or obligations.

It can be observed that Hobbes claimed that rights did not always bring benefits to the right holders. When individuals are free to exercise the liberty rights or rights that exist in the state of nature, then there is no obligation or a sense of duty of other individuals not to obstruct the right holder. Also, there is no provision for the protection of anyone's rights. Since everybody has the right to exercise their rights equally, so, a situation of competition should exist between all individuals for exercising their rights. But in this case, Hobbes says that 'there is little use and benefit' of having the right. In the absence of a machinery that enables the protection of individuals who exercise their rights, the individual will feel powerless because of the competition.

In a nutshell, the right of nature is an aggregate right that comprises of all possible actions that someone, living in the state of nature, might consider to be conducive to self-preservation. It denotes unlimited liberty. It allows individuals unrestrained and complete freedom to choose the way they want to act. But there is an inherent contradiction in this because it is impossible for individuals to enjoy this uninterrupted state for long and this will make survival impossible. After all, if everyone has the same set of rights and a sanction to act according to their desires, the strong would rule over the weak. This would prevent the fruition of any form of human association completely.

Hobbes draws conclusions about human nature, saying that in a state of nature, a war among individuals is inevitable. In order to avoid a state of war and to attain a peaceful state, it is important to meet certain conditions such as protecting the rights of all individuals. Thus, there is a need to replace the inherent and unhindered freedom of the state of nature with the protected freedoms that exist when individuals agree to give up some of their liberty rights and accept obligations towards others.

The notion of natural necessity was employed by Hobbes to address his concern with the interplay between natural right and obligation. He argued that on the one hand, under hypothetical conditions where obligations do not exist, people would be miserable, and therefore, willing to enter into covenants whereby obligations are created; while on the other hand, the whole point of his asserting that an individual has a natural right to do what is necessary to preserve oneself was to restrict the applicability of the notion of obligation.

Hobbes used the expression 'right of nature,' or 'natural right,' in a variety of ways, but there are two general categories under which his different usages might be classified. His best known

remarks occur at the beginning of chapter XIV of *Leviathan* where he defines liberty as ‘the absence of external impediments’. He maintained that rights denote a liberty to do, or to forbear, and contrasts this with obligation, suggesting that he meant to speak of liberty in the sense of there being an absence of obligation. This category of natural right is concerned with morality. In other equally well-known remarks, he claimed that in the state of nature everyone has a right to everything. In this instance, the notion of a right of nature is rendered in terms of propriety, i.e., the absence of ownership. Thus, his right of nature is a liberty in a two- fold sense – ‘in the state of nature, to have all, and do all is lawful for all’.

Although the right of nature, in either sense, is stated as an absolute, he draws the ironic conclusion that in the state of nature neither obligation nor propriety exists. The argument he employs to arrive at this skeptical conclusion regarding obligation and propriety trades on his two-fold concept of natural right. When the notion is explicated in terms of a freedom from obligation, he seemed to have been primarily concerned with the agent’s self-preservation; hence, the right of nature is equivalent to the right of self-defence.

When Hobbes claimed that the right of nature entitles the agent to take whatever steps she deems necessary to avoid death, pain or injury, he is mainly concerned with the agent’s right of self-defence. Although he frequently refers to preserving the body in his discussion of the right of self-defence, he sometimes goes a lot further and makes assertions which suggest that by self-defence he meant to include much more than merely protecting the body. In *Leviathan*, for instance, he claimed that ‘no man can transfer, or lay down his right to save himself from death, wounds, and imprisonment’.

There is a sense in which the right of nature entitles an agent, under conditions of war, to seek not only profit, but also dominion over others. This natural right to unlimited propriety is permitted because, in the state of nature, anything may prove useful to deal with future threats to the agent’s life. With this supposition in mind, Hobbes argued that unlimited propriety includes a right to someone else’s body, i.e., dominion over others is to be understood in terms of the proprietary sense of the right of nature. Hobbes makes this clear when he argues that an agent in the state of nature has a right of self-defence in relation to an invader who will use violence to obtain dominion over ‘other men’s wives, children, and cattle’.

Hobbes builds a conception of ‘the right of nature’ out of his psychological theory by first assuming that all living creatures are physiologically constructed so as to be motivated by their appetites and aversions, and, with minor qualifications, he further assumes that the avoidance of death is the strongest possible motive. On the basis of this assumption, he then argues that, when frightened, a living creature cannot but react so as to protect itself. Indeed, since it is impossible for the creature to do otherwise, it has a right to protect itself. But this is clearly not a moral right since the exercise of it always presupposes a pre-civic context of blameless liberty.

The two-fold sense of Hobbes’ right of nature rests on an assumption which underlies all of his political theory, viz., that it is necessary for agents in the state of nature to promote their general self-interest to ensure their continued self-preservation.

Acquiring goods and dominion over others are self-interested actions that enhance an agent’s power to overcome future threats to its life. Hobbes tends to conflate the concept of self-defence and the concept of self-interest because he not only saw acts of self-defence as necessary for promoting the agent’s general self-interest, but he also saw self-interested acts as necessary for maintaining the agent’s ability to defend herself in the long run. This conflation is understandable given his belief that humans have a physiologically-based disposition to avoid death, pain, or injury, and, to ensure their future safety, they are also inclined to seek more and more power.

Hobbes equates the right of nature with the right of self-preservation. It should be noted that this ‘right’ stands in contrast to the ‘law’ that forbids individuals to take any destructive step in their lives or to eliminate the means of self-preservation. Hobbes’ jurisprudence stands on these twin pillars of laws and rights. The rights and laws are to be employed together at two levels in his theory – the state of nature and the civil society.

In the state of nature, the right of nature signifies that all individuals have the right to all things equally, whereas the law of nature demands that all individuals should lay aside this right if possible. This would result in a covenant under which all individuals are required to lay down their rights, and entitling them to the sovereign. It is a case of absolute authority on two grounds. Firstly, since all individuals are entitled to these rights to all things equally, so, the authority is absolute. Secondly, it is unconditional because when the individuals give up their rights to be

used by the sovereign, they also forgo the right to assess the actions of the sovereign. In other words, they have no right left to judge the sovereigns' actions.

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## **7.7: SUMMARY**

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Thomas Hobbes was the first of the great modern philosophers who attempted to bring political theory into intimate relations with a thoroughly modern system of thought. Hobbes strove to make this system broad enough to account unscientific principles, for all the facts of nature including human behavior both in its individual and social aspects. Such a project obviously put his thought quite beyond his range of occasional and controversial literature. Nor is Hobbes to be judged exclusively by the correctness of his conclusions. Hobbes' ideas of what constituted a sound scientific method were those of his time and are long out of date. Yet the fact remains that he had something which can only be described as a science of politics, which was an integral part of his whole conception of the natural world and was carried through with quite extraordinary clearness. For this reason, he benefited not least those thinkers who tried to refute him. Though Aristotle is regarded as father of political science, Hobbes is often considered as the father of modern political science. The latter used deductive and geometrical method rather than empirical and experimental method. In Hobbes' opinion, the passions of desire and aversion are the principle cause of the conflict among the individuals in the state of nature. The goods and wealth are limited in the state of nature. It triggers severe competition and struggle for power. It is revealed from Hobbes' concept of human nature that conflict is inherent in the individual nature in its blind pursuit of self interest. Liberty according to Hobbes, in the state of nature is liberty to use his own power for his self-preservation. The self-preservation was a fundamental right of nature, and equally a basic law. He also termed it as a natural right. It is reason and rational self preservation which prompted man to escape the state of nature and avoid the conflict. Thus, it is the law of nature which instigated the individual to renounce the state of nature and formed a covenant and there by entered into a civil society. In this process, they also discard their natural rights. By making a covenant the individuals built a sovereign or third person to whom they surrendered all their rights and authorized the sovereign their all action. The sovereign was the outsider and not a part to the covenant.

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## 7.8: KEY TERMS

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- **Materialism:** The theory or attitude that physical well-being and worldly possessions constitute the greatest good and highest value in life
- **Individualism:** Belief in the primary importance of the individual and in the virtues of self-reliance and personal independence
- **State of nature:** A situation where men live or would have lived without the authority of civil law, state or political control; in the state of nature, there was no industry and no systematic production
- **Natural rights:** This is an aggregate right that covers any possible action that someone, living in the state of nature, might see as conducive to his preservation
- **Social contract:** The social contract was an 'occurrence' during which individuals came together and ceded some of their individual rights; this resulted in the establishment of society, and by extension, the state, a sovereign entity which was to protect these new rights which were now to regulate societal interactions

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## 7.9: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- Write in your own words the state of nature as described by Hobbes.
- Write a summary of the natural rights as propounded by Hobbes.
- Discuss Hobbes' concept of sovereignty.
- Was Hobbes an individualist or absolutist? Support your answer with valid arguments.
- Discuss the contribution of Hobbes to the field of political philosophy.
- Hobbes made the sovereign (the Leviathan) the sole source and interpreter of laws. Discuss.

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## 7.10: REFERENCES

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## **UNIT-8: CONTRIBUTION OF THOMAS HOBBS**

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### **Structure**

- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Introduction
- 8.3 The Laws of Nature and the Covenants
- 8.4 The Covenant and the Sovereign
- 8.5 Absolute Sovereignty
- 8.6 Hobbes as an Individualist
- 8.7 Summary
- 8.8 Key Terms
- 8.9 Self Assessment Questions
- 8.10 References

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### **8.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- Covenant of the Thomas Hobbes
- Absolute sovereignty of Hobbes
- Hobbes as an individualist

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### **8.2: INTRODUCTION**

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Thomas Hobbes (5th April 1588 – 20<sup>th</sup> December 1679) was an English philosopher. Hobbes is best known for his 1651 book *Leviathan*, in which he expounds an influential formulation of social contract theory. In addition to political philosophy, Hobbes contributed to a diverse array of other fields, including history, jurisprudence, geometry, theology, and ethics, as well as philosophy in general. He is considered to be one of the founders of modern political philosophy. Hobbes was born and raised in Malmesbury and attended the University of Oxford before graduating from the University of Cambridge in 1608. He then became a tutor to the Cavendish family. After returning to England from France in 1641, Hobbes witnessed the destruction and brutality of the English Civil War from 1642 to 1651 between Parliamentarians and Royalists, which heavily influenced his advocacy for governance by

an absolute sovereign in Leviathan. Aside from social contract theory, Leviathan also popularized ideas such as the state of nature ("war of all against all") and laws of nature. His other major works include the trilogy *De Cive* (1642), *De Corpore* (1655), and *De Homine* (1658) as well as the posthumous work *Behemoth* (1681). Thomas Hobbes was born on 5 April 1588 (Old Style), in Westport, now part of Malmesbury in Wiltshire, England. Having been born prematurely when his mother heard of the coming invasion of the Spanish Armada, Hobbes later reported that "my mother gave birth to twins: myself and fear." Hobbes had a brother, Edmund, about two years older, as well as a sister, Anne.

Although Thomas Hobbes's childhood is unknown to a large extent, as is his mother's name, it is known that Hobbes's father, Thomas Sr., was the vicar of both Charlton and Westport. Hobbes's father was uneducated, according to John Aubrey, Hobbes's biographer, and he "disesteemed learning." Thomas Sr. was involved in a fight with the local clergy outside his church, forcing him to leave London. As a result, the family was left in the care of Thomas Sr.'s older brother, Francis, a wealthy glove manufacturer with no family of his own.

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### **8.3: THE LAWS OF NATURE AND THE COVENANTS**

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In Hobbes' opinion, it is natural law which prompts men to abandon the state of nature and to establish law and government. Natural law comprises the following rules of self-preservation:

- Everybody should aim at securing peace.
- Man should be willing, in concert with others, to give up his natural rights.
- Man should keep his contracts.
- Man should show gratitude or return beneficence for beneficence.

Thus, the requirements of self-preservation itself created a sense of duty in the mind of men which prompted them to form the state. Hobbes says that there is one thing that all men fear, and that is, death. Since avoiding death is an absolute condition of satisfying their other, more various desires, all rational men should seek peace, which renders premature deaths less likely. He says, 'all man agree on this, that peace is good, and therefore also the way, or means of peace'.

According to Hobbes, in a state of nature, individuals enjoy complete liberty, including a natural right to everything, even to one another's body. The natural law was the dictate of reason. It is not the synonym of 'laws' or 'commands'. However, subsequently he argued that laws of nature were also proper laws as they were 'delivered in the word of God'. He called it the counsel of prudence. He differs with stoics on the meaning of natural law. Unlike stoics, natural laws to Hobbes do not mean internal justice, perfect morality or standard to judge existing laws. It also does not imply the existence of common good, for they merely created the common conditions which were necessary to fulfill each individual good. These laws were immutable. To him, there were nineteen natural laws which he called the *Article of Peace*. There were three important natural laws among them that are as follows:

1. Seek peace and follow it.
2. Abandon the natural rights to things.
3. Individuals must honour their contracts.

The other laws of nature suggest ways of establishing a peaceful and just society. The precept that one should act towards others the way we want them to treat us, aptly summarizes the natural laws. But Hobbes presents this precept in a different light. He says that the precept – 'Do not act towards others in a manner in which you would not want them to act towards you' is an effective method that can be used to evaluate moral conduct. He opined that natural laws were governed by reason, a faculty opposed to the natural instincts of human beings. For Hobbes, natural laws are the foundation of peace. According to him, a law of nature is 'is a precept, or general rule, found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same, and to omit that by which he thinketh it may be best preserved.' Hobbes creates a distinction between laws and rights saying that they are as different as obligation, and liberty. Thus, the two are not consistent with each other.

Similarly, Hobbes distinguishes natural law and civil law, and says that both may be revealed by each other. The main point of difference between the two is whether or not they are mutable. While civil laws can be changed by a sovereign, natural laws can never be changed by the sovereign, as they are the eternal laws of nature or God. An individual can understand natural law by employing his faculty of reason, but as far as civil law is concerned, an individual will

have to depend upon the both the ability to reason and the ability to understand and analyse natural law.

Hobbes argues that civil law is written, while natural law is unwritten. He further says that no individual can claim that he is not aware of the natural laws to justify breaking them. This is so because natural laws must be known to all who are capable of clear reasoning. He contended that breaking the civil laws cannot be justified except when the law is unclear or equivocal. However, when the law is clear, no excuse can be given for breaking the law.

Hobbes equated natural laws with moral laws. These laws included virtues such as equity, justice, mercy, humility, and other moral virtues. Another name for these laws is 'divine law', which only require reason, revelation and faith. He equated the kingdom of God with a commonwealth where God is the sovereign, and where God rules eternally. Happiness in this kingdom depends upon obedience to God or the sovereign. Therefore, it was only in God's kingdom that an eternally perfect and spiritual commonwealth may exist.

The law of nature for Hobbes meant a set of rules according to which an ideally reasonable person would pursue his own advantage, if he was perfectly conscious of all the circumstances in which he was acting and was quite unswayed by momentary impulse and prejudice. Since he assumes that by and large, men really do act in this way; the law of nature states hypothetical conditions upon which the fundamental traits of human beings allow a stable government to find it. They do not state values, but they determine casually and rationally what can be a given value in legal and moral systems.

Hobbes' concept of absolute authority is informed by placing limitations on the obligation of subjects to obey and on the proper use of law and punishment. An account of this concept was elaborated in the *Leviathan* for the first time as it was not explicated in Hobbes' earlier works such as *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic* and *De Cive*. Though these works treat certain natural rights as inalienable, the idea is not developed into anything corresponding to the 'true Liberty' of *Leviathan*. The limitations that Hobbes associates with absolute authority are discussed only marginally, if at all in all of Hobbes' other works. When Hobbes makes a case for the obligation of the sovereign towards his subjects, he is in a way revamping his political theory.

Hobbes argues that the innocent should not be punished because this involves a violation of the natural laws that demand equity from us, and that prohibit ingratitude and revenge. It is the duty of the sovereign to respect the natural rights of all his subjects.

Hobbes talks of covenant which individuals opted for to emerge out of state of nature. Question arises in mind why and how the individuals of the state of nature wanted to enter into a covenant. Since the first law of nature requires individuals to seek peace, the only way to attain it was through a covenant leading to an establishment of a state. Individuals thus agree to enter into a covenant and surrender all their powers through a contract to a third party who was not a party to the contract. This third party that became the sovereign received all the powers surrendered by the individuals. Thus, the 'Commonwealth' was constituted when the multitude of individuals were united in one person, when every person said to the other, 'I authorise and give up my right of governing myself to this man, or this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorise all his actions in like manner.'

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#### **8.4: THE COVENANT AND THE SOVEREIGN**

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As discussed earlier, individuals renounced the state of nature and entered into a covenant out of which, an independent sovereign power emerged. The sovereign power was not a party to the contract but he was a beneficiary of that. The third party, the sovereign which was a consequence of the contract was an artificial person distinct from the natural individual. Individuals gave up all their natural rights to all the things through a common consent to a person or body of persons. Thus, they confer all rights on the sovereign for enforcing the contract by using force. They authorize the sovereign and all his actions as their own. The sovereign had no obligation. The sovereign was not the common will of all, but it was only a substitute for conflicting individual will, as that would guarantee unity among multitude within a commonwealth. Hobbes said that the contract created an artifact in the sovereign authority whereby each individual gave up his right of governing himself on the condition that others did likewise. All the individuals were guaranteed basic equality with every other member by consenting to a set of rules. This implies no one possessed more rights than the other. The sovereign must treat all the individuals equally in matters of justice and while levying taxes. According to Hobbes, justice means equality in treatment and equality in rights. He also equated justice with fairness which means treating others as one would expect to be treated. The

sovereign was bestowed with all the powers. The contract was made by each with the other. The contract made by the individuals was a social and political contract. This contract created a civil society and political authority. According to Hobbes, a commonwealth or sovereign can be established by two methods – acquisition and institution. When individuals get threatened into some mission, the method of acquisition is adopted; whereas when individuals, of their own impulse and united, agree to transfer all their natural powers through a contract to a third party of one, few or many, the method of institution is adopted. Both the methods are contractual.

Thus, the social contract brings a sovereign into existence who enjoys supreme and absolute authority. Hobbes visualizes sovereign's power as undivided, unlimited, inalienable and permanent. He created unlimited political obligation. Both the state and government was created simultaneously by the contract. Everywhere, individual in the society, except the sovereign himself became his subjects. As earlier stated, all natural rights of man are surrendered to the sovereign once and for all. The individual cannot withdraw the power conferred on the sovereign, because if they chose to revive their natural rights, they will have to go back into the state of nature which is characterized by anarchy and insecurity. This is the reason why Hobbes did not grant the people the right to revolt. He condemned the civil war of 1642 because of this reason. The contract made by the individuals was perpetual and irrevocable. It means that individuals cannot change their sovereign. By creating a civil society, the individuals limited their sovereignty voluntarily. Hobbes preferred a monarch to be the sovereign. He preferred monarchy over aristocracy or democracy for the following reasons:

- i. The self-indulgence of one compared to that of many would be cheaper.
- ii. The existence of an identity of interest between the king and his subjects.
- iii. Less intrigues and plots, which were normally due to personal ambitions and envy of members of the ruling elite.

Since the state and society came into existence together through a single contract, repudiation of the contract would result not only in an overthrow of the government, but also in the disintegration of the society itself. This is the reason why Hobbes guaranteed absolute power to the sovereign beyond any question. In a way, thus, he justifies an absolute government or monarchy. However, absolute power enjoyed by the sovereign was not derived from the notion of kings. It was essentially derived through a contract based on individual consent.

He made the sovereign (the Leviathan) the sole source and interpreter of laws. He alone is the interpreter of divine and natural laws. The sovereign of Hobbes was not bound by divine and natural laws. Even the sovereign is not subject to civil laws. Like Jeremy Bentham and John Austin, Hobbes defined the laws as a command of the sovereign. Since a law was the command of the sovereign, it could be wrong, unjust or immoral. The sovereign administers as well as enforces the law. His theory of sovereignty was a forerunner of Austin's monistic theory of sovereignty. As individual surrendered all their powers, the sovereign gained absolute power. He talked about absolute sovereign power only because of his through-going individualism. The absolute sovereign represented the individuals, and was constituted by them for providing order and security, and averting the worst of all evils, namely, civil war. He didn't recognize any pre-political order of society based on kinship, religion and other associations, which normally contributed to sociability in the individual. He was quite unsympathetic towards customs, tradition and other moralities that existed outside the preview of the sovereign law. On this basis, he proclaimed that law was not derived from the social institutions of a people, but was the command of the sovereign. He ruled out private beliefs and divisions and multiplicity of authority which is antithetical to a stable political order. In his opinion, authority has to be unitary. He placed the sovereign above the law. The Leviathan sovereign of Hobbes has some rights and duties. These include governing and conducting policy; protecting civil society from dissolution; limiting or restricting freedom of expression, opinions and doctrines; controlling subject's property; reserving all conflicts through the right of judicature; making war and peace with other nation; conferring ownerships and privileges; determining artificial religion and the form of its worship; and preventing excess to subversive literature etc. The will of the sovereign is absolute and the individual has no appeal against it. Hobbes visualized a unified sovereign authority. He didn't give the subjects the right to change the form of the government. The contract was not between the individual and the sovereign. It was among the individuals themselves. Thus, as stated earlier elsewhere, the sovereign was not a party to the contract. Hence, the individuals cannot be freed from the sovereign's authority. Rather the individuals have a duty and obligation to obey the sovereign.

Hobbes' sovereign was characterized by the position rather than the person who commanded it. He provided a comprehensive theory of political absolutism and reconciled legitimate political authority with conflicting yet justified human demands. He also stipulated that for ensuring civil

peace, lesser association could exist only with the permission of the sovereign. He gave a subordinated status to the church against the sovereign. The sovereign annunciated by Hobbes stood outside the society. It was only fear and interest that supplied the reason for the existence of sovereign, but the authorized sovereign had some limits. It is bound by the law of nature to ensure peace and safety. There were some duties to be performed by the sovereign towards the subjects. One of the foremost duties was to protect the subjects from rebellion. To achieve this, Hobbes has seven injunctions:

1. Patriarchic commitment to status quo
2. Resistance to demagogues
3. Respect for the established government
4. The specific need for civil education
5. The importance of decline that was inculcated in the home
6. The law and order to abstain from violence, private revenge, dishonour to person and violation of property
7. Right attitudes would bring about the right behaviour

When Hobbes talks about authority in *Leviathan*, he is referring to absolute authority that cannot be exploited or misused on account of the limits upon its use. Absolute authority implies that the sovereign has the power to declare that any exercise of ‘true liberty’ is illegal and punishable. This can mean that the sovereigns have the power to cede certain essential rights of sovereignty or declare any absurd statements. These may be legal, but are improper. Therefore, an authoritative command that prohibits the exercise of ‘true liberty’ cannot be expected to form a proper law. If the sovereign punishes a person upon such improper law, it would be seen as an act of hostility; and denotes a recognizable misuse or abuse of the sovereign’s proper authority.

He placed a great emphasis on the fact that the sovereign is never obligated to subjects because, as a non-party to the social contract, the sovereign is understood to have remained in the state of nature, i.e., the sovereign’s authority is derived from being a third party beneficiary of the social contract. We may perhaps understand Hobbes to mean that the sovereign’s authority to use coercive power to frame the will of subjects arises in the amoral context of the state of nature. This is a context which persists even under the social contract and becomes manifest in the

various instances where he specifies that the subject's inalienable right of defence limits the sovereign's authority.

In the case of the sovereign's right to punish, he is quite clear that this right derives from the right of nature which only the sovereign retains as a non-party to the social contract. Political authority is justified by the social contract because subjects create civil society by laying down or transferring the right of nature in the proprietary sense. But since subjects can never be understood to transfer or lay down, their right of self-defence, in cases of capital punishment any obligations arising from the social contract which would require subjects to forbear acts of resistance are suspended, i.e., the condemned subject and sovereign are understood to be in a pre-civic amoral relationship.

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## 8.5: ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY

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Thomas Hobbes, a 17th-century English philosopher, is best known for his political philosophy outlined in his seminal work, "Leviathan," published in 1651. Hobbes's theory of absolute sovereignty is a central concept in his political thought, and it revolves around the idea of a social contract and the necessity of a powerful sovereign authority to maintain order and prevent the chaos that he believed would result from a state of nature.

Here are key points regarding Hobbes's theory of absolute sovereignty:

**State of Nature:** Hobbes begins his political philosophy by describing a hypothetical "state of nature," where individuals exist without a central authority. In this state, he argues, people are driven by self-interest and the desire for self-preservation, leading to a condition of perpetual conflict and insecurity.

**Social Contract:** To escape the chaos of the state of nature, Hobbes posits the need for a social contract. Individuals, out of rational self-interest, come together to form a political society and surrender some of their natural rights to a sovereign authority in exchange for security and order.

**Absolute Sovereignty:** Hobbes advocates for an absolute and undivided sovereign authority to prevent internal strife and external threats. The sovereign, according to Hobbes, must have supreme and unquestionable power over all aspects of governance, including making and enforcing laws, settling disputes, and maintaining order.

**Leviathan:** In Hobbes's metaphorical "Leviathan," which is the title of his most famous work, the sovereign is portrayed as a powerful, all-encompassing entity that is necessary to keep individuals in check and prevent the breakdown of social order. The Leviathan represents the unity and authority of the sovereign state.

**Authority and Obedience:** Hobbes argues that individuals must willingly submit to the authority of the sovereign for the social contract to be effective. The sovereign's power is absolute and unconditional, and citizens are obliged to obey its commands to avoid the return to the chaotic state of nature.

**Religious Justification:** Hobbes often provided a religious justification for absolute sovereignty. He argued that the sovereign's authority is necessary to maintain peace and prevent the "war of all against all," and therefore, submission to the sovereign is a means of fulfilling God's command to seek peace.

Hobbes's theory of absolute sovereignty had a significant impact on political philosophy and influenced subsequent thinkers. However, it also sparked debates and criticisms, especially from those who questioned the extent of the sovereign's power and the implications for individual liberties.

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## 8.6: HOBBS AS AN INDIVIDUALIST

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Thomas Hobbes, an influential philosopher of the 17th century, is often associated with a particular conception of individualism, although his views on the subject are complex and can be interpreted in various ways. Hobbes is best known for his work "Leviathan," in which he presents his theory of the social contract and the formation of the state.

Hobbes' individualism can be understood in several key ways:

**State of Nature:** Hobbes famously described the state of nature as a condition of individuals without any overarching authority. In this hypothetical scenario, every individual is naturally equal in power, leading to a state of constant conflict and war. This portrayal emphasizes the autonomy and self-interest of individuals in their pursuit of survival and self-preservation.

**Self-Interest and Rationality:** According to Hobbes, individuals are primarily motivated by self-interest and rational calculation. He argues that in the state of nature, individuals seek to maximize their own well-being, which may lead to competition and conflict. This emphasis on self-interest underscores the individualistic nature of Hobbes' philosophy.

**Rights and Liberties:** Hobbes discusses natural rights and liberties that individuals possess, such as the right to self-preservation. However, he also emphasizes the importance of relinquishing some of these rights to the sovereign authority established through the social contract. This tension between individual rights and the authority of the state reflects Hobbes' nuanced approach to individualism within the context of political organization.

**Freedom and Security:** Hobbes' conception of individualism is closely tied to his notion of freedom and security. He argues that individuals willingly enter into the social contract to secure their own safety and freedom from the chaotic state of nature. This highlights the importance of individual autonomy and agency in the formation of political societies.

Overall, Hobbes' individualism is characterized by a focus on the autonomy, self-interest, and rationality of individuals within the context of social and political organization. However, his philosophy also emphasizes the necessity of centralized authority to mitigate the inherent conflicts and ensure the security and stability of society.

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## 8.7: SUMMARY

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By making a covenant the individuals built a sovereign or third person to whom they surrendered all their rights and authorized the sovereign their all action. The sovereign was the outsider and not a part to the covenant. Hobbes made his sovereign permanent, indivisible and inalienable. Though sovereign has to act according to the natural law, he is also the sole interpreter of the law. Hobbes emphasized that sovereign would define, divine, natural or fundamental law, since it was difficult to obtain agreement among individuals. In this way, he made power, and not right the focal issue in politics. The individual has no right against the sovereign. His political philosophy is beyond all comparison, the most imposing structure that the period of the English civil wars produced. It is obvious from Hobbes' writings that the advantages of government are tangible and they must accrue quite tangibility to individuals, in

the form of peace and comfort and security of person and property. This is the only ground upon which government can be justified or even exist. A general or public good, like a public will is a figment of the imagination; there are merely individuals who desire to live and to enjoy protection for the means of life. Another main feature of his political philosophy is his individualism. Individualism is the thoroughly modern element in Hobbes' philosophy. The absolute power of the sovereign, a theory which Hobbes's name is more generally associated, was really the necessary complement of his individualism. Though Hobbes advocated for an all powerful state, it was in no way a totalitarian state. There were some duties to be performed by the sovereign, such as providing peace, order and security. Aristotle justifies the existence of the state in terms of its guarantee of a good life, but Hobbes' justification of its existence was security and safety of the individuals. Thus, Hobbes led down a systematic theory of sovereignty, law, human nature and political obligation.

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## 8.8: KEY TERMS

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- **Materialism:** The theory or attitude that physical well-being and worldly possessions constitute the greatest good and highest value in life
- **Individualism:** Belief in the primary importance of the individual and in the virtues of self-reliance and personal independence
- **State of nature:** A situation where men live or would have lived without the authority of civil law, state or political control; in the state of nature, there was no industry and no systematic production
- **Natural rights:** This is an aggregate right that covers any possible action that someone, living in the state of nature, might see as conducive to his preservation
- **Social contract:** The social contract was an 'occurrence' during which individuals came together and ceded some of their individual rights; this resulted in the establishment of society, and by extension, the state, a sovereign entity which was to protect these new rights which were now to regulate societal interactions

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## 8.9: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- Write in your own words the state of nature as described by Hobbes.
- Write a summary of the natural rights as propounded by Hobbes
- Was Hobbes an individualist or absolutist? Support your answer with valid arguments.
- Discuss the contribution of Hobbes to the field of political philosophy.
- Hobbes made the sovereign (the Leviathan) the sole source and interpreter of laws.

Discuss

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## 8.10: REFERENCES

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## **BLOCK-3: LOCKE AND ROUSSEAU**

Unit-9: Life Sketch of Locke

Unit-10: Contribution of John Locke

Unit-11: Introduction to J.J.Rousseau

Unit-12: Rousseau's Contribution to W.P.T

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## **UNIT-9: LIFE SKETCH OF JOHN LOCKE**

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### **Structure**

- 9.1 Objectives
- 9.2 Introduction
- 9.3 Life and Works of John Locke
- 9.4 Locke's Philosophy
- 9.5 Locke's views on accumulations
- 9.6 Summary
- 9.7 Key Terms
- 9.8 Self Assessment Questions
- 9.9 References

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### **9.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- Life and times of John Locke
- Locke's views on Human Nature
- Locke's views on State of Nature

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### **9.2: INTRODUCTION**

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Locke was a pre-Enlightenment thinker, whose tenets had a great impact on the period of Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason. He had a different opinion regarding natural law, mankind's natural characteristics and the purpose and structure of government.

Locke assumed all men are created equal and independent as per the natural law. Violence cannot be justified unless an individual's freedom is in peril. Locke's conception of natural liberty is a moral conception of 'perfect freedom' and equality. His view of the law of nature is normative and not descriptive. To Locke, natural rights include life, liberty and estate that are collectively known as property. He created a limited sovereign and ruled out political absolutism and advocated that a good state is the one that exists for the people who formed it and not the vice versa. The government has to be based on the consent of the people subject to the constitution and the rule of law.

Locke's theory of social contract differed from Hobbes' in many ways. Both of them agreed on only one point—persons in a state of nature would willingly come together to form a state. According to the social contract theory of Locke, people agree that their condition in the state of nature is not satisfactory, and so they agree to transfer some of their rights to a central government, while retaining.

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### **9.3: LIFE AND WORKS OF JOHN LOCKE**

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John Locke was an English philosopher and physician, widely regarded as one of the most influential Enlightenment thinkers and commonly known as the Father of Liberalism. Locke was born on 29 August 1632, in a small thatched cottage by the church in Wrington, Somerset, about 12 miles from Bristol. He was baptized the same day, as both of his parents were Puritans. Locke's father, also called John, was an attorney who served as a clerk to the Justices of the Peace in Chew Magna and as a captain of the cavalry for the Parliamentary forces during the early part of the English Civil War. His mother was Agnes Keene. Soon after Locke's birth, the family moved to the market town of Pensford, about seven miles south of Bristol, where Locke grew up in a rural Tudor house in Belluton. In 1647, Locke was sent to the prestigious Westminster School in London under the sponsorship of Alexander Popham, a Member of Parliament and John Sr.'s former commander. After completing their studies there, he was admitted to Christ Church, Oxford, in the autumn of 1652 at the age of 20. The dean of the college at the time was John Owen, vice-chancellor of the university. Although a capable student, Locke was irritated by the undergraduate curriculum of the time. He found the works of modern philosophers, such as René Descartes, more interesting than the classical material taught at the university. Through his friend Richard Lower, whom he knew from the Westminster School, Locke was introduced to medicine and the experimental philosophy being pursued at other universities and in the Royal Society, of which he eventually became a member. Locke was awarded a bachelor's degree in February 1656 and a master's degree in June 1658. He obtained a bachelor of medicine in February 1675, having studied the subject extensively during his time at Oxford and, in addition to Lower, worked with such noted scientists and thinkers as Robert Boyle, Thomas Willis, and Robert Hooke. In 1666, he met Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Ashley, who had come to Oxford seeking treatment for a liver infection. Ashley was impressed with Locke and persuaded him to become part of his retinue. He died on 28 October 1704 and is

buried in the churchyard of the village of High Laverest of Harlow in Essex, where he had lived in the household of Sir Francis Masham since 1691. Locke never married nor had children. The important major works of Locke are: A Letter Concerning Toleration (1689), A Second Letter Concerning Toleration (1690), A Third Letter for Toleration (1692), An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1689), Two Treatises of Government (1689/90), Some Considerations on the Consequences of the Lowering of Interest and the Raising of the Value of Money (1691), Some Thoughts Concerning Education (1693), A Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity (1695).

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#### **9.4: LOCKE'S PHILOSOPHY**

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In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, Locke's Two Treatises were rarely cited. Historian Julian Hoppit said of the book, "except among some Whigs, even as a contribution to the intense debate of the 1690s it made little impression and was generally ignored until 1703 (though in Oxford in 1695 it was reported to have made 'a great noise'), John Kenyon, in his study of British political debate from 1689 to 1720, has remarked that Locke's theories were "mentioned so rarely in the early stages of the [Glorious] Revolution, up to 1692, and even less thereafter, unless it was to heap abuse on them" and that "no one, including most Whigs, [were] ready for the idea of a notional or abstract contract of the kind adumbrated by Locke. In contrast, Kenyon adds that Algernon Sidney's Discourses Concerning Government were "certainly much more influential than Locke's Two Treatises.

In the 50 years after Queen Anne's death in 1714, the Two Treatises were reprinted only once (except in the collected works of Locke). However, with the rise of American resistance to British taxation, the Second Treatise of Government gained a new readership; it was frequently cited in the debates in both America and Britain. The first American printing occurred in 1773 in Boston. Locke exercised a profound influence on political philosophy, in particular on modern liberalism. Michael Zuckert has argued that Locke launched liberalism by tempering Hobbesian absolutism and separating the realms of Church and State. He had a strong influence on Voltaire who called him "le sage Locke." His arguments concerning liberty and the social contract later influenced the written works of Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and other Founding Fathers of the United States. One passage from the Second Treatise is reproduced verbatim in the Declaration of Independence, the reference to a "long train of

abuses." Such was Locke's influence that Thomas Jefferson wrote: "Bacon, Locke, and Newton... I consider them as the three greatest men that have ever lived, without any exception, and as having laid the foundation of those superstructures which have been raised in the Physical and Moral sciences".

However, Locke's influence may have been even more profound in the realm of epistemology. Locke redefined subjectivity, or self, leading intellectual historians such as Charles Taylor and Jerrold Seigel to argue that Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689/90) marks the beginning of the modern Western conception of the self. Locke's theory of association heavily influenced the subject matter of modern psychology. At the time, Locke's recognition of two types of ideas, simple and complex and, more importantly, their interaction through associations—inspired other philosophers, such as David Hume and George Berkeley, to revise and expand this theory and apply it to explain how humans gain knowledge in the physical world.

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## **9.5: LOCKE'S VIEWS ON ACCUMULATIONS**

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According to Locke, unused property is wasteful and an offense against nature, but, with the introduction of "durable" goods, men could exchange their excessive perishable goods for those which would last longer and thus not offend the natural law. In his view, the introduction of money marked the culmination of this process, making possible the unlimited accumulation of property without causing waste through spoilage. He also includes gold or silver as money because they may be "hoarded up without injury to anyone," as they do not spoil or decay in the hands of the possessor. In his view, the introduction of money eliminates the limits of accumulation. Locke stresses that inequality has come about by tacit agreement on the use of money, not by the social contract establishing civil society or the law of land regulating property. Locke is aware of the problem posed by unlimited accumulation but does not consider it his task. He just implies that government would function to moderate the conflict between the unlimited accumulation of property and more nearly equal distribution of wealth; he does not identify which principles the government should apply to solve this problem. However, not all elements of his thought form a consistent whole. For example, the labour theory of value in the *Two Treatises of Government* stands side by side with the demand-and-supply theory of value developed in a letter he wrote titled *Some Considerations on the Consequences of the Lowering*

of Interest and the Raising of the Value of Money. Moreover, Locke anchors property in labour but in the end, upholds the unlimited accumulation of wealth.

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## 9.6: SUMMARY

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Locke begins his political theory in the Second Treatise of Government (1689) with the postulation of the divinely granted liberty of all individuals, understood in terms of the absolute right to preserve one's life and to lay claim to the goods one requires for survival. According to British political philosopher Professor Vaughan, Everything in Locke's system revolves around the individual; everything is disposed of to ensure the sovereignty of the individual. Locke is considered a through-going individualist. He is commonly known as the Father of Liberalism. Locke wrote as many as 35 books dealing with different walks of life. The main books which provide us with an insight into his philosophy and political thought include Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690), His Letters on Toleration (1689, 1690, 1692, and 1706), Two Treatises of Government (1690) and Fundamental Constitution Concerning Carolina (1706).

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## 9.7: KEY TERMS

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- **Right to Revolution:** Locke asserted that individuals have the right to resist and overthrow a government that violates their natural rights and fails to fulfill its obligations. This concept became influential in later revolutionary movements.
- **Property:** Locke's concept of property extends beyond material possessions to include an individual's right to the products of their labor. Property is a natural right and a key component of a just society.
- **Labor Theory of Property:** Locke's theory that ownership of property is acquired through one's labor and productive efforts. If an individual mixes their labor with resources from the state of nature, they gain a property right in those resources.
- **Toleration:** Locke wrote extensively on religious toleration, arguing for the separation of church and state and the acceptance of diverse religious beliefs within society. He believed that the state should not interfere in matters of conscience.
- **Glorious Revolution:** The political events in England in 1688, during which James II was replaced by William of Orange without bloodshed. Locke's ideas on the right to resist tyranny played a role in justifying this revolution.

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## 9.8: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- Discuss the most important theme of Locke's political philosophy.
- Write an essay on Locke's life and works.

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## 9.9: REFERENCES

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## **UNIT-10: CONTRIBUTION OF JOHN LOCKE**

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### **Structure**

- 10.1 Objectives
- 10.2 Introduction
- 10.3 Locke's State of Nature
- 10.4 Social Contract Theory of Locke
- 10.5 Criticism of Locke's Social Contract Theory
- 10.6 Consent and Political Obligation
- 10.7 Locke as an individualist
- 10.8 Summary
- 10.9 Key Terms
- 10.10 Self Assessment Questions
- 10.11 References

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### **10.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- Locke's social contract theory
- Locke's views on state of nature
- Locke as an individualist

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### **10.2: INTRODUCTION**

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John Locke (1632–1704) was an influential English philosopher and political theorist whose ideas profoundly shaped modern political thought and had a significant impact on the development of liberal democracy. Born in Wrington, Somerset, England, Locke lived during a time of political and social upheaval, including the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution. Locke is best known for his works, particularly "Two Treatises of Government" (1690), where he articulated his political philosophy. In this seminal work, Locke addressed the nature of government, the origins of political authority, and the rights of individuals in the context of social contracts.

Locke was born on 29 August 1632, in a small thatched cottage by the church in Wrington, Somerset, about 12 miles from Bristol. He was baptised the same day, as both of his parents were Puritans. Locke's father, also named John, was an attorney who served as clerk to the Justices of the Peace in Chew Magna and as a captain of cavalry for the Parliamentary forces during the early part of the English Civil War. His mother was Agnes Keene. Soon after Locke's birth, the family moved to the market town of Pensford, about seven miles south of Bristol, where Locke grew up in a rural Tudor house in Belluton. In 1647, Locke was sent to the prestigious Westminster School in London under the sponsorship of Alexander Popham, a member of Parliament and John Sr.'s former commander. At the age of 16 he was at school just half a mile away from the execution of Charles I; however, the boys were not allowed to go and watch. After completing studies at Westminster, he was admitted to Christ Church, Oxford, in the autumn of 1652 at the age of 20. The dean of the college at the time was John Owen, vice-chancellor of the university. Although a capable student, Locke was irritated by the undergraduate curriculum of the time. He found the works of modern philosophers, such as René Descartes, more interesting than the classical material taught at the university. Through his friend Richard Lower, whom he knew from the Westminster School, Locke was introduced to medicine and the experimental philosophy being pursued at other universities and in the Royal Society, of which he eventually became a member. Locke was awarded a bachelor's degree in February 1656 and a master's degree in June 1658. He obtained a bachelor of medicine in February 1675, having studied the subject extensively during his time at Oxford and, in addition to Lower, worked with such noted scientists and thinkers as Robert Boyle, Thomas Willis and Robert Hooke. In 1666, he met Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Ashley, who had come to Oxford seeking treatment for a liver infection. Ashley was impressed with Locke and persuaded him to become part of his retinue.

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### **10.3: LOCKE'S STATE OF NATURE**

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As we turn to the state of nature argument of John Locke, we find a very different view indeed. Locke's conception of natural liberty is a moral conception of 'perfect freedom' and equality. His view of the law of nature is normative rather than descriptive—a discussion of what people living up to their duty to God, ought to do. State of nature to John Locke, is not gloomy and pessimistic. In Locke's view, it is not a state of constant warfare. He points out that it is a state

of 'peace, goodwill, mutual assistance and preservation'. He further says it is a state of liberty, not a state of license. The state of nature is a state of equality amongst men. Locke maintains 'The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges everyone, and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that all being equal and independent, no one will harm another in his life, health, liberty or possession; for all men being the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker; all servants of one sovereign Master sent into the world by His order and about His business; they are His property'. Unlike Hobbes, Locke says that the majority of the people of this stage obey the law of nature. The law of nature, to Locke is the law of the inward morality. Individuals to Locke are rational beings. However, Locke advocates there are few persons who do not follow the rules of morality and give priority to their self-interest. It becomes very difficult to deal with such offenders as in the state of nature, there is no established authority. If everybody thinks that he is the judge over his own case, justice will not be done to anybody. Thus, the state of nature becomes inconvenient to stay with. To overcome this problem, individual decides to renounce the state of nature and enter into a civil and political society by making a contract. Though individual is not controlled by any superior power, he is subject to the law of nature.

Individual derives natural rights from the law of nature. To Locke, natural rights include life, liberty and estate, which are collectively known as property. The individual has an idea about the law of nature through his power of reason. It is this power of reason, which directs them towards their 'proper interest'. At the same time, individuals have some natural rights to perform. According to Locke, liberty is not the freedom to do what one chooses but to act within the bounds of law of nature. Locke points out that personal independence and freedom is fundamental human right. No one has a right to coerce and dominate others in a state of nature. Everyone has an equal right to one's natural freedom, without being subjected to the will or authority of any other man. Locke clarified that the law of nature is dictated by reason. Since rights and duties are derived from the laws of nature, the most important of these is the right to hold others responsible for a breach of the law and to punish them accordingly. Though Locke categorically rejects the right of a person to kill oneself, he grants the right to inflict penalties, including the death penalty, on others who violate the law in general or if another person's life is threatened. Locke explicitly rejects the right of the individual to commit suicide and murder.

The conception of natural rights and theory of property is one of the important themes in Locke's political philosophy. According to Locke, natural right forms in the root of morality implanted in human conscience. He points out that natural right consists in the perfect freedom and equality of every man. Not only to preserve his property (life, liberty and estate) against the injuries and attempts of other men, but to judge and punish the breaches of natural law committed by others. However, when individuals decide to enter into a contract and thereby establish a political society, they surrender their natural rights to be judges. Now, that power rests with the community but the natural rights to life, liberty and property still belong to them. Locke points out that by human reason and by revelation, it is apparent that the earth and its fruits belong to God and that God gave them to the human inhabitants in common to enjoy. He also argues that it is human labour which distinguishes what is privately owned from what is commonly owned. Labour is the unquestioned property of the labourer and by mixing his labour with a piece of land, an individual acquires the right to whatever he makes. The stress is on what human beings make of the earth, how and what they leave for prosperity. He insists, God has given human beings the earth to make it a better place, full of conveniences of life by entrepreneurship, hard work and reason. In other words, Locke emphasized that human beings were trustees or stewards who could appropriate and consume by being industrious and creative without wasting, squandering, spoiling or destroying.

Locke in his depiction of state of nature states that individuals had initially a right to appropriation which was limited to three things. Firstly, an individual could appropriate only that much he needed, and would leave enough goods for others. Secondly, an individual had a right only to that much for which he had mixed the labour of his body and the work of his hand. Thirdly, labour not only created property but also determined its value. Locke argued that it was labour that made the world different by creating conveniences and increasing productivity. In the state of nature, Locke argues the individual had perfect freedom to dispose of their possessions, and persons, as they thought fit. According to Locke, property was a natural right derived from natural law. It was there before the formation of government. He concedes individual rights to do as they pleased within the bounds of the law of nature. Thus, rights were not absolute and hence limited to the extent that they did not harm themselves or others. As a result of the introduction of money, one could possess more regardless of the use of the product and hoard without injuring anyone. It also divorced right from convenience. Locke states that property

represented human entitlement and, in fact, the great and chief end of men's uniting into Commonwealth and putting themselves under government is the preservation and protection of their property. It was the social character of property that enabled Locke to defend a minimal state with limited government and individual rights and reject the hereditary principle of government. It was the protection of liberties and property that men entered into an agreement instructing the government to recognize these rights and embody in a statutory form. Locke also justifies and defends class differentials in right and rationality and wage, in the process of providing the moral basis for capitalist society. It is an attempt to inform the proper structure of government and above all to develop a theory of political obligation from a consideration of what rational people would invent if they were living without a government and wanted to devise one.

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#### **10.4: SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY OF LOCKE**

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Having described the state of nature as a condition of peace and mutual head and having defined natural rights, Locke next proceeded to derive civil society from the consent of its member. The consent, by which each person agrees with the other to form a Body Politic, obligated him to submit to the majority. The compulsion to constitute a civil society was to protect and preserve freedom and to enlarge it. The state of nature was one of liberty and equality but it was also one where peace was not secured being constantly upset by the 'corruption and viciousness of degenerate men'. It led three important wants: the want of an established, settled, known law; the want of a known and indifferent judge and the want of an executive power to enforce just decisions. Through a contract, individuals consented to submit to majority rule and organized themselves as a community or civil society. Locke says men being by nature free, equal and independent, none can be put out of this estate (state of nature) and subjected to political power of another without his own consent. After the formation of civil society, this common consent becomes the consent of the majority. As a result of the contract, all men unanimously agreed to incorporate themselves in one body and conducted their affairs by opinion of the majority. They surrendered their powers partially, namely, the three specific rights that constituted the natural right to enforce the laws of nature. At first, individuals established a civil society, and then a government to act as a judge in the nature of a fiduciary power for promoting certain ends. Thus, Locke envisioned two contracts, one by which the civil society is established and the other which creates the government. According to Jeremy Waldron, a university professor of law &

philosophy at the New York University School of Law, contract and consent have three stages in Locke's description: first, man must agree unanimously to come together as a community and pull their natural powers show that they can act together to uphold one another's right; second, the members of this community must agree by a majority vote to set up legislative and other institutions; third, the owners of property in a society must agree, either personally or through their representatives to what ever taxes are imposed on the people. In Locke's theory, state and society were created in different steps. In the first stage, civil society was found and, in the second stage, only government was established. This is the reason why, when a government is dissolved, society remains intact. By drawing a distinction between the process of formation of society and the state, Locke placed, government under the control of society, so there is no scope for absolutism unlike Hobbes. The relationship between society and the government is expressed by the idea of trust because it obviates making the government a party to the contract and giving it an independent status and authority. Within the government, the legislative power was supreme, since it was the representative of the people, having the power to make laws. There was also an executive which concedes of usually one person who has the power to enforce the law. According to Locke, the executive which included the judicial power had to be always in session. It enjoyed prerogatives. Locke also advocated for the separation of power between the executive and legislature. Besides the legislature and executive, there was a third wing of the government, which is called the federative power. It means the power to make treaties and conduct external relation. Locke created a limited sovereign and ruled out political absolutism. He advocated that a good state is the one which existed for the people who formed it and not the vice versa. The government has to be based on the consent of the people subject to the constitution and the rule of law. It will act as a trustee of the people's right. Powers of the government are derived from the people. Natural laws and individual rights act as a limitation on the government's power. Locke advocated that supreme power resided in the people, and the people as a community had the inalienable right to constitute and dismiss a government. Locke justifies resistance to unjust political power. After overthrowing government, individuals can establish a new one.

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## **10.5: CRITICISM OF LOCKE'S SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY**

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Locke's handling of property is usually thought to be among his most significant inputs in political thought. However, it is also one of the features of his thinking that has been most

profoundly condemned. There are essential debates over what precisely Locke was trying to achieve with his theory. According to C.B. Macpherson, an influential Canadian political scientist, Locke was a supporter of unrestricted capital accumulation. According to Macpherson, Locke set limits on the amassing of property in the state of nature. They are three such limits and they have been enumerated below:

- One may only be suitable as much as one can use before it spoils
- One must leave ‘enough and as good’ for others (the adequacy restriction)
- One may (allegedly) only accumulate property through one’s own labour Macpherson states that as the debate advances, each of these limits is surpassed.

The creation of money leads to the spoilage limit ceasing to be a significant restriction since value can now be stored in a medium that does not expire. The adequacy restriction is also surpassed as the formation of private property augments productivity in such a way that even the landless who cannot obtain land will have more opportunities to gain what one needs for survival. Macpherson states that the ‘enough and as good’ prerequisite is itself just a derivative of a previous principle guaranteeing the chance to acquire, through labour, the life’s necessities. Macpherson goes on to state that Locke did not truly believe in the third restriction at all. Although Locke seems to make labour the foundation of property rights when he suggests that one can only possess property in what one has individually laboured on, Locke also evidently recognizes that even in the state of nature, ‘the Turfs my Servant has cut’ can become my property. Locke thus was undoubtedly hinting towards the alienation of labour. Unsurprisingly, Macpherson also critiques the ‘possessive individualism’ that Locke’s theory of property stands for. According to Macpherson, its consistency depends upon separating society along different classes and also on the assumption of differential rationality between the capitalist class and wage-labourers. These restraints force Locke to include only the holders of property as the voting population of society.

Macpherson’s analysis of Locke has been criticized by many people. According to Professor of Politics at the University of Oxford Alan Ryan, in Locke’s view, property comprised of life, liberty and estate; thus even the landless could still be associates of political society. The most important critique of Macpherson’s analysis of Locke was provided by James Tully.

## **Tully's arguments**

James Tully, teacher and Canadian philosopher of civic freedom and political struggles, critiqued Macpherson's understanding of Locke. Tully pointed out that the *First Treatise* specifically contains a 'duty of assistance' to people who have no means of survival. While such a responsibility is consistent with requiring the poor to work for low salaries, it does negate the assertion that those who have capital have no social duties to others.

Tully also wanted a primary reinterpretation of Locke's hypothesis. Preceding accounts had highlighted on the claim that since individuals own their own labour, when they combine their labour with that which is disowned it turns out to be their property. Harvard professor of politics Robert Nozick criticized this suggestion by giving the example of mixing tomato juice with the sea. According to Robert Nozick, if he spills his can of tomato juice in the sea in such a way that the molecules of tomato juice mix with the sea that does not mean that he will own the sea. When we combine what we own with what we do not, why should we believe we gain property as an alternative of losing it? On Tully's explanation, focus on the combining metaphor misses Locke's stress on what he calls the 'workmanship model.' Locke considered that makers have property rights regarding what they make just like God has property rights as regards human beings since he is their maker. Human beings are crafted in the image of God and share with God, though to a much smaller degree, the capability to shape and mould the physical setting in line with a rational pattern or plan.

Waldron has criticized this explanation by saying that it would make the rights of human makers supreme in the same way that God's right over his creation is supreme. Professor of Philosophy at Duke University Gopal Sreenivasan supports Tully's argument against Waldron's reply by asserting a difference between creating and making. According to Sreenivasan, absolute property right can only be produced by creating, and only God can create. On the other hand, making is comparable to creating and constructs an analogous right which may be seen as weaker.

Another contentious part of Tully's analysis is his explanation of the sufficiency condition and its inferences. For Tully, Locke's argument becomes acceptable only because of the sufficiency argument. Since Locke's assertion begins with the supposition that all individuals own the world, individual property is only justified if it is proved that no one has been made worse off

by the deceit. According to Locke's supposition, in conditions where there is much water or land accessible, an individual's taking some part of it does no harm to others. For Locke, where such conditions are not met, those who are denied access to land do have a lawful objection to its appropriation. In Tully's analysis, Locke recognized that when land becomes limited, the previous rights acquired by labour no longer holds since 'enough and as good' is no longer available for others. Therefore, once land becomes limited, property can only become legal if a political society is established.

Waldron, unlike other critics like Tully and Macpherson, claims that Locke did not distinguish a sufficiency condition at all. Rather, Waldron suggests that a sufficiency rather than an obligatory condition is formulated by Locke when he states that labour manufactures a title to property 'at least where there is enough, and as good left in common for others'. Waldron sees Locke to be making a descriptive statement and not a normative one, about the situation that happens to have at first existed. Waldron also says that in the text 'enough and as good' is not presented as a constraint and is not grouped with other constraints. Waldron believes that the situation would lead Locke to the absurd conclusion that in conditions of scarcity everyone must be malnourished to death since no one would be capable to acquire universal consent and any appropriation would make others worse off.

On the other hand Sreenivasan defends Tully's analysis and suggests that Locke's repetitive use of 'enough and as good' shows that the phrase is carrying on some real work in the debate. Sreenivasan states that it is the only way Locke can be thought to have offered some explanation to the fact that the consent of all is required to give good reason for appropriation in the state of nature. If others are not hurt, they have no grounds to point and can be thought to consent, while if they are hurt, it is unlikely to think of them as consenting. However, Sreenivasan does have some significant differences with Tully. Sreenivasan believes that 'enough and as good' suggests 'enough and as good opportunity for securing one's preservation,' and not 'enough and as good of the same commodity (such as land)' as Tully suggests. This results in suggesting that Locke's account of property is less essential because it does not maintain that Locke thought that the point of his hypothesis was to show that all original property rights were unacceptable at the point where political communities were created. Sreenivasan himself acknowledges that such an assessment has an obvious drawback; it burdens Locke with a faulty argument. Those who just have the opportunity to labour for

others at survival wages no longer have the freedom that individuals had before shortage to benefit from the full surplus of value they generate. Furthermore, the equality of access to the materials from which products are produced are no longer enjoyed by poor labourers. For Sreenivasan, Locke cannot properly resolve the issue of how property rights for individuals can be created without consent in a situation where everything is first owned by all people.

The Commonwealth Professor of Philosophy and Law A.J. Simmons favoured Waldron's analysis and argued against Tully and Sreenivasan while rejecting the workmanship model. According to Simmons, Locke thinks that God had all rights as he was the creator while humans have diverse restricted rights as they were just trustees and not makers. Simmons based this statement on his reading of two different arguments, which are as follows:

- The first argument for Simmons justifies property based on God's will and essential human needs
- The second based on 'mixing' labour

According to the previous argument, in any case some property rights can be justified by showing that a system allowing appropriation of property without approval has useful consequences for the conservation of mankind. According to Simmons, this argument is over-determined, i.e., it can be understood either theologically or as an easy rule-consequentialist argument. With respect to the latter view, Simmons takes labour not to be a substance that is actually 'mixed' but rather as a purposive activity focused at satisfying requirements and conveniences of life. Like Sreenivasan, Simmons views this as flowing from a prior right of people to guard their survival, but Simmons also adds a prior right to self-government. Labour can make claims to private property since private property makes individuals more autonomous and they are able to govern their own actions. For Simmons, Locke's assertion is eventually flawed since Locke undervalues the extent to which wage labour would make the poor dependent on the rich, undermining self-government. He also supports those who find Locke's appeal to consent to the introduction of money insufficient to validate the very imbalanced property holdings that now exist.

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## 10.6: CONSENT AND POLITICAL OBLIGATION

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The idea of consent plays an extremely important role in Locke's formulation of political philosophy. Locke begins his analysis with the supposition of individuals in a state of nature where they are not beholden to a universal lawful authority that has the power to legislate or arbitrate disagreements. From such a situation which is natural and independent, Locke emphasizes individual approval as the method through which political societies are crafted with individuals joining those societies. According to Locke, the law of nature gives all people certain some common obligations and rights; however, Locke asserted that unique obligations only come about when one willingly undertakes them. Locke claims that one can only turn out to be a full part of society by an act of express consent. The text on Locke's theory of consent tends to focus on how Locke does or does not effectively answer the following issue: only a few people consent to their governments and thus almost no government can claim to be legitimate. This is a problematic formulation because it totally opposes Locke's intention.

Locke's tries to solve this issue through his principle of tacit consent. Just by walking along the roads of a country an individual gives tacit consent to the government and agrees to abide by it while living in its region. For Locke, this explains why resident aliens have a compulsion to follow the laws of the state where they reside, although this is only true while the aliens live there. According to Locke, the possession of property results in an even stronger bond, since the original proprietor of the property everlastingly puts the property under the authority of the commonwealth. When children inherit the property of their parents, they implicitly approve the authority of the commonwealth over the said property. The issue that arises here is whether the legacy of property should be looked upon as tacit or express consent. There are two explanations to this issue. In one explanation, by accepting property, Locke believes a person becomes a full member of society, which means that he must regard this as an act of express consent. The American Professor of political science Ruth W Grant proposes that Locke's ideal would have been an unambiguous mechanism of society at which point adults would give express consent and this would be a requirement of inheriting property. According to the second explanation, Locke identified that people inheriting property did not in the course of doing so make any unambiguous declaration about their political compulsion.

Nevertheless, this debate is solved, as there will be many people who have never given express consent in any current or earlier existing society, and thus some version of tacit consent is required to explain how governments could still be lawful. For Simmons, the idea of just walking on a street or inheriting land being considered as an example of a ‘deliberate, voluntary alienating of rights’ is hard to believe. According to Simmons, it is one thing for an individual to consent by actions more willingly than words, however, it is completely erroneous to suggest that an individual has consented without being aware that he has done so. To require a person to leave behind all of his property and emigrate to keep away from giving tacit consent is to make a situation where continued residence is not a free and intentional choice. Simmons agrees with Locke in that real consent is required for political obligation; but Simmons disagrees about whether most people actually have given that kind of approval. For Simmons, Locke’s arguments results in the direction of ‘philosophical anarchism,’; the point is that most people do not have a moral compulsion to follow the government, although Locke himself would not have claimed so.

The political theorist Hannah Pitkin approaches Locke very differently. Pitkin declares that the reason of Locke’s argument makes consent far less important in practice than it might emerge. According to her, tacit consent is certainly a watering down of the idea of consent, but Locke can afford to do this because essentially his idea of what governments need to be are based on natural law and not on consent. Pitkin asserts that if consent were really foundational in Locke’s scheme, we would be able to find out the legitimate powers of any given government by discovering what agreement the original founders signed. Pitkin believes that in Locke’s view the power and variety of governments are based on and decided by natural law. What actually matters, therefore, is not preceding acts of consent but the superiority of the current government, whether it matches to what natural law calls for. For instance, Pitkin states that Locke does not believe that walking the streets or inheriting property in a country which has an oppressive regime automatically means approval of that regime. Thus, it is the superiority of the government, not acts of actual approval that ultimately decide whether a government is lawful. Simmons disagrees with this explanation by Pitkin. According to Simmons, Pitkin’s explanation does not take into account of the fact that in a lot of places Locke asserts that a person attains political obligations only by his own approval.

John Dunn, the emeritus Professor of Political Theory at King's College, adopts another different approach. Dunn suggests that it is archaic to read into Locke a modern formation of what 'consent' is. In a modern formation the idea of consent is that consent is really consent only if it is premeditated and intended. On the other hand, Locke's conception of consent was far broader. In Locke's view, if the public is 'not unwilling' it may be termed as consent. Thus for Locke, voluntary acquiescence is all that is needed. To prove his assertions, Dunn provides several examples of consent like 'consenting' to the use of money. Simmons disagrees with Dunn's explanation and argues that such a reading of Locke's idea of consent overlooks the examples where Locke does mention consent as a premeditated choice.

A question that can be linked to the above interpretation has to do with the degree of one's obligation once consent has been provided. The interpretive school influenced by the political philosopher Leo Strauss stresses the supremacy of preservation. As the responsibilities of natural law are applicable only when our preservation is not risked, then our compulsions end in instances where our preservation is directly threatened. This has significant repercussions if we think of a soldier who is being sent on a task where death is the most probable possibility. Grant asserts that in Locke's view a soldier who deserts from this task can be sentenced to death. Grant thus suggests that for Locke the laws of desertion are perfectly lawful in the sense that they can be perfectly implemented (something Hobbes accepts) and that there is an ethical obligation on the part of soldiers to sacrifice his life for his country or for the common good (something Hobbes rejects). In Grant's view, Locke believes that our acts of consent can really extend to cases where living up to our obligations will threaten our lives. It is for this reason that the choice to join a political society is undeviating: a society needs protection and if public can dissolve their consent to help guard a society when it is attacked, the act of consent that is made when one joins a political society would become null and void since the political society would fail at the point when it is most needed. In Grant's interpretation then, Locke is suggesting that when individuals join a political society, the danger of dying in the struggle is part of the calculation that individuals make when they take the 'premeditated' decision to join a political society. Grant also believes Locke identifies a duty based on reciprocity because others also risk their own lives.

As you can see, many of these interpretations of Locke are based on Locke's idea of consent to explain the question of political obligation. A different approach to Locke asks what

role consent plays in deciding, here and now, the lawful ends that governments can follow. The debate between Martin Seliger and B.W. Kendall captures an aspect of this debate. For Seliger, Locke is more or less a constitutionalist; in this interpretation, a constitution is formulated by the consent of the public as part of the establishment of the commonwealth. On the other hand, for Kendall, Locke gives pretty much unrestrained power to majorities; in this interpretation the people set up a legislature that governs by majority vote. Another opinion is given by the American Professor of Political Science Alex Tuckness. Tuckness asserts that Locke was flexible on the issue of what role consent plays in deciding the lawful ends that governments can follow. In Tuckness' view, Locke gave the public considerable flexibility in constitutional planning.

Another part of the debate centers on ends rather than institutions. In his *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke declares that a government's power should be restricted to the common or the public good. According to Locke, the government's power has 'no other end but preservation' and thus cannot validate killing, enslaving or plundering of residents. For libertarians like Nozick, this assertion by Locke suggests that the duty of the government for Locke is only to protect individuals from the violation of their rights. A different explanation, advanced in several ways by Tuckness, emphasizes that in the following sentences Locke stresses on the formulation of natural law. Tuckness highlights Locke's declaration that, 'as much as possible' humankind needs to be conserved. Thus according to Tuckness' explanation, for Locke, the duty of the government is restricted to fulfilling the aims of natural law; these aims entail both positive and negative goals. The power to encourage the common good according to this explanation can be extended to include planned increases of population, the development of a military, the consolidation of the economy and infrastructure, etc., only if these actions are indirectly helpful to accomplish the higher goal of preserving society. This interpretation helps explain Locke's assertion that the right remedy for the risk of foreign attack would be the government backing for 'arms, riches and multitude of citizens'.

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## 10.7: LOCKE AS AN INDIVIDUALIST

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According to British political philosopher Professor Vaughan, Everything in Locke's system revolves around the individual; everything is disposed of to ensure the sovereignty of the individual. Locke is considered a through-going individualist.

The main features of the individualist philosophy of Locke can be summed up as follows:

**Firstly**, he accords a fundamental position to the natural rights in his scheme and asserts that the natural rights of life, liberty, and property belong to the individual due to the fact of his very personality. In other words, he is of the view that natural rights are before the state.

**Secondly**, Locke sought rights and freedom for all men without distinction. The state was created for the protection of natural rights and the happiness of the individual.

**Thirdly**, Locke assigns to the state purely negative functions. It interferes only when the rights of the individual are endangered. Otherwise, the individual is left completely free to pursue his moral, material, and intellectual pursuits.

**Fourthly**, Locke's view on the property further confirms him as an individualist. He says that property that was initially owned in common becomes private property of an individual after he used his labour with it or imparts a bit of his individuality to the common object. This is probably the best way to emphasize the importance and worth of the individual.

**Fifthly**, Locke displays his strong individualist bias in his views on revolution. He authorizes the individual to rise in and revolt against the state if it fails to carry out its part of its obligations.

**Sixthly**, his faith in the pleasure and pain theory, which forms the starting point of his philosophy, further points to his individualism.

**Seventhly**, Locke also advocates the division of power, because he was convinced that it was an essential pre-condition for the preservation of individual freedom which adds to his list of individualistic philosophies.

Locke begins his political theory in the *Second Treatise of Government* (1689) with the postulation of the divinely granted liberty of all individuals, understood in terms of the absolute right to preserve one's life and to lay claim to the goods one requires for survival. Again arguing against the patriarchal doctrine of Sir Robert Filmer, Locke insists that no natural basis, neither

paternity nor descent, justifies the submission of one person to another. Rather, each individual is the proprietor of his or her physical and mental talents, abilities, and energies. The individual thus constitutes the basic unit of social and political analysis for Locke, who is sometimes considered the proponent of the doctrine of possessive individualism par excellence.

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## 10.8: SUMMARY

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Locke's conception of natural liberty is a moral conception of 'perfect freedom' and equality. His view of the law of nature is normative rather than descriptive. According to Locke, the law of nature is the law of inward morality and all the individuals are rational beings. John Locke thinks that natural rights include life, liberty and estate. These things are collectively known as property. The conception of natural rights and theory of property is one of the important themes in Locke's political philosophy. According to Locke, natural right forms in the root of morality implanted in human conscience. He points out that natural right consists in the perfect freedom and equality of every man. According to Jeremy Waldron, contract and consent have three stages in Locke's description: first, man must agree unanimously to come together as a community and pull their natural powers show that they can act together to uphold one another's right; second, the members of this community must agree by a majority vote to set up legislative and other institutions; third, the owners of property in a society must agree, either personally or through their representatives to whatever taxes are imposed on the people. Locke's treatment of property is generally thought to be among his most important contributions in political thought, but it is also one of the aspects of his thought that has been most heavily criticized.

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## 10.9: KEY TERMS

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- **Empiricism:** Locke was a proponent of empiricism, emphasizing the role of sensory experience and observation in gaining knowledge. He argued against innate ideas and believed that all knowledge comes from sensory impressions.
- **Natural Rights:** Locke proposed the idea of natural rights, asserting that individuals have inherent rights to life, liberty, and property. These rights form the basis of his social contract theory.

- **Social Contract:** Locke's social contract theory posits that individuals enter into a political society by mutual consent to secure their natural rights and protect their interests. Governments are established to serve the people and can be dissolved if they fail in their duties.
- **State of Nature:** Locke's hypothetical state of nature is a condition without government, where individuals enjoy natural freedom but face potential conflicts. The establishment of political societies is seen as a way to mitigate the challenges of the state of nature.
- **Limited Government:** Locke advocated for a limited government with defined powers, emphasizing the protection of individual rights. He argued that if a government oversteps its bounds or becomes tyrannical, citizens have the right to resist and even overthrow it.

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## 10.10: SELF ASSESMENT QUESTIONS

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- Discuss John Locke's contribution to the Western Political Thought.
- Write an essay on Social Contract Theory of John Locke.
- Find out the difference between Thomas Hobbes and John Locke.

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## 10.11: REFERNCES

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## UNIT-11: INTRODUCTION TO J.J.ROUSSEAU

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- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 Introduction
- 11.3 Life and Works of Rousseau
- 11.4 Critique of Enlightenment
- 11.5 Rousseau's idea on Sovereignty
- 11.6 Summary
- 11.7 Key Terms
- 11.8 Self Assessment Questions
- 11.9 References

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### 11.1: OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- Life and works of Rousseau
- Rousseau's idea on sovereignty

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### 11.2: INTRODUCTION

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Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was an influential Genevan philosopher, writer, and political theorist during the Enlightenment era. His ideas had a profound impact on political philosophy, education, and the development of modern political thought. Rousseau's works laid the groundwork for the French Revolution and inspired subsequent generations of thinkers. Rousseau was born in Geneva, which was at the time a city-state and a Protestant associate of the Swiss Confederacy (now a canton of Switzerland). Since 1536, Geneva had been a Huguenot republic and the seat of Calvinism. Five generations before Rousseau, his ancestor Didier, a bookseller who may have published Protestant tracts, had escaped persecution from French Catholics by fleeing to Geneva in 1549, where he became a wine merchant. Rousseau was proud that his family, of the *moyen* order (or middle-class), had voting rights in the city. Throughout his life, he generally signed his books "Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Citizen of Geneva". The citizens were a minority of the population when compared to the immigrants ("inhabitants") and their descendants ("natives"). There was much political debate within

Geneva, extending down to the tradespeople. Much discussion was over the idea of the sovereignty of the people, of which the ruling class oligarchy was making a mockery. In 1707, a democratic reformer named Pierre Fatio protested this situation, saying "A sovereign that never performs an act of sovereignty is an imaginary being". He was shot by order of the Little Council. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's father, Isaac, was not in the city then, but Jean-Jacques's grandfather supported Fatio and was penalized for it. Rousseau's father, Isaac Rousseau, followed his grandfather, father and brothers into the watch-making business. He also taught dance for a short period. Isaac, notwithstanding his artisan status, was well-educated and a lover of music. Rousseau wrote that "A Genevan watchmaker is a man who can be introduced anywhere; a Parisian watchmaker is only fit to talk about watches".

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### **11.3: LIFE AND WORKS OF ROUSSEAU**

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Rousseau was born on 28th June 1712 in Geneva in a middle-class French family. His mother died only a few days after his birth, he was brought up by his father and other family members. His father was a watchmaker by profession who had also adopted some other professions for a short period; he was very eccentric and unstable in his behaviour. Because of the unstable and careless character of his father, Rousseau could not get a proper education and discipline. He grew up like a neglected child without proper education and a decent lifestyle. At the age of twelve, he started working as an apprentice under an engraver at Geneva for three years but having been disgusted with the cruel nature of his employer he finally left the apprenticeship. At the age of sixteen, he left home and lived a life of a vagabond. He neither had a steady job nor a royal patron. He traveled throughout Europe where he experienced glaring inequalities and deprivation. He lived most of his life in abject poverty and survived solely on his inventiveness and the kindness of women. He even altered his religion and took assistance or financial aid from individuals with whom he had a good relation. Though his parents were Protestant he converted to Catholicism. In 1744, he moved to Paris and tried his hand at numerous plans in the theatre, opera, music, and poetry, but with little success. He developed an intimate relationship with Therese le Vasseur with whom he had five children who were left at an orphanage owing to his refusal of Rousseau in taking responsibility for them; later he married Vasseur. Rousseau never forgot his humble, plebian, puritanical upbringing in a low-middle-class family despite his

closeness with individuals of rich order. He died on 2nd July 1778 at the age of sixty-six. Rousseau was a prolific writer; he profoundly contributed his ideas and thoughts of his time in his several writings. In 1749 he participated in an essay competition and won the prize. In this competition, he emphatically presented his views on science and arts and their corresponding effects on human society. According to him, the progress in science harmed human society, it never made man happy or virtuous instead it made man corrupt; only in a simple society virtuous life is possible. Later this essay was published as *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts* in 1750. His other notable works are *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1754), *Discourse on political Economy* (1755), and *Social contract*, (1762) considered his most important work on Political Philosophy. *Emile* (1762) contains his idea of Education and *The Confession* (1782) delineates his autobiographical accounts.

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#### **11.4: CRITIQUE OF ENLIGHTENMENT**

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The Enlightenment was named the age of Reason and spanned from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century to the 18th century. It was a period when scientific analysis played a crucial role in all aspects of life. Generally, the enlightenment refers to a series of remarkable revolutions in the field of science, philosophy, and politics that happened in Europe. It was exclusively related to the French Revolution which challenged and violently destroyed the power and supremacy of traditional French authorities like the Monarchy and the Church. It also attempted to set up a new political and social order based on the principles of liberty, equality, fraternity, humanity, and rationality. The French Enlightenment played a crucial role in creating an environment of opinion and the spirit of dissent against the ancient system. Everything was judged solely based on reason and experience during the Enlightenment. Many elements that had previously been taken for granted, like the church and France's conventional political institutions were relentlessly questioned. The period of Enlightenment was mainly associated with some renowned French thinkers Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert, Montesquieu, and others who were commonly regarded as Philosophes. Though Rousseau belonged to this era, he discarded the sole use of scientific knowledge that differentiated him from his contemporaries. Rousseau vehemently voiced against science and reason through his writings. Thus, his protest was a revolt against reason; he also regarded the thinking being as a depraved animal (Sabine 1973: pp-530-31). However, Rousseau shared some enlightenment principles, but not all. Rousseau agreed with his contemporary philosophers

in that they desired change and placed their faith in man as a free actor, but he did not share their vision of progress represented by modernity and scientific advancement. Instead, he valued emotion over reason. In an essay titled "Has the growth of science and arts contributed to corrupt or purify morality?" written in 1749, Rousseau criticized the Enlightenment and argued that science, instead of saving the human society brought moral devastation for the same. Progress or advancement was only a mirage. What appeared to progress was a reversal of it or regression. Men had not become happier or more virtuous as a result of the development of modern civilization. Virtue was possible in a simple society where austerity and frugality were the mainstays in the lifestyle of the individual. Man became corrupt in the modern sophisticated society. According to Rousseau, the highly advanced and sophisticated society made man more corrupt and vicious. Rousseau was also critical of the abundance of wealth made through the advancement of science. To him, abundance meant luxuries, and luxuries degenerated into corruption. Luxurious living had precarious effects on nations as well as on individuals. Because of its elegance, luxury, wealth, art, and sciences, Athens, the city of vices, was doomed to fall. He also cited the example of Roman history: while Rome was poor and simple, she was able to command respect and win an empire; after becoming rich she developed a luxurious living that subsequently reduced her grandeur and respect in the world. She eventually became prey to people who did not even know what riches were. According to Rousseau, more progress in arts and sciences meant more corruption. The human mind became corrupt in proportion to the development of arts and sciences. The much-lauded human values of modern civilization such as politeness, the glory of civilized refinement, etc. were like a "uniform and perfidious veil" for Rousseau which breeds jealousy, mistrust, suspicion, wildness, hate, and fraud in the human mind."

Rousseau pitted pleasant and amicable sentiments, against intelligence, the growth of knowledge, and the development of sciences, which the Enlightenment held to be the only hope of civilization. He favoured sentiments and conscience over reason and argued that all moral judgments he had made were based on sentiments. Science was destructive because it took away faith; reason was bad because it juxtaposed prudence against moral intuition. Intelligence was dangerous because it undermined reverence; there is no character or society without reverence, faith, and moral intuition. Rousseau critiqued and dismissed modern society as false and artificial; to him, it destroyed the true and natural culture of the human being.

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## **11.5: ROUSSEAU'S IDEA ON SOVEREIGNTY**

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It is also obvious from the above that Rousseau's view of sovereignty differs from Hobbes' and Locke's. According to Hobbes, the people create a sovereign and transfer all power to him. People establish a limited government for limited purposes in Locke's social contract, but, Rousseau established the sovereignty of the people or the society as a whole through his idea of General Will. Rousseau's idea of sovereignty is considered a combination of Locke's popular basis of sovereignty and Hobbes's absolute sovereignty. According to Rousseau, Sovereignty is based on the General Will and exercised for the Common good. He indeed advocated for the doctrine of popular sovereignty which considers people as the source of all authority in the state. Like Hobbes, Rousseau believes that people's sovereignty is absolute, inalienable, and indivisible. Hobbes bestows all the powers on a single ruler and considers them sovereign; on the other hand, Rousseau confers the supreme power in the community or the General Will. According to him, the people's ultimate right to self-government, to determine their fate, cannot be given away or transferred to any person or anybody., Rousseau distinguishes between sovereignty, which constantly and entirely rests with the people, and government, which is only a transitory agent (as in Locke's notion) of the sovereign people. In Locke's theory people transfer their power like legislative, executive, and judiciary as well as the authority of sovereignty to the organs of government whereas in Rousseau's theory such transfer is absent since his conception of sovereignty is absolute, inalienable, and indivisible which does not allow people to transfer their supreme power and legislative power to any agency of the state. The executive and judicial power are exercised by the special organs of the government but they are exclusively subordinate to popular sovereignty. There is no separation of power in Rousseau's theory of the state. People are the supreme authority represented by the General Will. His doctrine of popular sovereignty expresses the supreme authority of the General Will in the society. As the General Will is inalienable and indivisible it can neither be represented nor be delegated. Any attempt to delegate it will certainly result at the end of it. He said that there will be no sovereign if there will be a master; according to him, the voice of people is considered the voice of God. He is a great votary of the theory of Popular Sovereignty. He never argued for the representative assemblies because they promoted particular selfish interests instead of common interests. He preached for direct democracy based on the idea of popular sovereignty.

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## 11.6: SUMMARY

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Human beings, according to Rousseau, are corrupted by society. Civilization, he said, was synonymous with conceit and hubris. Rousseau believed that the contemporary man's problem was that he had lost touch with his emotions. Rousseau's respect for reason is balanced by an equal or higher respect for emotion. Criticizing existing civil society, he noted that the social order was established to preserve private interests and property; that private property was at the foundation of social inequality, injustice, and exploitation; and that such a civil order was incompatible with man's nature. Because society was unavoidable; man could not relearn himself and return to the woods; and the manifestation of man's nature was dependent on the nature of socialization, his mission was to propose just principles on which to build a sociopolitical order conducive to the achievement of human liberty. Rousseau achieves this goal in his Social Contract, in which he lays forth the blueprint for the ideal political society. This ideal political society is established by a social contract, modeled after a community with a sovereign general will that, although always aiming for the common good, derives from all and applies to all equally. Because there is no contradiction between freedom and authority in Rousseau's idea of General Will, the two are immediately harmonized. Because it had a flawed understanding of man and society, prior ideas based on individual secession and the necessity to preserve and protect private interests through the establishment of authority failed to effectively reconcile authority with freedom

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## 11.7: KEY TERMS

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**Social Contract:** Rousseau's most famous concept, the social contract refers to the implicit agreement among individuals to create a civil society and government for their mutual benefit.

**General Will:** Rousseau argued for the existence of a "general will" that represents the common good or the collective interests of the people. It is distinct from the will of all individuals.

**State of Nature:** Rousseau theorized about the state of nature, a hypothetical condition in which people lived without organized society or government, serving as a foundational concept in his political philosophy.

**Natural Innocence:** Rousseau believed that humans are naturally good and innocent in their state of nature, and it is societal institutions that corrupt them.

**Amour de Soi and Amour Propre:** These terms represent Rousseau's distinction between "self-love" based on a healthy concern for oneself (amour de soi) and a more destructive form of self-love rooted in comparison with others (amour propre).

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## 11.8: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- Write an essay on Rousseau.
- Give the ideas of Rousseau on critique of Enlightenment.
- Discuss the Rousseau's ideas on sovereignty.

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## 11.9: REFERENCES

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## **UNIT-12: ROUSSEAU’S CONTRIBUTION TO W.P.T**

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12.1 Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 A Brief Life Sketch

12.4 Revolt against Reason

12.5 The critique of Civil Society

12.6 The General Will

12.7 Summary

12.8 Key Terms

12.9 Self Assessment Questions

12.10 References

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### **12.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- Contribution of Rousseau to W.P.T
- Views on revolt against reason
- The social contract and General Will

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### **12.2: INTRODUCTION**

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Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was one of the most influential enlightenment philosophers. He believed that due to the “natural” differences between men and women, they held different roles in culture and society. As a result, he felt that the two sexes should receive an education tailored to their respective roles. His idea had a long-lasting influence on the education of girls and the perception of women. Her was one of the leading advocates of the ideology of the “separate spheres” for men and women: the public domains of men are according to him business, politics and war, the private domains of women are household and family. Rousseau was born in Geneva, Switzerland In June 1712. His mother died during childbirth, leaving Rousseau’s father, Isaac Rousseau, to raise him on his own. His father was a clockmaker and dance professor too preoccupied with causing trouble on adventures around the world to properly educate his children. This drove Rousseau’s older brother, François, very early out of

the house. But their father had one passion, reading, and introduced his children very early to it. Already at the age of seven, Rousseau began reading lengthy novels such as *Les Hommes Illustres*, *Cassandre* and *Astrée*. He started to share his passion of reading with his father; the two would stay up late at night reading together. In 1722, after a quarrel with Pierre Gautier, a captain in the French army, Isaac Rousseau fled to Nyon. Jean-Jacques Rousseau briefly lived with his father and his new wife; however quickly returned to Geneva to live with his uncle Bernand.

At the age of sixteen, Rousseau left Geneva and went to Annecy, France. In 1742, he moved to Paris to become a musician and composer. Here he met Therese Levasseur, who became his illiterate mistress. Together they had five children, all of which were sent to the Paris orphanage. During this time, Rousseau became close friends with two philosophers, Condillac and Diderot. In 1750, an article Rousseau had written in response to an essay question was published in the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*. This article was widely read and became controversial. It challenged the belief that the progress of civilization brought an improvement in morals. He argued that knowledge and virtue are not correlated. Despite this early fame, Rousseau continued to work in music and composed a very successful opera, *Le Devin du Village* (The Village Soothsayer). In 1753, Rousseau submitted another response to an essay question, which would be published one year later titled *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Among Men*. In this article he challenged the belief that human are social creatures. He stated that before civilization, he imaged that men enjoyed a primitive freedom and happiness, which has now been lost. With the advancement of civilization freedom and happiness give way to misery and oppression. After this Rousseau became a philosopher and continued to write many influential pieces.

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### **12.3: A BRIEF LIFE SKETCH**

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One of the geatest theorists that France has ever produced, Jean Jacques Rousseau was a keen moralist who was ruthless in his criticism of the 18th century French society. He was one of the most controversial thinkers, as is evident from the conflicting, contradictory and often diametrically opposite interpretations that existed of the nature and importance of his ideas. He was an 18th century philosopher, writer and composer in who thrived in the era of Romanticism. He was born in Geneva, Switzerland on 28 June 1712. During that period, Geneva was a city-

state and a protestant associate of the Swiss Confederacy. But he was proud that his middle class family had a right to vote in the city. Throughout his lifetime, Rousseau considered himself to be the citizen of Geneva. Isaac Rousseau, his father was a watch maker and also well educated and a lover of music. Rousseau remarked 'A Genevan watchmaker, is a man who can be introduced anywhere; a Persian watchmaker is only fit to talk about watches'. Rousseau lost his mother to puerperal fever while he was only nine days old. His paternal aunt Suzanne and his father bought both him and his elder brother Francois up. His father went to Nyon in the territory of Bern from Geneva along with his aunt. Rousseau stayed with his maternal uncle after this. His uncle Abraham Bernard, took him to Hamlet outside Geneva with his own son for two years. Here the children took the subjects mathematics and drawing for their study. At that period, he was deeply influenced by religious services and he also considered becoming a protestant minister. His parents were Protestants, but he got converted to Catholicism under the influence of Madame de Warens. Subsequently, he became her lover. His life was not smooth as he led the life of a vagabond. In his book *Confessions* he said that it is only after many years that he began to educate himself. He went to Paris when he was 30 years old. There he met Diderot and became his friend. His writing on music featured in *Encyclopedia* was written by Diderot. In 1743, he became the Secretary to the French Ambassador in Venice. He came in contact with Therese le Vasseur in 1745 and had five children from her who were abandoned in an orphanage. He married Vasseur much later. His eccentric, egoistic and overbearing personality made him sever his friendships with his former friends. Thus, he was a controversial person and his life was very complex. However, he rose to fame with his prize winning essay *Discourse on the Science and Arts*. In this essay, he rejected progress based on the Arts and Sciences, as these did not elevate the moral standards of human beings. He traced the rise of inequality and the consequent fall of the human individual. He wrote a novel namely *La Nouvelle Heloise* in 1761. In this novel, the themes of his early essays reappeared, and his preference for nature and the simple pleasures of country life became evident. It is only after his death that the *Confessions* was published. He accomplished many things during his lifetime which included writing on music, politics and education. His fame primarily rests on his writings. He also composed some operas. He remained the mainstay of the Paris opera for years to come. He also wrote a dictionary of music and devised a new system of music notation. He wrote *The Social Contract*, his most famous book in Paris in 1762. He died in the year 1778.

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## 12.4: REVOLT AGAINST REASON

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Rousseau projected the contradiction and maladjustments of his own nature upon the society about him and sought an anodyne from his own painful sensitivity. For this purpose, he adopted the familiar contrast between natural and the actual current in all the appeals to reason. But he did not appeal to reason. On the contrary, he termed the contrast into an attack upon reason. Against intelligence, the growth of knowledge, and the progress of science, which the enlightenment believes to be the only hope of civilization, he said amiable and benevolent sentiments, the good will and reverence. He criticized the idea of enlightenment since his early period. As mentioned above, in his prize winning essay *Discourses on the Science and Art*, he depicted the drawbacks of science and arts including its impact on morality. According to him, science had brought moral degradation among men. He criticized the idea that science has brought progress. He termed it as an illusion. For him, it was not progress and in fact was regression. The advancement of science and modern civilization had made individual life unhappy. It had made him less virtuous. He advocated for a simple society. He said that virtue can be prevalent only in a simple society. In his criticism of modern advanced society, he alleged that man has been growing corrupt day by day. With the advancement of the civilization, man has become corrupt. He advocated that abundance in the world has brought more evil than good.

According to him, luxury was the fertile source of corruption. It not only negatively impacts man, but also undermines the nations. He cited the example of Athens. It is because of its luxury, wealth, science and elegance that brought vices which led to its downfall in the long run. He also cited the example of Rome. As long as Rome was simple and devoid of luxury, it had respect all over the empire but the time it embraced luxury and wealth, it began to decline. He severely criticized the advancement of art and science. He argued that the minds of the human beings have been corrupted as the arts and science have advanced through the ages. To him, the much-vaunted politeness, the glory of civilized refinement was a ‘uniform perfidious veil’ under which he saw jealousy, suspicion, fear, wildness, fraud and hate. Science brought intelligence and knowledge revolution. The supporter of enlightenment eulogized it. But against this notion, Rousseau gave preference to amiable and benevolent sentiments, reverence and goodwill. He preferred sentiments and conscience to reason. He argued intelligence was dangerous because it undermined reverence. He termed science as destructive because it undermined faith. Reason

was bad to him because it undermined morality. For Rousseau, morality is nothing other than the ability to see oneself through the eyes of others and act appropriately. This is a fascinating description of morality. Learning to live with others is the essence of morality. Humans have the capacity to act morally, but it is not natural in the sense of being fully fixed in all humans from birth. It is capacity that has to be developed and nurtured.

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## **12.5: THE CRITIQUE OF CIVIL SOCIETY**

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Rousseau maintained that liberty in the state of nature was a great boon. However, with the increasing population and the depletion of the treasures of nature, it was no longer possible for man to enjoy natural liberty as before. Thus, in the changed circumstances, natural liberty was threatened when the forces of nature no longer sustained them, they had to consolidate their own force to save themselves. They, therefore, created a civil society to maintain their freedom. According to him, vanity among human beings and difference in property and possessions led to inequality. The rich became richer and the poor became poorer. Laws were enacted to protect property rights. The civil society degenerated into a state of war, extreme inequality, ostentation, cunning, ambition and enslavement. Through laws and other political devices, the rich were able to corner power and dominate, while the poor descended into slavery. Civilized man was born a slave and died as one.

In the state of nature, the man was a ‘noble savage’. He lived in isolation and had limited desires. According to him, it was neither a condition of plenty nor scarcity. There was no conflict for cooperative living. Individuals had no language or knowledge. They had no idea of any art or science. He argued that in this type of situation, man was neither happy nor unhappy. He had no conception of just and unjust, vice and virtue. He was not guided by reason, but guided by self-love or the instinct of self-preservation. This state of nature was not perennial. Gradually, individuals discovered the utility and usefulness of labour. Man began to collaborate and created a provisional order. It led to a patriarchal stage when men began to build shelter for themselves and families stayed together. They began to use language and reason. The division of labour came into being. It led men from the subsistence economy to an economy of productive development. Individuals learned metallurgy and agriculture. It gave man iron and corn and made him civilized. However, it ruined humanity and morality. The growth of agriculture and division of labour created the idea of property. Rousseau famously remarked that ‘the first man who after fencing of a piece of land, took it upon himself to say “this belongs

to me” and found people simple minded enough to believe was the true founder of civil society’. The man’s talents and skills created inequality among the people. The longing for possession and wealth led to enslavement of some people thus leading to conflict and competition. It is this conflict, which led a demand for a system of law to ensure order and peace. The rich people especially demanded it to save their possession and wealth. Thus, the social contract envisioned by the rich was to maintain their status and position. As a result of this demand and social contract, the civil society and law was originated. It became a bane for the poor and a boon for the rich. It destroyed natural liberty.

According to Rousseau, the emergence of civil society degenerated the human society. He argued that the natural man lost his ferocity once he began to live in the society. As a result, he became weak. He lost natural independence as his desires were expanded and comforts became a necessity. He became dependent which created problems in human relationship as they became vain and contemptuous. Their vanity brought various social ills. Vanity overpowered man and guided his actions which degenerated individual’s mind and the society. Rousseau also severely criticized enlightenment which believes in human progress of reason through science and technology. According to him, it brought down moral improvement thereby leading to unhappiness. This is well represented in his book *Emile*. He stated that though God has made all things good, it was man who meddled with them and made them evil.

It is in his *The Second Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* that Rousseau developed his views expressed earlier in his prize winning essay *Discourses on the Science and Arts*. In this work, he narrated the fall of man. He highlighted how nature got twisted, warped and corrupted with the emergence of civil society. The civil society was necessitated by the rise of the institution of private property and the need to defend it by institutionalizing social inequality through law. Thus, he underlined the difference of ‘natural man’ and ‘civilized man’. He appreciated the natural man and severely criticized the civilized man who was created as a result of the emergence of the civil society.

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## **12.6: THE GENERAL WILL**

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The creation of popular sovereignty by vesting it in the general will is a unique contribution of Rousseau which led the foundation of modern democracy. The concept of general will is the central theme of Rousseau’s doctrine. It is distinguished from the other types of human will.

According to him, the general will can never be wrong, that is the will that one has as a citizen when one thinks of the common good and not of one's own particular will as a private person. Many later thinkers have used the distinction between actual will and real will in order to explicate Rousseau's distinction between particular will and general will. The existence of these two types of wills is a source of conflict within the minds of man. Actual will is motivated by his immediate, selfish interest, whereas real will is motivated by his ultimate collective interest. Actual will is concerned with his ordinary self, whereas real will is associated with his better self. The satisfaction of his desire is the aim of his actual will, but real will induces him to acts of reason. The characteristics of actual will are being transient, unstable and inconsistent, whereas real will is stable, constant, consistent and determined. The actual will is detrimental to human freedom. Thus, in order to attain freedom, the individuals should follow the direction of the real will. His real freedom is reflected by the real will. The real will is concerned with the interest of the community and subordinates his self-interest. The problem is that individuals at times may not be able to discriminate between their actual will and real will. This problem can be eliminated by the transition from the 'particular' to 'general' will. The general will is the harmonization of the interest of each with those of all. However, it is not a 'compromise' or the lowest common factor. It is an expression of the highest in every man. It reflects the true spirit of citizenship. Unlike particular will, the general will always guide individuals through a proper way.

Rousseau opined that the emergence of a unified collective view was inevitable when general will was allowed to function on its own. Rousseau envisaged a relatively simple society of farmers and artisans where there was no distinction of being rich or poor (though he railed against property, he never advocated its abolition), a condition that he considered the sovereign was required to maintain. Conflicts would be avoided in the society because everybody was equal, thus facilitating all to treat each other with love, kindness and compassion. According to him, the general will would be the source of all laws. Human beings would be truly free if they followed the dictates of the law. Civil liberty meant freedom from the assault of others, from following the arbitrary will of another person and obedience to one's notion of liberty.

Of course, if one had to be free, then one had to obey one's own will which means that one's will and the laws of a state would have to be in harmony. The free state would be a consensual and participatory democracy. Rousseau categorically said that general will could emerge only in

an assembly of equal law makers. It could not be alienated. The 'executive will' could not be the 'general will'. Only the legislative will, which was sovereign, could be the general will. For Rousseau, it was the direct democracy that embodied the legislative will. The individual participated in the articulation of the general will for citizenship was the highest that one could aspire for. The general will could not be the will of the majority. In fact, it didn't represent the will of all; it was the difference between the sum of judgments about the common good and the more aggregate of personal fancies and individual desires. It would always aim and promote the general interest and will of its members.

According to Rousseau, submission to the general will creates freedom. He spoke of a total surrender but not to a third party. Unlike Hobbes, he vested sovereign power in the political community. He created a sovereign that was inalienable and indivisible. But it was not vested in a man or a group of men; rather, it was vested in a body politic. The people cannot give away, or transfer, to any person or body their ultimate right of self government, of deciding their own destiny. Thus, he expounded the concept of popular sovereignty. His concept of inalienable and indivisible sovereignty does not permit the people to transfer their legislative function, the supreme authority of the state to the organs of government, unlike Locke. So far as the judicial and executive functions are concerned, they have to be exercised by special organs of the government. However, they are completely subordinate to the sovereign people. Sovereign power cannot be represented. He maintained that representative assemblies ignore the interest of the community and are often concerned with their particular interest. This is the reason why he advocated direct democracy. Sovereignty originated with the people and stayed with them. For him, the government and sovereign were different. According to him, the government was the agent of the general will which is vested in the community. Sovereign to him was the people constituted as a political community through social contract.

It would be pertinent to mention here that Rousseau, in his book *The Discourse on Political Economy*, first coined the term general will. He points out in the book that general will tends always to the preservation and welfare of the whole end of every part, and is the source of the laws, constituted for all the members of the state in relation to one another and to it, the rule of what is just and unjust. It is an outcome of the moral attitude in the heart of citizens to act justly. Here, individual sacrifices his private interest and embraces the public interest. The general will is emerged from all and applied to all. It comprises rational will of all the members

of the community. He pointed out that if someone objected to adhere to the general will, it would not be wrong to force him to do so. He famously advocated that man can be forced to be free. When a man is being compelled to obey the general will, it essentially means that he is being asked to follow his own best interest because it is by obeying the general will that he can express his moral freedom. Obedience to the general will is not the corrosion of their liberty because obedience to the general will essentially implies obedience to part of their own selves.

In a nutshell, Rousseau advocated a policy that would aim for the general rather than the particular interests of its members. The freedom that the noble savage enjoyed in the state of nature would be possible under the right kind of society governed by the general will. Society and the individual, in his theory were complementary.

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## **12.7: SUMMARY**

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Rousseau rightly focused on the drawbacks brought by art and science, enlightenment and modernity. He was more concerned with individual's morality and that of community as a whole. Rousseau was critical of the advancement of the civilization as it was detrimental to the morals of the individual as well as the community and its corrupting impact upon them. At the same time, he was critical of civil society because it embodied private interest and property which promoted social inequality, injustices and exploitation. Rousseau envisioned a social contract to lay down the blueprint of the required political society. The political society was created out of a social contract. He brilliantly assigned sovereignty in the community in the form of General Will which always aimed at general good or good of the community. Rousseau was seen as the spiritual father of the French Revolution of the 1789. Burke famously referred to him as 'the insane Socrates of the National Assembly'. For Rousseau, the state represented the pinnacle of human existence, the source of all morality, freedom and community. Sovereignty for Rousseau, is not a mere legal thing; it is the sum total of all virtues and even freedoms. The individual and the state were two themes in Rousseau's theory. Both were simultaneously sovereign. Both were needed to realize a just social and political order. Rousseau also pointed out the close relationship between liberty and equality, and the fact that without equality, liberty would be nonexistent. He abandoned his initial hostility to property, and accepted it as an essential institution of society.

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## 12.8: KEY TERMS

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- **Theory of tacit consent:** According to this theory, people choose to remain in a ‘territory’ controlled by a society with a government, which is what gives legitimacy to such a government
- **Romanticism:** An artistic and intellectual movement originating in Europe in the late 18th century and characterized by a heightened interest in nature, emphasis on the individual’s expression of emotion and imagination, departure from the attitudes and forms of classicism, and rebellion against established social rules and conventions
- **Catholicism:** The faith, doctrine, system, and practice of a Catholic church, especially the Roman Catholic Church

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## 12.9: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- Compare and contrast between Hobbes’ notion of sovereignty and that of Rousseau.
- Examine Rousseau’s views on democracy.
- Discuss the contribution of Rousseau to political philosophy.
- According to Rousseau, luxury was the fertile source of corruption. Discuss

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## 12.10: REFERENCES

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## **BLOCK-4: BENTHAM AND J.S.MILL**

Unit-13: Bentham and Utilitarianism

Unit-14: Contribution of Bentham

Unit-15: Introduction to J.S.Mill

Unit-16: Contribution of J.S.Mill

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## **UNIT-13: BENTHAM AND UTILITARIANISM**

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- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 Introduction
- 13.3 A Brief Life Sketch
- 13.4 The Utilitarian Principles
- 13.5 Political Philosophy
- 13.6 Jurisprudence and Punishment
- 13.7 Summary
- 13.8 Key Terms
- 13.9 Self Assessment Questions
- 13.10 References

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### **13.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- A brief life sketch of Bentham
- Utilitarian Principles of Bentham
- Political Philosophy of Bentham

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### **13.2: INTRODUCTION**

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The unit describes various facets and aspects of Bentham's political philosophy, underlining and explaining Bentham's idea of the nature of government and how it is essential to create a system of right and obligation. The unit also deals with the concept of the Panopticon, the model of a prison which was structured by Bentham for the British government.

Besides Bentham, this unit covers the ideas propounded by J.S. Mill. John Stuart Mill was a British philosopher, political economist and civil servant who actively contributed to social theory, political economy and political theory. He is considered the most influential English philosopher of the nineteenth century. 'Liberty', as conceived by Mill, justified the freedom of the individual as opposed to boundless state control. He advocated utilitarianism, and wished to offer a solution to issues related to probabilistic or inductive reasoning, such as the tendency of

people to support information that conforms to their beliefs (also called confirmation bias). Therefore, he was of the opinion that falsification is a key component in science. A political philosopher who contributed to liberalism, he was also a Member of Parliament. His work *On Liberty* is till date considered one of the classic texts on liberal philosophy.

Mill was a notably gifted child. He began his studies of Greek at the age of 3 under the strict supervision of his father. His vision was to make every man and woman a business owner. He was a prolific writer and wrote on different branches of knowledge with equal mastery. His famous works are: (i) *System of Logic* (1843); (ii) *Principles of Political Economy* (1848); (iii) *Essay on Some Unsettled Questions in Political Economy*; (iv) *On Liberty* (1859); (v) *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861); (vi) *Utilitarianism* (1865); (vii) *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1863); (viii) *The Subjection of Women* (1869). The intellectual prodigy who started his education at the tender age of 3 enriched the philosophical treasures by his clear understanding and deep insight into things.

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### **13.3: A BRIEF LIFE SKETCH**

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*Jeremy Bentham*, widely known as the founder of utilitarianism, also played the multiple roles of a philosopher, a jurist, a social reformer and an activist. A leading theorist in Anglo-American philosophy of law, Bentham is to be seen as a political radical whose ideas paved the way for the development of welferism. He is most popularly associated with the concept of utilitarianism, and the panopticon. His position entailed arguments in favour of individual and economic freedom, usury, the separation of church and state, freedom of expression, equal rights for women, the right to divorce, and the decriminalizing of homosexual acts. He also fought for the abolition of slavery and the death penalty and for the elimination of physical punishment, including that of children. Even though he was on the side of extension of individual legal rights, he was against the idea of natural law and natural rights, referring to them as ‘nonsense upon stilts.’ He can be seen as one of the most influential utilitarians, and his ideas were brought to the fore through his works and that of his students. Here we have his secretary and collaborator on the utilitarian school of philosophy, James Mill; James Mill's son J. S. Mill; John Austin, legal philosopher; and several political leaders, including Robert Owen, a founder of modern socialism. He is considered the godfather of University College London (UCL).

Bentham is often seen in relation with the foundation of the University of London specifically University College of London (UCL), even though when UCL opened in 1826, he was 78 years old and played no active part in its foundation. The probable explanation is that UCL may not have been possible without his inspiration. Among Bentham's strong beliefs was that education should be more widely available, specifically to those who were not wealthy or who did not belong to the established church – two requirements that had to be fulfilled by both the students by Oxford and Cambridge. UCL, being the first English university to open its doors to all irrespective of race, creed or political belief, can be seen, thus, to be largely in consonance with Bentham's vision. He is credited with overseeing the appointment of one of his pupils, John Austin, as the first professor of Jurisprudence in 1829.

Born February 15, 1748, in London in a prosperous middle class family, Bentham's mother died when he was ten. His father was very strict and demanding and arranged a thorough education for Bentham. Such an upbringing rendered Bentham's childhood monotonous and gloomy. Even as a child, Bentham could be seen as deriving his primary source of enjoyment from reading books with no inclination to play, reflecting his serious outlook.

An incident from his childhood suggests that he was nothing short of a child prodigy: Once, when a toddler, he was found sitting at his father's desk perusing a multi-volume history of England. Further, he even began studying Latin at the age of three. He had close relations with Samuel Bentham, his one surviving sibling. He had training as a lawyer and, was called to the bar in 1769 despite the fact that he never even practiced. The English legal code, given its complexity, met with his approbation and was termed the 'Demon of Chicanery'. When the American colonies published their Declaration of Independence in July 1776, the British government instead of issuing an official response covertly commissioned London lawyer and pamphleteer John Lind to publish a rebuttal. His 130-page tract was sent for distribution in the colonies and included an essay titled 'Short Review of the Declaration', penned by Bentham, a friend of Lind's, which condemned and satirized America's political philosophy.

Bentham began learning Latin at the age of three and proceeded to Queens College, Oxford, at the mere age of twelve. It is on being stationed there, that he began developing his critical stance towards ancient or traditional ideas and institutions. He espoused the view that the entire system of law needs an overhauling. He had a keen interest in science, particularly in

Chemistry and Botany. He was inspired and influenced by the French Philosopher *Claude Adrien Helvetius* and *Cesare Bonesana*, Marquis of Beccaria. He also drew inspiration from *Feneton's Telemaque*. From Helvetius, he took the lesson which proclaimed legislation as the most significant of all worldly pursuits. It is from the early 1770s, that we may trace the study of legislations becoming an important concern with Bentham. Though, he refrained from practicing law, he nonetheless concentrated on charting out what the law should be, rather than delving in what it was. The period from the early 1770s to the mid 1780s can be seen as marking an important phase of development of Bentham's ideas. During this time, he concentrated on trying to comprehend the rational basis of law, in England as well as in and other countries. During the mid-1770s, at the age of 28, he wrote a lengthy piece criticizing William Blackstone's - *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. A portion of this piece was appeared in 1776 as *A Fragment on Government*. This work had a profound influence on the Earl of Shelbourne, a Whig aristocrat, who henceforth became his close friend. During his close association with Earl of Shelbourne, *Bentham* got attracted to lady Shelbourne's niece *Caroline Fox*. This was his second love, the first being *Marry Dunkley*. However, neither of the relationships led anywhere, and he remained a bachelor.

He began to give his time and commitment to practical areas like public administration, economic, social policy, in addition to working on developing a theory of law and legislation. He laid down details for the construction of a prison or factory or work house which is referred to as the Panopticon or the inspection house. The panopticon was viewed as the pivotal hinge of utilitarianism, for it would aid in scientifically meting out philosophic calculus by measuring pain justly. Though he welcomed the French Revolution and sent forth his reform proposals, none were accepted. Yet, he was made an honorary citizen of France in 1792 for his *Draught of a New Plan for the Organisation of the Judicial Establishment of France* (1790). The early 1800s were witness to an increase in his popularity and reputation, which began to garner attention even in far off places like Russia and countries in Latin America. In 1809, a close relationship between *Bentham* and *James Mill* (1773– 1836) started taking root, with Mill being convinced of the urgent need for reforms. It is under Mill's influence, that Bentham can be seen as having become more radical. In 1817, he published *Plan of Parliamentary Reform* in the form of catechism, and 1819 saw the completion of the draft proposals of the *Radical Reform Bill*. An attack on the establishment church can be

witnessed in the Church of England in 1818. The codification of law occupied a high priority for Bentham from the 1780s to the 1830s. He continued with his life long devotion to legal reform, looking upon it as a game. Other developments ascribed to Bentham include inventing devices like primitive telephones, suggesting reforms for the London police, the London sewage and drainage systems, devising a central heating system, running a law school from his home, laboring on a scheme for lowering the national debt, securing low interest loans for the poor, planning a national public education system, a national health service, and a national census, etc.

Even though leading an ascetic life himself, given that saints were idlers, he is to be seen as having regarded ascetism with contempt. He looked down upon spiritualism and claimed that spiritualism glorified unhappiness and distrusted pleasure. Spiritualism is, then, to be seen as being in opposition to Bentham's unwavering belief in happiness as the goal of all individuals. He helped in providing funds to the University of London. He also composed humorous songs and was fond of rituals. It is with progression in age that he is seen to have become light-hearted and causal. He began, and financed, the *Westminster Review* in 1824 with the aim of furthering his utilitarian principles.

The list of books penned by him include - *An Introduction to the principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), *Anarchical Fallacies* (1791), *Discourse on Civils and Penal Legislation* (1802), *The Limits of Jurisprudence* (1802), *Indirect Legislation* (1802), *A Theory of punishments and Rewards* (1811), *A treatise on Judicial Evidence* (1813), *Papers Upon Codification and Public Instruction* (1817), *The Book of Fallacies* (1824). He also wrote *Rational of Evidence* (1827), which was edited by J. S. Mill. He also had several correspondences with the Indian thinker Ram Mohan Roy, who was his friend. Ram Mohan supported Bentham's negation of the natural right theory and the distinction between law and morals. He was also appreciative of the principle of utilitarianism. Bentham lived till the age of 84 and died on June 6, 1832.

Bentham left manuscripts which account for some 5,000,000 words. Since 1968, the Bentham's project at University College London has been working on an edition of his collected works. The Project is now attempting to bring about a digitization of the Bentham papers and outsource their transcription. So far, 25 volumes have come up; and there may be many more waiting in the wings to come out before the project is completed. While most of

his work was never published in his lifetime; much of that which was published was readied for publication by others. Several of his works first came in French translation, prepared for the press by Etienne Dumont, while some made their first appearance in English in the 1820s drawing from back-translation from Dumont's 1802 collection of Bentham's writing on civil and penal legislation. The works which were published in Bentham's lifetime include:

'Short Review of the Declaration' (1776) was an attack on America's Declaration of Independence; and (ii) 'A Fragment on Government' (1776) which served as a scathing critique of some introductory passages relating to political theory in William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. The book, published anonymously, got a good acceptance, and was ascribed to some of the greatest minds of the time. Bentham disagreed with several of the ideas propounded by Blackstone, such as his defense of judge-made law and legal fictions, his theological formulation of the doctrine of mixed government, his appeal to a social contract and his use of the vocabulary of natural law. Bentham's 'Fragment' was only a small part of a 'Commentary on the Commentaries', which remained unpublished until the twentieth century. (iii) *Introduction to Principles of Morals and Legislation* (printed for publication 1780, published 1789). (iv) *Defence of Usury* (1787). Jeremy Bentham wrote a series of thirteen 'Letters' addressed to Adam Smith, published in 1787 as *Defence of Usury*. Bentham's main argument against the restriction was premised on the view that 'projectors' generate positive externalities. Gilbert K. Chesterton identified Bentham's essay on usury as marking the very advent of the 'modern world.' Bentham's arguments were had a far reaching influence. Many eminent writers moved to put an end to the restriction, and a repeal was strived for in stages and fully achieved in England in 1854. There is little evidence corroborating Smith's reaction. He did not revise the offending passages in *The Wealth of Nations*, but Smith made little or no substantial revisions after the third edition of 1784. (v) *Panopticon* (1787, 1791) (vi) *Emancipate your Colonies* (1793) (vii) *Traité de Législation Civile et Penale* (1802, edited by Étienne Dumont. 3 vols) (viii) *Punishments and Rewards* (1811) (ix) A Table of the Springs of Action (1815) (x) *Parliamentary Reform Catechism* (1817) (xi) *Church-of-Englandism* (printed 1817, published 1818) (xii) *Elements of the Art of Packing* (1821) (xiii) *The Influence of Natural Religion upon the Temporal Happiness of Mankind* (1822, written with George Grote and published under the pseudonym Philip

Beauchamp) (xiv) *Not Paul But Jesus* (1823, published under the pseudonym Gamaliel Smith) (xv) *Book of Fallacies* (1824) (xvi) *A Treatise on Judicial Evidence* (1825).

John Bowring, a British politician who had been Bentham's trusted friend, was appointed his literary executor and given the task of bringing forth a collected edition of his works. This appeared in 11 volumes in 1838–1843. Instead of basing his edition on Bentham's own manuscripts, Bowring based his edition on previously published editions (including those of Dumont), and he did not bring out any reprint of Bentham's works on religion. Even though Bowring's work includes significant writings, such as the one on international relations as Bentham's *A Plan for the Universal and Perpetual Peace*, written 1786–89, which forms part IV of the *Principles of International Law*, it has received criticism.

In 1952–54, Werner Stark published a three-volume set, *Jeremy Bentham's Economic Writings*, in which he tried collating all of Bentham's writings on economic matters, including both published and unpublished material. Not trusting Bowring's edition, he undertook great labour in reviewing thousands of Bentham's original manuscripts and notes; a task rendered much more difficult because of the way in which they had been left by Bentham and organised by Bowring.

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## 13.4: THE UTILITARIAN PRINCIPLES

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The school of thought called Utilitarianism dominated English political thinking from the middle of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th century. Some of the early utilitarians were Francis Hutcheson, Hume, Helvetius, Priestly, William Paley and Beccaria. However, it was Bentham who established the theory of Utilitarianism and rendered it popular on the basis of his endless proposals for reform. As Russell has rightly pointed out, Bentham's significant contribution is to be located not so much in the doctrine but in his vigorously applying it to various practical problems. It was through his friendship with James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill, that Bentham became acquainted with the two greatest economists of his time - Malthus and David Ricardo - and was able to learn classical economics from them. This group of thinkers referred to themselves as philosophic radicals and aimed to bring about a revolutionary transformation of England into a modern, liberal, democratic, constitutional, secular state based on market economics. Utilitarianism was used interchangeably with philosophic radicalism, individualism, laissez faire, and administrative nihilism.

The seminal assumptions of utilitarianism postulated that human beings, naturally so, sought happiness, that pleasure alone was good, and that the only right action was that which produced the greatest happiness of the greatest number. In espousing such assumptions, the utilitarian thinkers can be seen reiterating the ideas of the Greek thinker - Epicures. Bentham lent a scientific colour this pleasure – pain theory and brought it in application in the context of the policies of the state, welfare measures, and the administrative, penal and legislative reforms. He brought to the fore a psychological perspective on human nature. He conceived of human beings as creatures of pleasure. In his analytical inquiry, he used the benchmark of utility. His book, *Introduction to the principles of Moral and Legislation*, provides an explanation of his theory of utility. The central principal undergirding his theory states that the state is useful only so long as it caters to the ‘Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number’. The ‘Greatest Happiness Theory’, in turn, is based on a psychological and hedonistic theory of pleasure and pain.

Bentham’s ambition in life was to create a ‘Pannomion’ - a complete utilitarian code of law. Bentham not only brought to the fore many legal and social reforms, but also elaborated on an underlying moral principle on which they should be based. The argument being put forward here stated that the right act or policy was one which would lead to ‘the greatest good for the greatest number of people, also known as ‘the greatest happiness principle’ or the ‘principle of utility’.

Bentham also brought to the fore a procedure which would aid in gauging the moral status of any action, which he referred to as the Hedonistic or felicific calculus. Utilitarianism was revised and expanded by Bentham’s student John Stuart Mill, and it is in Mill’s hands, ‘Benthamism’ became a primary component which was deployed in the liberal conception of state policy objectives.

Bentham proposed a classification of 12 pains and 14 pleasures and ‘felicific calculus’ by which we might test the ‘happiness factor’ of any action. Nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that Bentham’s ‘hedonistic’ theory unlike Mill’s, is often said to be devoid of a principle of fairness, which is entrenched in a conception of Justice. In ‘Bentham and the Common Law Tradition’, Gerald J. Postema states: ‘No moral concept suffers more at Bentham’s hand than the concept of justice. There is no sustained, mature analysis of the notion . . .’ In the light of this, we have some critics objecting to Bentham’s proposition in

that it seems to suggest that it would be acceptable to torture one person if this would produce an amount of happiness in other people outweighing the unhappiness of the tortured individual. However, as argued forcefully by P. J. Kelly in his book, *Utilitarianism and Distributive Justice: Jeremy Bentham and the Civil Law*, Bentham had a theory of justice that aimed at prevention and circumvention of such consequences. According to Kelly, for Bentham the law ‘provides the basic framework of social interaction by delimiting spheres of personal inviolability within which individuals can form and pursue their own conceptions of well-being.’ It gives security, which serves as a necessary precondition for the formation of expectations. As is witnessed in the hedonic calculus, which shows ‘expectation utility’ to be much higher than natural ones, we can see that Bentham does not favour the sacrifice of a few to the benefit of the many.

Bentham’s *Principles of Legislation* highlights the principle of utility and explains the way this view of morality feeds into legislative practices. His principle of utility hails ‘good’ as that which aids the production of the greatest amount of pleasure and the minimum amount of pain, while ‘evil’ is conceived as that which produces the most pain without the pleasure. This concept of pleasure and pain is defined by Bentham as being of both a physical as well as spiritual nature. Bentham delineates this principle as it manifests itself within the legislation of a society. He lays bare a set of criteria for gauging the extent of pain or pleasure that a certain decision will create.

Deploying these measurements, he takes a review of the concept of punishment and tries to fathom when it should be used, and whether a punishment will end up creating more pleasure or more pain for a society. He gives out a call for legislators to determine whether punishment can lead to an even more evil offense. Instead of bringing down evil acts, Bentham is arguing that certain unnecessary laws and punishments could ultimately lead to new and more dangerous vices than those being punished to begin with. These statements are followed by propositions explaining how antiquity, religion, reproach of innovation, metaphor, fiction, fancy, antipathy and sympathy, and imaginary law are not a sufficient justification for the creation of legislature. Rather, Bentham is calling upon legislators to measure the pleasures and pains associated with any legislation and to bring forth form laws in order to enable the greatest good for the greatest number. He argues that the conception whereby the individual pursues his or her own happiness cannot be necessarily declared ‘right’, since often these

individual pursuits can lead to greater pain and less pleasure for the society as a whole. Hence, the legislation of a society is integral to maintaining a society with optimum pleasure and the minimum degree of pain for the greatest amount of people.

Pleasure and pain theory, which is quite abstruse, is brought to the fore by Bentham in a simple and accessible manner. He points out that human beings are creatures of feeling and sensibility, while reason is only a handmaiden of feeling or passion. All experiences are either to be seen as pleasurable or painful. That action is deemed good which increases pleasure and decreases pain, whereas, that action is deemed bad which decreases pleasure and increases pain. The benchmark for judging the goodness or badness of every individual's actions is the pleasure-pain theory. Bentham advocated that 'nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters - pain and pleasure. It is incumbent on them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. So, we have on the one hand, the standard of right and wrong, and on the other, the chain of causes and effects. Achievement of pleasure and avoidance of pain are, however, not to be seen as the sole motivating forces of human behavior; they also set the standards of values in life'. According to him, what applies to the individual's morals, applies with equal force statecraft. He further pointed out that the action of the state is to be adjudged good, if it can be seen increasing pleasure and decreasing the pain of the largest number of the individuals comprising it. All action must be then be judged by significant yardstick. If the pushes for the greatest good of the greatest number, then it is to be hailed as good; and if matters are to the contrary, then it is bad. Sabine in his book *History of Political Theory* points out that this principle was held by the utilitarians to be the only rational factor, guiding both private morals and public policy. The seminal function of jurisprudence is sensorial, while the criticism of the legal system is carried out keeping in mind its improvement. For such criticism to function, a standard of value is required, and that can be gathered only from the principle of utility. He pointed out that it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number which is the basis, then, by which we may ascertain the issue of right and wrong. All actions of the state should be geared towards providing the greatest good of the greatest number. Hence, utilitarianism is to be seen as implying both individualism and democracy.

In Bentham's framework, pleasure and pain can be quantitatively and arithmetically calculated and measured, and a comparison can be drawn between the two qualities. In order to gauge pleasure and pain, he advocated the doctrine of felicific calculus. The sum of the interests of the

several members composing it is the interest of the community. The calculation here would entail that the happiness of each person is to count for one and none is to account for more than one. He delineated a list of some factors which would be used to measure pleasure and pain: (i) intensity (ii) duration (iii) certainty or uncertainty (iv) nearness or remoteness (v) purity (vi) extent (vii) fecundity. While the first four factors are clear, the fifth factor *purity* means that pleasure is one which is not likely to be followed by pain. The sixth factor *extent* refers to the number of persons who might be affected by this particular pleasure or pain. The seventh factor *fecundity* refers to productivity. Bentham's formula of calculation entails that we should make an addition of the values of all the pleasures on the one side, and those of all the pains on the other. The balance or surplus of any of the sides will be an indication if it is to be deemed good or bad. Based on his felicific calculus, he has tried to render ethics and politics as exact sciences like physics and mathematics. In the words of Wayper, 'The doctrine of utility is a doctrine of quantitatively conceived hedonism - it can recognize no distinction between pleasures except a quantitative one. He contended that human beings by nature were marked by hedonism. Each of their actions drew from a desire to seek pleasure and avoid pain. Every human action could be traced to embody a cause and a motive. He saw hedonism not only as a principle of motivation, but also as a principle of action. He listed 14 simple pleasures and 12 simple pains, which were then classified into self regarding and other regarding groups. Only two, benevolence and malevolence, were put under other-regarding action. Under self-regarding motives, he listed physical desire, pecuniary interest, love of power and self-preservation. Self-preservation would include fear of pain, love of life, and love of ease. He described four sanctions which would serve as sources of pain or pleasure, such as physical sanction, political and legal sanction, moral or popular sanction and religious sanction. He postulated that an adult individual is to be hailed as the best judge of his own happiness, and to be seen worthy of pursuing it without harming the happiness of others. He traced an essential connection between the happiness of an individual and that of the community, and offered the principle of utility as a standard which would aid in framing laws which would be geared to obtain the overall happiness and welfare of the community. I was constantly emphasized by him, that a person's actions and policies had to be judged against his intention geared towards furthering the happiness of the community. The end and the goal of legislation were to follow the rule: 'each is to count for one and no one for more than one'. His defense of the principles of utility led him to plead a case for democracy,

manhood, and, later on, universal suffrage, including female enfranchisement. As Bentham postulated, suffrage and democracy were to be seen as integral for the realization of the greatest happiness principle.

His views regarding monetary economics are to be seen as being at great variance from those of David Ricardo; however, they both exhibited certain affinities with Thornton. He focused on monetary expansion as a means of helping to create full employment. Bentham also underlined the relevance of forced saving, propensity to consume, the saving-investment relationship, and other matters that underlie the content of modern income and employment analysis. His monetary view can be seen as having a close affinity with the fundamental concepts deployed in his model of utilitarian decision making. His work is to be seen as occupying the centre stage of modern welfare economics.

Bentham stated that pleasures and pains can be graded according to their value or 'dimension' such as intensity, duration, certainty of a pleasure or a pain. He was occupied with thinking out the maxima and minima of pleasures and pains; and this engagement triggered the trajectory which would see a future employment of the maximization principle in the economics of the consumer, the firm, and the search for an optimum in welfare economics.

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### **13.5: POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY**

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More popular of Bentham's works are *Fragments on Government* and *Introduction to the Principles of Moral and Legislation*, in which he has laid out his political philosophies which can be discussed under following heads.

#### **Utilitarian principle**

Though, the principle of utility has been discussed above in detail, we can retrace here a brief outline since it is one of the most significant political ideas propounded by Bentham. As said earlier, he was not the originator of this idea. He borrowed it from Priestley and Hutcheson. However, Bentham reworked the idea, and owing to his attributing to it great significance, this idea became an integral part of his philosophical system and also a watch-word of the political movement of the later 18th and early 19th century. The keynote of this principle postulates that the state is useful only so long as it caters to the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number'. The 'greatest happiness' theory in turn is based on a psychological and hedonistic theory of 'pleasure and pain'. Bentham highlighted that, that action is good which increases pleasure and decreases

pain. The yardstick of judging the goodness or badness of every individual's action is the pleasure-pain theory. According to him, what applies to the individual morals, applies with equal force to statecraft. The seminal idea which needs to be grasped here is that pleasure and pain can be quantitatively and arithmetically calculated and measured.

### **Views on political society**

With respect to the origin of the political society, Bentham blatantly rejected the contract theory as absorbed. He rejected the view which saw children as being bound by the oral or written words of their forefathers. He brought to the fore a harsh criticism of the theory of natural rights. According to him, the state is founded on the selfish interest of the individuals. People obey the demands of the state as it furthers their selfish interest, their life, and property. In his view, the political society has existed and will continue to exist because it is believed to promote the happiness of the individual who compose it. Hence, succinctly put, the origin of the state is in the interest, welfare, and happiness of individuals which comprise it. It is the principle of utility which is to be credited with binding individuals together. The utilitarian concept conceives of the state as a group of persons organized for the promotion and maintenance of the greatest happiness of the greatest number of individuals comprising it. Bentham's view of the state entails that 'any corporate body, such as state all society is evidently fictitious. Whatever is done in its name is done by someone, and it's good, as he said, is the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it'.

### **Views on state, law and liberty**

According to Bentham, the modern state is to be viewed as an ideal, and an aspiration which examines the technique of state building and the method that would promote modernization. He regarded diversity and fragility within political order as inevitable. He saw the state as a legal entity with individualism as its ethical basis. He saw modernization as entailing two things: on the one hand, it required a broad based and diversified legal system which would take stock of individuals desires; and on the other hand, it comprised institutions that would extend support to the legal system, aiding in namely the bureaucratization of public service and legislation as a continual process, accommodating both change and diversity. He kept secure the individualist notion of moral autonomy with due priority given to individual interest. According to Hume,

‘Bentham’s theory brought together in a particular way the two great themes of modern political thought: individualism and the modern sovereign state’.

He came up with ideas and devices geared to guarantee governmental protection of individual interest, ensuring that public happiness should be seen as the object of public policy. Government is to be seen as a trust with legislation as the primary function and uniformity, clarity, order and consistency were to be seen as crucial for both law and order. He was equally conscious of the need for institutional safeguards which would see to it that the government pursued public interest. He championed universal adult franchise and recommended it to all those who could read the list of voters. Further, he conceived of the state as comprising a number of persons who are supposed to be in the habit of paying obedience to a person, or an assemblage of persons, of a known and certain description. Such a group of persons taken together is to be seen comprising a political society. In his *Constitutional Code*, Bentham reserved for the people the power to select and dismiss their leader, and to ensure that the interest of the rulers were closely linked with those of the people. For furthering this, he recommended the abolition of monarchy and the house of lords, checks on legislative authority, unicameralism, secret ballot annual elections, equal electoral districts, annual parliaments and election of the prime minister by the parliament. He saw representative government as providing a solution to the problem. He considered constitutional representative democracy as an overall political arrangement which was seen secured by measures like widespread suffrage, an elected assembly, frequent elections, freedom of the press, and of associations providing a guarantee against misrule. He regarded constitutional democracy as being of great significance to all nations and all governments who were in possession of liberal opinions.

Bentham postulated that the state was the only source of law. The main purpose of the state is to frame laws which attend to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. According to him, law is to be seen as comprising the command of the sovereign, and binding on the subjects. But the individuals obey the law of the state only because it furthers their interest. In the words of Wayper, ‘because law is a command, it must be the command of a supreme authority.’ Indeed it is only in the case where such an authority is regularly obeyed, that Bentham is prepared to admit the existence of civil society. His state, thus, is to be seen as a sovereign state. It is the sign of a sovereign state that nothing it does can be illegal. Law is the sole source of all rights of the individuals. There is no such thing as natural rights, and all rights

are civil rights. The individuals can never plead natural law against the state. According to Bentham, natural rights are not to be ascribed any significance. The basis of the political obligation comprises partly habitual obedience of the laws of the state by the individuals and partly the calculated self-interest of the individuals. Even though Bentham strongly believed that rights cannot be maintained against the state, yet he justified opposition to the state if that opposition will end up producing less pain than continued obedience. According to him, liberty is not to be perceived as an end in itself. Happiness is the only final criterion and liberty must bow to that criterion. The end of the state is maximum happiness and not maximum liberty. This concept of a state can only be a democracy and that too a representative democracy. In such a state all men should have equal rights. However, the concept of equality of rights is not premised on any abstract notion of natural law, but rather rests on the concrete idea that every individual seeks to pursue his interest to the best of his mind. All individuals are invested with equal rights including right of property in the eyes of law, despite the fact that by nature they may not be equal. Protection of property is one of the ways to ensure a furtherance of one's happiness. However, Bentham also believed that law should strive for facilitating an equal distribution of property and removal of gross inequalities. In opposition to natural rights and natural law, Bentham recognized legal laws and rights that were enacted and enforced by a duly constituted political authority or the state. He defined law as comprising the command of the sovereign, and postulated that the power of sovereign be seen as indivisible, unlimited, inalienable, and permanent.

Bentham defined liberty as signifying an absence of restraints and coercion. Crucial to his concept of liberty was the idea of security, which brought together his idea of civil and political liberty. For him, the principle of utility provided the objective moral standard, which was seen as being considerably at variance from other theories that supplied purely subjective criteria.

Even though Bentham downplayed the sanctity of natural rights formulations, he acknowledged the importance of right as being essential for the security of the individual. He rejected not just the idea of natural and inviolable right to property, but also the idea of absolute right to property since the government had the right to interfere with property to usher in security. He backed the need for adequate compensation in case of a violation of the individual's right to property. Property, for Bentham, was neither natural, nor absolute, and nor inviolable.

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### **13.6: JURISPRUDENCE AND PUNISHMENT**

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One of the most significant aspects of Bentham's political philosophy is located in the sphere of jurisprudence and reforms in criminal law and prison. There was no limitation imposed on the legislative power of the state, not even in the customs and conventions. While the state may take help from customs and established institutions, there were no checks on the legislative competence of the state. Bentham brought to the fore his popular distinction between 'descriptive' and 'sensorial' jurisprudence; namely what the law ought to be or whether a particular law was bad or good, to establish the validity of moral propositions about legal rights. Bentham's greatest achievement comprises his attempt to apply the principle of greatest happiness of the greatest number to all the branches of law - civil and criminal, procedural law as well as to the organization of the judicial system. For furthering this end, he suggested several reforms in civil and criminal laws and procedures. He was entirely for simplification of English law and international law. As a jurist and legal reformer, he brought to the fore liberal reforms in antiquated British law and procedure. The whole of the 19th Century legislation of England is can be seen as resulting from his laborious endeavors. Bentham suggested diverse ways and means by which justice could be administered cheaply and expeditiously. He postulated that justice delayed is justice denied. He suggested that acts of the parliament should be framed in simple and easily accessible language to ensure that the lawyers not cheat the public at large. The highly technical, rigid, obscure, capricious and dilatory legal procedures existing at large in his time were nothing short of a conspiracy on the part of the legal profession to misguide the public. Bentham suggested that there should be single-judge courts, since the multi-judge courts led to a shirking of responsibility. He also furthered the suggestion that judges and other officers of the court should be paid regular salaries instead of ad hoc fees. Further, he also attacked the jury system.

In the context of punishment, he maintained that penalty is an evil but a necessary one. It is an evil since it engenders pain, but it can be justified if it is seen as either preventing a greater future evil or repairing an evil already committed. Bentham strongly believed that punishment should be in consonance with the crime committed, and that under no circumstance should it exceed the damage done. He was not for death penalty, except in very rare cases. He was also in favour of doing away with other savage penalties from the British legal system, and suggested

diverse reforms in the treatment being doled out to the prisoners. Here, the state was required to tailor the punishment with regard to the offence in such a manner which would restrain the offender from committing it, or at least from repeating it. To aid in the furtherance of these reforms, Bentham has given a detailed account of various punishments to be given in particular circumstances.

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### 13.7: SUMMARY

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*Jeremy Bentham*, widely known as the founder of utilitarianism, can be seen as having played the multiple roles of a philosopher, a jurist, a social reformer and an activist. He is most popularly associated with the concept of utilitarianism, and the panopticon. He can be seen as one of the most influential utilitarians, and his ideas were brought to the fore through his works and that of his students. Here we have his secretary and collaborator on the utilitarian school of philosophy, James Mill; James Mill's son J. S. Mill; John Austin, legal philosopher; and several political leaders, including Robert Owen, a founder of modern socialism. Bentham is often seen in relation with the foundation of the University of London specifically University College of London (UCL). The period from the early 1770s to the mid 1780s can be seen as marking an important phase of development of Bentham's ideas. During this time, he concentrated on trying to comprehend the rational basis of law, in England as well as in and other countries. Even though leading an ascetic life himself, given that saints were idlers, he is to be seen as having regarded ascetism with contempt. He looked down upon spiritualism and claimed that spiritualism glorified unhappiness and distrusted pleasure. Utilitarianism, conceived as a school of thought dominated English political thinking from the middle of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th century. Francis Hutcheson, Hume, Helvetius, Priestly, William Paley and Beccaria were some of the early utilitarians. However, it was Bentham who is credited with systematically working to establish the theory and render it popular on the basis of his endless proposals for reform.

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### 13.8: KEY TERMS

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- **Utilitarianism:** An ethical theory which states that the right course of action is the one that maximizes the overall 'good' consequences of the action; it thus promotes that the moral worth of an action is determined by its resulting outcome

- **Principle of utility:** This regards ‘good’ as that which produces the greatest amount of pleasure and the minimum amount of pain, and ‘evil’ as that which produces the most pain without the pleasure
- **Pleasure and pain theory:** Bentham pointed out that human beings are creatures of feeling and sensibility; since reason is only a handmaid of feeling or passion, all experiences are either pleasurable or painful and that action is good which increases pleasure and decreases pain, whereas, that action is bad which decreases pleasure and increases pain.
- **Individual liberty:** It defines the state of being free to enjoy various social, political or economic rights, free from any government control or restraints in the exercise of those rights. It forms the core of democracy.

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### 13.9: SELF ASSESSEMENT QUESTIONS

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- Discuss Bentham as an utilitarian.
- Discuss the principles of greatest happiness greatest number.
- Discuss the principles of jurisprudence and punishment of Bentham.

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### 13.10: REFERENCES

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## **UNIT-14: CONTRIBUTION OF JERMY BENTHAM**

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- 14.1 Objectives
- 14.2 Introduction
- 14.3 The Panopticon
- 14.4 Views on Democracy
- 14.5 On Law Reforms
- 14.6 Theory of Punishment
- 14.7 Criticism
- 14.8 Summary
- 14.9 Key Terms
- 14.10 Self Assessment Questions
- 14.11 References

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### **14.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- Bentham's views on Democracy
- Bentham's theory of Punishment
- Bentham's views on Law and Reforms

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### **14.2: INTRODUCTION**

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Jeremy Bentham was born on February 15, 1748, in Spital fields, London. He died in 1832. He showed signs of being a child prodigy; while he was just a toddler, it was discovered that he was reading a multi-volume history of England at his father's desk, and at the age of three, he started learning Latin. When Jeremy was twelve, his father, a successful lawyer, decided that Jeremy would follow him into the legal profession and was confident that his clever son would someday become Lord Chancellor. Jeremy was sent to Queen's College Oxford. Bentham, however, quickly lost interest in the law after hearing lectures by Sir William Blackstone, the preeminent authority at the time (1723-80). He decided to write about law rather than practice it, and he devoted his whole life to criticizing the current legal system and outlining improvements that should be made. After his father passed away in 1792, he was financially independent and lived

quietly in Westminster for nearly forty years, producing ten to twenty sheets of the manuscript a day, even when he was in his seventies. There are currently many thousands of Bentham's manuscripts, most of which are housed in two collections at the British Library and the UCL Library.

Bentham's system of thought or methodology is based on the experimental method. He believes that real facts could be discovered by observation, testimony, and experience. Bentham's main aim is to provide the 'greatest happiness for the greatest number'. His theory of Utilitarianism is experimental. Bentham is a realistic political philosopher and he uses an experimental method based on a critical view, research, and experience. Thus, Bentham's methodology is inductive which the foundation is experimental and the objective is practical.

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### **14.3: THE PANOPTICON**

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The starting point of Bentham's political theory was his strong belief that there was need for extensive reforms in British society and particularly in English law and judicial procedure. He critiqued the existing laws and the machinery, as well as the methods of executing them and proposed details scheme of his own. Most of the law reforms since Bentham's day can be traced to his influence. Sir Henry Maine once said 'I do not know a single law reform affected since Bentham's day which cannot be traced to his influence'. As earlier stated, Bentham postulated a theory of punishment. In this context, he envisaged the construction of a prison which came to be known as the Panopticon. This model prison was designed by him for the British Government in the 1790s. While he envisaged that the British Government would buy a piece of land to construct the prison, to his disappointment the project could not be concretized.

Bentham conceived of the Panopticon to be the hallmark of utilitarianism. His concept of the felicific calculus was to be deployed in this institution. However, it would be significant to keep in mind that the Panopticon envisioned by Bentham was more than a mere prison. It was to serve as a model for any disciplinary institution. Besides being a jail house, it could as easily be a school, hospital, factory, military barracks, etc. According to Michel Foucault, the Panopticon represents a pivotal moment in the history of repression - the transition from the inflicting of penalties to the imposition of surveillance. In his book *Power/Knowledge*, Foucault has

extensively dealt with the details which went in the building of prisons: 'the prison was a perimeter building in the form of a ring. At the centre of this, there is a tower pierced by large windows opening on to the inner face of the ring. The outer building is divided into cells, each of which traverses the whole thickness of the building. These cells have two windows, one opening on to the inside, facing the windows of the central tower, the other, the outer one, allowing day light to pass through the whole cell. All that is then needed is to put an overseer in the lower end place and in each of the cells a lunatic, a patient, a convict, a worker or a school boy. The back lighting enables one to pick out from the central tower the little captive silhouettes in the ring of cells. In short, the principle of the dungeon is reversed; day light and the overseer's gaze capture the inmate more effectively. The prisoners, who have no contact with each other, feel as if they are under the constant watch of the guards. There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints, but just a gaze. An inspecting gaze which each individual will end up interiorizing to the point that he becomes his own overseer; each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself.' Bentham suggested an incorporation of 'Big Brother' supervision, coupled with fourteen hours a day, long hours on the treadmill accompanied by Martial music, while completely rejecting solitary confinement as abhorrent and irrelevant. In his utilitarian mission to prevent crime, he advocated punishments like castration for rape. Subsequently he applied the principle of the Panopticon to poultry, devising the first battery farm.

Among his diverse proposals for legal and social reform was a design for a prison building he called the Panopticon. Although it was never built, the idea had an important influence upon several subsequent generations of thinkers. Twentieth-century French philosopher Michel Foucault argued that the Panopticon was paradigmatic of a whole range of 19th-century 'disciplinary' institutions. It is said that the Mexican prison 'Lecumberri' was designed on the basis of this idea. Having written a dissertation on punishment, in which he developed and systematized Baccaria's ideas, Benjamin was convinced that pain could be scientifically administered by experts. He devoted most of his time to dividing the scheme, and making meticulous plans which went so far as the governor's urinal. He hoped to be appointed the first governor of the Panopticon and was confident that it would give him £37000. Like his brother, he had an unwavering belief in contraptions of all kinds. In 1791, Bentham send his plans to the English Prime Minister Pitt, but the panopticon, as earlier stated, never really materialized,

forcing him to admit defeat 20 years later. A jail was built, but not on the design recommended by him. He was awarded compensation for his sincerity and effort.

The Benthamite idea of the panopticon has been severely criticized by Michel Foucault. Foucault saw the panopticon as the quintessential disciplinary apparatus of the bourgeois state, epitomizing a repressive nationality.

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#### **14.4: VIEWS ON DEMOCRACY**

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The foundation of Benthamite democracy is the belief that every man has inherent rights and that he is a rational creature capable of understanding what constitutes his true happiness and how to achieve it. He also regarded equality as a given, albeit not in its purest form. Bentham's thoughts were divided between two types of equality. The first is that each man's happiness must be taken into account. This is a case of equal rights. As a form of natural equality, every man is likely to be the best arbiter of his interests. This shows that Bentham has made his viewpoint plain about rights and equality, making him from the perspective of his readers a great democrat. He said that in the counting of maximum pleasure 'each person is to count one and no one for more than one. Thus, he advocates the idea of 'one man one vote. In its most basic terms, Bentham's state is negative. The state accomplishes this objective by using the wonderful tool of law to increase happiness or pleasure. Nevertheless, the state does nothing to alter a person's character. Jeremy Bentham wanted to reduce the interference of the government with individual affairs to the lowest level. That is, his government is a limited one. It cannot control all the spheres of human activity. He believed that an all-powerful state cannot ensure the greatest happiness for its citizens in the largest number. In this sense, his government is a negative one the role is not constructive but negative. His views on democracy and related concepts show that he was strongly in favour of a representative type of democracy. Of course, it comes as no surprise to him given that the British population adopted and embraced this form of democracy in the second part of the eighteenth century. Additionally, he thought that this style of democracy would be able to satisfy the needs of the populace. Only such a government can balance the interests of the many with the needs of the few. Additionally, the representative government will actively promote the welfare or happiness of the populace because if they fail to do so, they would lose power.

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## **14.5: ON LAW AND REFORMS**

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Bentham was a great law reformer and an ardent advocate of the codification of law. The phrase "to codify" (to create a legal code) was first used by Bentham, who was also the one who gave it its current meaning. Bentham was the first to vigorously push for the codification of all common law into a comprehensible body of statutes. To create codification commissions in both England and the United States, he vigorously advocated for their creation. He even went so far as to write to President James Madison in 1811 to offer his services as a volunteer to create a comprehensive legal code for the fledgling nation. He immediately wrote to the governors of every state with the same offer after learning more about American law and realizing that most of it was based on state law. Bentham's attempts to codify laws during his lifetime were a complete failure. They are still wholly disapproved of in practically every common-law country, including England. But a generation later, David Dudley Field II's relatively successful codification work in the United States was made possible because of his works on the issue.

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## **14.6: THEORY OF PUNISHMENT**

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For Bentham, punishment is "an artificial consequence annexed by the political authority to an offensive act." We punish to augment the total happiness of the community by excluding mischief, which tends to subtract from that happiness. He could not have known was mischievous. He urges legislators to investigate whether punishment leads to even worse offences. Bentham contends that rather than deterring bad behaviour, some pointless laws and penalties may encourage vices that are worse and more dangerous than the ones being deterred. He urges legislators to weigh the benefits and costs of any proposed legislation and to craft laws that will do the greatest good for the greatest number of people. According to Bentham, "the immediate principal end of punishment is to control action. This action is either that of the offender, or of others: that of the offender it controls by its influence, either on his will...in the way of reformation; or on his physical power ..by way of disablement: that of other it can influence no otherwise than by its influence over their will.. in the way of example. However, the utilitarian theory of punishment comprehends three types of punishment theory- Deterrent theory, Preventive theory, and Reformatory theory: (1) Deterrent theory implies that the main purpose of punishment is to deter or discourage people from committing a crime by showing that

its result would be particularly painful or unpleasant. This principle works at two levels- individual deterrence and general deterrence. (2) Preventive theory is based on the argument that when an offender is deprived of freedom of movement, as in the case of imprisonment, or otherwise disabled, he is unable to repeat the offence. This theory upholds capital punishment or the death penalty for dreaded criminals so that society would never face them again. (3) Finally, Reformatory theory holds that when the criminal is made to suffer on account of the wrong done by him, he realizes his fault and learns to behave better in the future. So the experience of punishment brings about fundamental changes in the personality, attitude, and behaviour of the offender.

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## **14.7: CRITICISM**

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Bentham's utilitarian theory has been severely criticized by various scholars on different grounds. First, it is said that there is a lack of originality in Benthamite's utilitarian theory. He borrowed the idea of utilitarianism from various thinkers i.e. Hume, Hutcheson, Priestley, Paley, Helvetius, and others but failed to represent it properly. Thus, his utility theory lacks originality.

Second, J.S. Mill, a student of Bentham, asserted that "I am the peter who denied his master". He argued that qualitative differences between pleasures are as important as their quantitative differences. He said that "it is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied"( cited in Jha: 1989: p.334). J.S.Mill improved and modernized the utilitarian approach to political obligation by inducting qualitative aspects of its substance.

Third, by criticizing Davidson wrote that a further objection has been made on the ground that Bentham insists on testing conduct by the number and quantity of the pleasure that it produces; but that is an impracticable test, in as much as a sum of pleasures' is an impossible conception(Davidson:1915: p.43).

Fourth, according to Sabine, "he (Bentham) had, in fact, no skill in psychological observation and no interest in it for its own sake. But he aspired to be the 'Newton of the Moral Science' and he considered his psychological fictions to be more violent than some that had proved serviceable in the science of mechanics”

Fifth, some other thinkers have criticized Bentham's utilitarianism from different perspectives. Moralists and idealist scholars portrayed it as 'base materialism'. They argued that Bentham treats individuals as animals which is why Carlyle dubbed it as 'pig philosophy'. He argues that Bentham's utilitarianism is "a philosophy suitable for swine". Carlyle claimed that it encouraged individuals to live like pigs and seek pleasure in any way they could. Carlyle had reasoned that if happiness is the only good, then people are no better than pigs.

Lastly, Plamenatz opines that the inadequacy of Bentham's philosophy is that it treats happiness....as if it consisted in successfully satisfying one desire after another. But men have not only desires; they have ideals as well, and we cannot go far toward explaining their desires except about these ideals.

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## **14.8: SUMMARY**

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According to Bentham and his supporters, a state is a group of people set up to promote and maintain utility, or the achievement of the greatest happiness or pleasure for the largest number of people. Bentham was a great law reformer and an ardent advocate of the codification of law. The phrase "to codify" (to create a legal code) was first used by Bentham, who was also the one who gave it its current meaning. We can infer Bentham's desire for a strong state from his writings. However, this does not prove that he was an advocate of autocracy. He had a democratic outlook. He disregarded natural rights, as we've already mentioned. He talked about state-created rights. For Bentham, punishment is "an artificial consequence annexed by the political authority to an offensive act." We punish to augment the total happiness of the community by excluding mischief, which tends to subtract from that happiness. He could not have known was mischievous. However, the utilitarian theory of punishment comprehends three types of punishment theory- Deterrent theory, Preventive theory, and Reformatory theory. Bentham's utilitarian theory has been severely criticized by various scholars like Davidson, Sabine, Mill, Plamenatz Moralists, Idealists, and among others, on different grounds. Some of the scholars dubbed it 'base materialism'; some dubbed it 'pig philosophy' and 'a philosophy suitable for swine'. Despite its certain limitation, Maxey has rightly said that he was a professional reformer whose reforms were almost ahead of his times, a source of ideas to be harvested by subsequent generations.

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## 14.9: KEY TERMS

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- **Utilitarianism:** Bentham is often considered the father of utilitarianism, a consequentialist ethical theory that posits the greatest happiness for the greatest number as the ultimate moral goal.
- **Principle of Utility:** The core concept in Bentham's utilitarian philosophy. It holds that actions are morally right to the extent that they promote happiness or pleasure and morally wrong to the extent that they produce unhappiness or pain.
- **Hedonism:** Bentham's utilitarianism is a form of hedonistic utilitarianism, emphasizing the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain as the fundamental components of human motivation.
- **Felicific Calculus:** Bentham introduced this concept as a method for calculating the moral worth of an action by considering the intensity, duration, certainty, propinquity, fecundity, purity, and extent of pleasure or pain it produces.

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## 14.10: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- Discuss Bentham's views on Democracy.
- Discuss Theory of Punishment of Bentham.
- Critically discuss Bentham's contribution to Western Political Thought.

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## 14.11: REFERENCES

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## **UNIT-15: INTRODUCTION TO J.S.MILL**

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15.1 Objectives

15.2 Introduction

15.3 A Brief Life Sketch

15.4 Mill on Utilitarian Philosophy

15.5 Equal Rights for Women

15.6 Summary

15.7 Key Terms

15.8 Self Assessment Questions

15.9 References

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### **15.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- Brief life history of J.S.Mill
- Utilitarian Principles of J.S.Mill
- Rights of the Women

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### **15.2: INTRODUCTION**

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John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) was a prominent English philosopher, political economist, and social reformer of the 19th century. His works, particularly "On Liberty" and "Utilitarianism," have had a profound impact on political philosophy, ethics, and the theory of knowledge. John Stuart Mill was one of the most important intellectual figures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was the most influential British political thinker, economist, and statesman. He was often known as J. S. Mill. He was a major contributor to social theory, political theory, and political economics, and was one of the most prominent intellectuals in the history of classical liberalism. He was dubbed "the most important English-speaking philosopher of the nineteenth century. and saw liberty as justifying individual liberty in the face of unrestricted state and social control. All of his knowledge came from his father, James Mill, and he read the books that his father had been reading for the book History of British India, which he had written in 1818. He began to assist his father at the age of eleven by reviewing the proofs of his father's novels. As he continued to

fight against individual rights and freedoms in his senior years, he became more critical of economic liberalism and his views on democracy.

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### 15.3: A BRIEF LIFE SKETCH

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The essayist, economist and reformer John Stuart Mill was born in London on 20 May 1806. His father, James Mill, was also a political philosopher and a contemporary of Jeremy Bentham. Mill had eight younger siblings. The senior Mill came to London from Scotland with the desire to become a writer. He tried journalism and then concentrated on writing *History of British India* (1818) which had a great influence on the young Mill. In fact India influenced the life of the young Mill greatly and subsequently also determined his career. After the publication of *History of British India*, James Mill was appointed as an assistant examiner at the East India House. This solved James Mill's financial problems and allowed him the time to give attention to his areas of interest: philosophical and political problems. It also allowed him to consider a liberal profession for his elder son - J.S. Mill. James Mill first thought of a career in law for his son, but when another vacancy arose for another assistant examiner in 1823, John Stuart Mill grabbed the opportunity to serve the British government until his retirement.

J.S. Mill was both a philosopher and a civil servant. An influential contributor to social theory, political theory and political economy, his conception of liberty justified the freedom of an individual in opposition to unlimited state control. He was a proponent of utilitarianism, an ethical theory developed by Jeremy Bentham, although his conception of it was very different from Bentham's. Hoping to remedy the problems found in an inductive approach to science, such as a confirmation bias, he clearly set forth the premises of falsification as the key component in the scientific method. Mill was also a member of Parliament and an important figure in liberal political philosophy.

He started his educational career at the delicate age of 3. He studied Greek at the age of 3 under the strict supervision of his father whom J.S. Mill describes as the 'most impatient of men'. At the age of 8, he studied Latin, algebra and geometry and also read philosophy, including Plato's, Herodotus', Socrates', Diogenes' and Xenophon's. In English, he read the ideas of Gibbon and Hume. At the age of 12, Mill began the study of logic and read Aristotle's *Treaties on Logic* in the original Greek. He also read some books on experimental science. At the age of 13, Mill's primary subject of study was political economy, particularly that of Adam

Smith and David Ricardo, the latter being a close friend of Mill's father. He then went to France with Samuel Bentham, brother of Jeremy Bentham, where he learned the French language and studied higher mathematics, chemistry and botany. After returning to Britain at the age of 15, Mill took up the study of psychology and attended a series of lectures delivered on jurisprudence by John Austin. He then decided to be a lawyer and began to study for the bar. He lost his interest in this, and at the age of 17, he joined the staff of the East India Company as a clerk. He became the head of the department in 1856. After two years, he retired from his position. Most of his great literary output was produced when he held a full-time job. In 1865, he was requested by a body of voters in Westminster to stand for the membership of the House of Commons. Contrary to his expectations, he, nevertheless, won with a small majority. Mill served for three years in the Parliament, making unpopular speeches on unpopular subjects and generally devoting himself to things he thought needed to be done but no one else would do. In the election of 1868, he was defeated but he confessed in his autobiography that he was less surprised by his defeat than by his having been elected the first time.

Mill was a notably gifted child. He describes his education in his autobiography. At the age of 3, he learned Greek. By the age of 8 he read Aesop's Fables, Xenophon's Anabasis, the works of Herodotus and also acquainted himself with Lucian, Diogenes Laertius, Isocrates and six dialogues of Plato. He also read a great deal of history in English and was also taught arithmetic. At the age of 8 he learned Latin, Euclid and algebra, and was appointed as the teacher to the younger children of the family. His main reading was still history, but he went through all the commonly taught Latin and Greek authors and by the age of 10 could read Plato and Demosthenes with ease. His father also thought that it was important for Mill to study and compose poetry. One of Mill's earliest poetry compositions was a continuation of the Iliad. In his spare time, he also enjoyed reading about natural sciences and popular novels, such as Don Quixote and Robinson Crusoe.

His father's work, *The History of British India*, was published in 1818; immediately thereafter, at about the age of 12, Mill began a thorough study of the scholastic logic, at the same time reading Aristotle's logical treatises in the original language. In the following year, he was introduced to political economy and studied Adam Smith and David Ricardo with his father, ultimately completing their classical economic view of factors of production. When Mill was 14 years old he went for a year to France and stayed with the family of Sir Samuel

Bentham, brother of Jeremy Bentham. The mountain scenery of the place left a lifelong impression on him. In Montpellier, he attended the winter courses on chemistry, zoology, logic of the *Faculté des Sciences*, and also took a course in higher mathematics. While on his French trip Mill also stayed with the noted economist Jean-Baptiste Say in Paris. In Paris he was introduced to many notable Parisian intellectuals like Henri Saint-Simon.

The rigorous and exhaustive study that Mill went through at a young age had an effect on Mill's mental and physical health. When Mill was 20 he suffered a nervous breakdown. In his celebrated *Autobiography*, Mill claims that this was caused by the great physical and mental arduousness of his studies which suppressed any feelings he might have developed normally in his childhood. Eventually his health got better and Mill began to find comfort in the poetry of the Romantic poet William Wordsworth and in the *Mémoires* of Jean-Francois Marmontel.

In the 1820s Mill went on to engage in a pen-friendship with the founder of positivism and sociology Auguste Comte. Comte's *Sociologie* was more an early philosophy of science than we perhaps know it today, and the *positive* philosophy aided in Mill's broad rejection of Benthamism. Mill refused to study at the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge, because he was not ready to take Anglican orders. Instead he followed his father to work for the East India Company until 1858.

Between the years 1865 and 1868 Mill served as Lord Rector of the University of St. Andrews. During the same period, he was a member of Parliament for the City of Westminster, and often remained associated with the Liberty Party. During his time as a member of Parliament, Mill advocated easing the burdens on Ireland, and in 1866 became the first person in the Parliament to call for women to be given the right to vote. Mill became a strong advocate of women's rights and social reforms such as labour unions and farm cooperatives. In *Considerations on Representative Government*, J.S. Mill called for various reforms of the parliament and voting, especially proportional representation, the Single Transferable Vote, and the extension of suffrage. He was the godfather to Bertrand Russell. In 1873, he breathed his last, at the age of 67.

Towards the end of his life, he was the acknowledged philosopher leader of British liberalism and in Lord Morley's words one of the greatest teachers of his age. In his thinking, he was greatly influenced by the dialogues and dialectics of Plato and the cross-questioning of Socrates. The poetry of Wordsworth and the philosophical lubrications of Coleridge played

their respective roles. An indelible effect on his mind was left by *Treaties on Legislation* written by Dumont which contains Bentham's ethical and political speculations. His studies of *Roman Law* by John Austin, *Wealth of Nation* by Adam Smith and *Principles* by Ricardo largely affected his reasoning. He imbibed Bentham's principle from his father and from Bentham himself, and he found the principle of utility and the key stone of his beliefs. He outlined in his own words 'I now had a creed, a doctrine, a philosophy, a religion, the inculcation and diffusion of which would be made the principal outward purpose of my life.'

Harriet Taylor, a mother of three who was to become Mill's companion in life, strongly supported equal rights for women and other social reforms. She first met Mill in 1830 at a party in her home and from that point on, she worked constantly with Mill, helping him write and edit his articles and books. After Mill and Harriet Taylor's companionship began, Mill began to make an immediate impact on intellectual world of Britain. Mill wrote the essay *The Spirit of the Age* in 1831. In the essay Mill used history to bring light on the transition from feudalism to a 'new age' that Britain was going through. After his father's death in 1836 Mill took over his father's job at the East India House. The death of Mill Sr. was a sort of liberation for J.S. Mill. He started publishing books on economics and logic - all of which with Harriet's help – which helped Mill to become a far more important philosopher and thinker than his father.

Mill's books on economics critiqued the selfish and single minded pursuit of money. Mill's argument was that the purpose of wealth must be individuality, i.e., the higher objective of self-development. Mill's wished for more and more people to become business-owners in a free-market economy. For the working class he advised that they pool in their money and buy out private enterprises and operate them as cooperatives. In such cooperatives Mill envisioned that the workers would elect their managers and the wages given to them would be part of the profits of the enterprise. Such a system would allow such cooperatives to compete with other privately owned businesses. Mill today is often classified by historians as a Utopian Socialist. However, in his time Mill was an opponent of government central planning. Central planning was something pretty much every European Socialist supported. Rather, Mill's vision was to make every individual a business owner. This he believed would allow the cultivation of the highest objective of man – self development.

After twenty years of companionship Mill and Harriet finally married in 1851. Unfortunately, tuberculosis resulted in their marriage being cut short. Harriet died of the disease in 1858 while both of them were on a trip to France.

Mill's wife made a deep impact on his life and thinking. He used to call her a perfect embodiment of wisdom, intellect and character. She was a remarkable woman who touched the emotional depth of his nature and provided the sympathy he needed. His exaggerated tributes to her can only be regarded as his cry of anguish after her death in 1858. Her influence on his work appeared to have been smaller than his thought. She humanized his political economy, and suggested the chapter on *The Probable Futurity of the Laboring Classes*. She helped him in writing *On Liberty*, published in 1859, the year after her death, and she certainly inspired him to write the book *The Subjection of Women*. The other great influence on the minds of Mill proceeded from the discussions and deliberations of the Utilitarian Society and Speculative Debating Society founded by him. The Political Economy Club was also equally important which functioned under his fostering care. It was here that he began his public speaking. It was in these societies and clubs that topics pertaining to utility, logic, political economy and psychology were discussed with a view to have clear knowledge about this subjects. He was a prolific writer and he wrote on different branches of knowledge with equal mastery. His famous works are: (i) *System of Logic* (1843); (ii) *Principles of Political Economy* (1848); (iii) *Essay on Some Unsettled Questions in Political Economy*; (iv) *On Liberty* (1859); (v) *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861); (vi) *Utilitarianism* (1865); VII. *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1863); (viii) *The Subjection of Women* (1869). The intellectual prodigy who started his education at a tender age of 3 enriched the philosophical treasures by his clear understanding and deep insight into things. He had a reverence for his intellectual age but with a difference, projecting his own personality and ideas in the prevailing theories. He died in 1873 in Avignon, France.

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## 15.5: EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

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J.S. Mill applied the principles of liberalism to issues of political and sexual equality for women. He was as much interested in social reforms as in political speculations. His sense of justice was stirred early in his life by the social discrimination meted out to women. In the mid-Victorian period, the condition of the women in the British society was appalling. Mill argued

that women's submissive nature was the result of centuries of subjugation and a lack of opportunities. This inequality he regarded as highly unjust. He regarded birth as no basis of excluding women from the rights that they deserve. According to Mill, no person is deliberately created by nature for a particular profession. If women, however, differ from men on the grounds of sex, this distinction should not be made as a basis of distinction everywhere. He was eager to emancipate women and was the first to plead their cause in the parliament. He believed that if women were given equal opportunities to men, the result would be beneficial for women, since freedom alone gives happiness and is valuable to the community in general, since the society would benefit from the contributions made by the mental capacities and characteristics of women. The higher education of women, the increased opportunities open to their talents, and the extension to them of the franchise and eligibility to public office were largely added by his arguments and his efforts.

For Mill, improving the position of women in society by providing them with suffrage, education and employment opportunities was a stepping stone to progress and civility. Mill considered the improvement in the position of women as an issue which concerned the whole of society. In this regard, his work *The Subjection of Women* made a strong claim for women's right to vote and women's right to equal opportunities in education and employment. The two themes that is prevalent throughout the writings of Mill is Liberty and self-determination. Mill believed that freedom was the most spacious and crucial issue for a human's well being. In this context, Mill asserted that women were the subjugated sex who were not given access to their own potential and were subjected to their unquestioned prejudices and biases in society. Mill's main concern was equality as a legal right between the sexes. He referred to women as both the subject and the enslaved class for he believed that their position was worse than that of slaves. According to Mill, unlike slaves, women were in a 'chronic state of bribery and intimidation combined.' He pointed out that the women's capacity was spent in seeking happiness not in their own lives, but exclusively in winning the favour and affection of the other sex, which they gained at the cost of their independence. A woman was not free within her marriage, nor was she free to remain unmarried. He explained how unmarried women in the 19th century were deprived of avenues for living a good and independent life. He deplored the lack of freedom of choice for women and contended that equality should be the ordering principle of societal and personal relationships. He pointed out that opposition to sexual equality was not based on any

reason. Mill asserted that to dismiss equality of sexes as a mere theoretical opposition did not lend credibility to the argument that women were weaker and hence subordinate. He agreed that the majority of the opinions favoured inequality but this he contended went against reason.

According to Mill, the way men dominate women was entirely inappropriate and altogether based on force. Women also accepted it voluntarily without any complaint and became consenting parties to their subordination. Men, on their part, expected not only obedience but also affection from women. This was ensured through education, training and the socialization process. Women from childhood were taught to be submissive, yielding and accommodating, rather than being independent with self-will and self-control. They were taught to live for others, their husband and children. Selfless devotion was considered to be the best feminine trait, the glory of womanhood. In the case of a pre-contractual social arrangement, birth determines one's position and privileges, while the modern society was characterized by the principle of equality. Individuals enjoyed greater freedom of choice to pursue their own life and improve their faculties. However, women continued to be denied of this opportunity, for they were not free to do what they chose to. It seemed paradoxical that the modern world accepted the general social practice of women's equality, but not gender equality. Mill emphatically said that denying women an equal position only demeaned a man. Like Mary Wollstonecraft, he believed that women could earn their liberation with the support of men. Both Mill and Wollstonecraft presented a reasonable critic of male domination within marriage. However, Mill extended it by pleading for a relationship based on mutual friendship and respect. He subscribed to the view that by and large the human nature and character were decided by the circumstances in which individuals were found, and unless and until women were granted freedom, they could not express themselves. The process itself could take longer, but that could not be the basis for denying women the freedom and opportunities for their complete development. He believed that women were as bright and gifted as men, and once granted the same 'eagerness for fame', women would achieve the same success. A judgment regarding the capacities and talent in women could be made only after generations of women benefited from equal opportunities through education and employment. He rejected the idea that it was natural for a woman to be a mother and wife, and felt that it was the women who should be able to decide whether to marry and manage a house or to pursue a career. He lamented that it was society, however, that decided marriage to be the ultimate aim of women. He articulated and defended the right of women to be

considered as a free rational being capable of choosing the life they would like for themselves, rather than being dictated by what the society thought they should be or do. He was of the opinion that women, even if granted freedom and opportunities, would not fail to perform their traditional functions. When he was a member of the British Parliament, he supported a married women's property bill.

According to Mill, the position of the wife under the common law of Britain was worse than that of slaves in the laws of many countries; by the Roman law, for example, a slave might have his peculiar status, which, to a certain extent, the law guaranteed to him for his exclusive use. He further pointed out that marriage did not give the women the dignity and equal status that she ought to get. Once married, she was totally under the control of her husband. She was denied by the law the right to her children and property. Hence, they must have the rights to property, inheritance and custody. He pleaded for the equality of both sexes before the law, for that was crucial to ensuring a just arrangement. This he felt would be beneficial for all. He was of the opinion that a marriage contract based on the equality of married persons before the law was not only a sufficient but also a necessary condition for full and just equality between the sexes. For Mill, equality was a genuine moral sentiment that ought to govern all relationships including the marital one. He also acknowledged the family as the real school of learning the virtues of freedom and liberation, yet it was there that sentiments of injustice, inequality and despotism were taught. He desired a transformation of the family to suit the temperament and spirit of the modern age, namely the spirit of equality and justice, and in the process to bring about a moral regeneration of humankind. The relationship between a man and a woman should be based on mutual respect and mutual love, giving due regard to one another's rights. This would make them self-reliant and self-sufficient. Mill said, unless the equal and just worth of human beings was recognized, they could not enjoy equal rights and could not realize their full potential as well. A life of rational freedom devoted to the release of their full creative potential was as much a requirement for a man as for a woman. In spite of his insistence on the need to restructure family relationships based on equity and fairness, he continued to pursue the family as one where a man earns the family income and a woman takes care of domestic affairs. He was convinced that if suitable domestic help was made possible, then a woman, and in particular the talented and exceptional ones, could take up a profession or a vocation. Like Wollstonecraft and Fuller, he argued that 'the dignity of a woman was guaranteed if she had the

power of earning her own living'. A married woman would have full right in her property and earning. She would have the right to enter a profession or take up a career. According to him, women were fully capable of becoming business partners, philosophers, politicians and scientists.

Mill said both the law and the custom prohibited women from seeking any means of livelihood, other than being a mother and a wife. Besides equal opportunity for women in education and property, he also pleaded for political rights to vote and to participate in the government as administrators and rulers. In his book, *The Representative Government*, he commented that the difference of sex could not be the basis of political rights. He desired that the subjection of women be ended not only by the law, but also by education, opinion, habits and finally a change in the family life itself. In his book, *Principles*, he observed the need to open industrial occupations for both sexes.

Mill saw women's issues as important and began to write in favour of greater rights for women. In his work, *The Subjection of Women*, which was published in 1869, he talks about the role of women in marriage and how he felt that it needed to be changed. In that work, Mill comments on three major facets of women's lives that he felt are hindering them: society and gender construction, education and marriage. Mill is also famous for being one of the earliest and strongest supporters of ever greater rights for women.. He felt that the 'oppression' of women was one of the few remaining relics from ancient times, a set of prejudices that severely impeded the progress of humanity. Mill's ideas were opposed by Ernest Belfort Bax in his treatise, *The Legal Subjugation of Men*.

After *On Liberty* was published in 1859 Mill turned his attention towards reforms in the political sphere. It could be stated that many of his political opinions were contradictory in nature. Although Mill was a strong supporter of giving voting rights to all, especially women, he advocated a contentious voting system. Rather than universal adult franchise, Mill wanted a voting system where people with an education had more voting power than those who did not. Moreover, Mill was not a supporter of the public schooling system believing that such a system would enforce social conformity. At the same time he supported government subsidies to parents who could not afford schooling for their children. Mill was also an opponent of slavery, something that Britain had abolished in 1833, and was sympathetic to the American North in the American Civil War. When the American Civil War was raging, Mill wrote that if

the American South won then this ‘would be a victory of the powers of evil, which would give courage to the enemies of progress’.

Mill contested and won a seat in the British Parliament in 1865 on a Liberal Party ticket. He used his Parliamentary position as a platform to give voice to his opinions on social and political reform, especially on issues relating to women. As a parliamentarian Mill helped found the first women’s suffrage society in Britain in 1867. Many of Mill’s speeches in parliament on issues were many years ahead of his time. He had become a parliamentarian on the condition that he would vote according to his conscience, unfortunately, he was defeated for re-election in 1868 after serving only one term.

The same year that Mill left the British parliament, he published perhaps his most famous work - *The Subjection of Women*. The pamphlet in detail delineates Mill’s argument for equality for men and women in society. In it Mill stressed that both women and men should have the same rights to develop their individuality. This entailed both men and women having equal rights to their own property, earn a college education, choose any occupation, and participate fully in politics. Mill’s position on the rights of women Mill was sharply different from his father. Mill Sr. believed that women should not have a right to vote since their husbands represented them when they voted. J.S. Mill on the other hand stated that a wife’s interests are often different from those of her husband, and thus she should have an equal right to vote.

*The Subjection of Women* and many other works that preceded it galvanized society and played a huge part in breaking patriarchal mindsets and forcing the male dominated society to finally give in to the demand of women’s suffrage. This finally occurred in 1918, long after Mill had died.

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## 15.6: SUMMARY

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John Stuart Mill's liberalism provided the first major framework of modern democratic equality by extending the logic of the defense of liberty to end the subjection of women. As a Member of Parliament, he tried to push through a law allowing women to vote and was disappointed when that did not happen. He was the first male philosopher, as points of write about women's oppression and subjugation. He also portrayed the wide diversity in our society and cautioned the need to protect the individual from the fear of intermediating his private domain by a collective group or public opinion. The distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding action

would determine the individual's private independent sphere and the latter, the individual's social public sphere. He stressed the need to protect the rights of the minority within a democracy. He understood the shortcomings of classical utilitarian liberalism and advocated vigorously for important state actions in providing compulsory state education and social control. Realizing that his scheme is very different from the time of Bentham, he also described himself as a socialist. His revision of liberalism provided T.H. Green who combined the British liberal tradition with the continental one provided a new basis for liberalism with his notion of the common good.

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## 15.7: KEY TERMS

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- **Utilitarianism:** Mill's ethical theory that emphasizes the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Actions are judged based on their utility in promoting overall well-being.
- **Qualitative Utilitarianism:** Mill's modification to traditional utilitarianism, asserting that not all pleasures are equal. He argued for qualitative distinctions among pleasures, emphasizing intellectual and moral pleasures as superior.
- **Harm Principle:** The principle articulated in "On Liberty" that states that the only justification for restricting an individual's freedom is to prevent harm to others.
- **On Liberty (1859):** Mill's influential essay defending individual freedom against state interference. He explores the limits of authority and the importance of protecting minority rights in a democratic society.

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## 15.8: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- Discuss utilitarian principles of J.S.Mill.
- Find out how Mill has given equal rights to both men and women.
- Write an essay on j.s.Mill.

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## 15.9: REFERENCES

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## **UNIT-16: CONTRIBUTION OF J.S.MILL**

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- 16.1 Objectives
- 16.2 Introduction
- 16.3 Life and Works
- 16.4 Individual Liberty
- 16.5 Representative Government
- 16.6 Summary
- 16.7 Key Terms
- 16.8 Self Assessment Questions
- 16.9 References

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### **16.1: OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- Mill's views on individual liberty
- Mill's views on representative government

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### **16.2: INTRODUCTION**

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John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) was a prominent English philosopher, political economist, and social reformer of the 19th century. His works, particularly "On Liberty" and "Utilitarianism," have had a profound impact on political philosophy, ethics, and the theory of knowledge. Mill was born on May 20, 1806, in London, England, into a well-educated and influential family. His father, James Mill, was a philosopher and economist who played a significant role in his early education. Mill was exposed to advanced intellectual pursuits from an early age. Like his father, Mill was a proponent of utilitarianism, a moral theory that emphasizes the greatest happiness for the greatest number. However, Mill's version of utilitarianism differed from that of Jeremy Bentham (an earlier utilitarian philosopher) in that he introduced qualitative distinctions among pleasures. Mill argued that intellectual and moral pleasures are of higher quality than mere physical pleasures. "On Liberty" (1859) is one of Mill's most influential works. In this essay, he defends individual freedom against the tyranny of the majority. Mill argued for the principle of harm, stating that the only legitimate reason to interfere with individual liberty is to prevent harm to others. Mill made significant contributions to political economy, addressing issues related to

capitalism, labor, and social justice. His major economic work, "Principles of Political Economy" (1848), reflects his commitment to social reforms and a more equitable distribution of wealth. Mill was an advocate for women's rights and gender equality. He collaborated with his wife, Harriet Taylor Mill, on works such as "The Subjection of Women" (1869), where he argued for equal rights and opportunities for women. Mill supported representative democracy but was critical of the tyranny of the majority. He believed that elected representatives should protect individual liberties and minority rights. Mill is often associated with classical liberalism, promoting the idea of limited government interference in individual lives and a society that maximizes individual autonomy. John Stuart Mill's ideas have had a lasting impact on political philosophy, ethics, and economics. His defense of individual liberty and his nuanced version of utilitarianism continue to be influential in discussions on ethics and political theory. John Stuart Mill's diverse contributions to philosophy, political theory, and economics make him a key figure in 19th-century thought. His emphasis on individual liberty and the pursuit of higher pleasures has left a lasting legacy in the fields of ethics and political philosophy.

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### **16.3: LIFE AND WORKS**

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John Stuart Mill was born on May 20, 1806, in Pentonville, his father was James Mill and his mother was Harriet Barrow. James Mill, a Scotsman, was educated at Edinburgh University, where he was instructed by Dugald Stewart, and travel led to London in 1802, where he became a close friend of Jeremy Bentham and the Philosophical Radicals. J.S. Mill was a well-known author who contributed to the development of political theory with several key works. A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and his father James Mill strive to inspire his son all by themselves at home, and the latter is denied the customary experience of going to a regular school are some of J.S Mill's important works. John Stuart Mill was born on May 20, 1806, in London. As James Mill decided to teach his son all by himself at home, the father was denied the usual experience of going to a regular school. By the time he was ten, he had read many of Plato's dialogues, logic, and history. He was familiar with the writings of Euripides, Homer, Polybius, Sophocles, and Thucydides. He could solve problems in algebra, geometry, differential calculus, and higher mathematics. So dominant by his father's influence that John Stuart Mill could not recollect his mother's contributions to his formative years as a child. From the training that John Stuart received at home, he was convinced that more than nature played a crucial role in the

formulation of character. It also assured him of the importance education could play in transforming human nature. In his Autobiography, which he wrote in the 1850s, he acknowledged his father's contribution in shaping his mental abilities and physical strength to the extent that he never had a normal boyhood. By the age of twenty Mill started to write for newspapers and periodicals. He contributed to every aspect of political theory. His *System of Logic* (1843) which he began writing in the 1820s tried to elucidate a coherent philosophy of politics. The *Logic* combined the British empiricist tradition of Locke and Hume of social psychology with a conception of social sciences based on the paradigm of Newtonian physics. His essays *On Liberty* (1859) and *The Subjection of Women* (1869) were classic elaborations of liberal thought on important issues like law, rights, and liberty. His *The Considerations on representative Government* (1861) provided an outline of his ideal government based on proportional representation, protection of minorities, and institutions of self-government. His famous pamphlet *Utilitarianism* (1863) endorsed the Bentham principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, yet made a significant departure from the Bentham assumption by arguing that this principle could not be defended if one distinguish happiness from pleasures. His essays on Bentham and Coleridge written between 1838 and 1840 enabled him to critically dissect Benthamism. In 1826 Mill experienced a 'mental crisis' when he lost all his capacity for joy in life. He recovered by discovering the romantic poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth. He also realized the incompleteness of his education, mainly the lack of emotional side of life. In his re-examination of Bentham's philosophy, he attributed its one-sidedness to Bentham's lack of experience, imagination, and actions. He made use of Coleridge's poems to broaden Benthamism and made for emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual dimensions. However, he never wavered from Benthamism though the major difference between them was that Bentham followed a more simplistic picturization of human nature of French utilitarianism whereas Mill followed the more sophisticated utilitarianism of Hume. Mill acknowledges that both *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of women* were a joint endeavour with Harriet Hardy Taylor whom he met in 1830. Through Harriet, he was married Mill fell in love with her. The two initiated all intimate but caste friendships for the next nineteen years. Harriet's husband of Taylor died in 1849. In 1851 Mill married Harriet and described her as the honour and chief blessing of his existence, a source of great inspiration for his attempts to bring about human improvement. He was confident and bad

Harriet lived at a time when women had greater opportunities she would have been 'eminent among the rulers of mankind. Mill died in 1873 at Avignon, England.

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## **16.4: INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY**

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Mill's *Essay on Liberty* is one of the finest discourses on the definition of freedom in general and freedom of thought and expression in particular. He was an ardent champion of liberty. According to him, free discussion alone can nourish fruitful ideas. He pointed out that not even the whole of humankind can coerce even a single dissentient into accepting the majority's view point as nobody knows that majority views may be incorrect. He said the truth will certainly come out of free discussions, but if somebody's views are suppressed, then not only the truth will never come out, but also that particular individual's development will be retarded. There cannot be any self-realization or self-development of individuals without liberty. He passionately advocated the right of the individual to freedom. In its negative sense, it meant that the society has no right to coerce an unwilling individual, except for self-defence. In his words, 'It is being left to one self: all restraints qua restraints are an evil.' In its positive sense, it meant the grand of the largest and the greatest amount of freedom for the pursuit of the individual's creative impulses and energies and for self-development. If there is a clash between the opinion of the individual and that of the community, it is the individual who is the ultimate Judge, unless the community could convince without resorting to threat and coercion. Mill's ideas on liberty had a direct relationship with his theories of utility or happiness. He regarded liberty as a necessary means for the development of individuality which will become the ultimate source of happiness. There was only one road for him to take and that was the road of higher utility. He has done a distinction between higher and lower utility which may better be understood, respectively, as conducting to the good of the society and the good of individuals. He was keen to good of the society and of the individuals as well. Happiness, for Mill, is the ability of individuals to discover their innate powers and develop these while exercising their human abilities of autonomous thought and action. For Mill, happiness means liberty and individuality. Liberty is regarded as a fundamental prerequisite for leading a good, worthy and dignified life. J. Gray says, 'The contention of the *Essay on Liberty* is that happiness so conceived is best achieved in a free society governed by the principle of liberty.'

Mill insisted on the liberty of thought and expression as well as the liberty of conduct. He defended the liberty of thought and expression on two important grounds. In the first place, he argued that it is useful to the society. He asserted that rational knowledge is the basis of social welfare, and the only way of confirming the correctness of the knowledge is to submit all ideas, old and new, to the test of free discussion and debate. In the second place, he advocated the liberty of thought and expression on the grounds of human dignity. On the liberty of conduct, he took another line of argument. He drew a distinction between two types of actions of a man: 'self-regarding actions' and 'other-regarding actions'. He advocated complete freedom of conduct for the individual in all matters not affecting the community, i.e. in the case of 'self-regarding actions'. However, in the case of 'other-regarding actions', i.e. in matters that do affect the community, Mill conceded the right of the community to coerce the individual if his conduct is prejudicial to its welfare. In this way, he defended complete freedom of conduct for the individual unless it adversely affects the community. But the state could also interfere in the self-regarding action if it is thought to be very injurious for an individual. He wrote in his *Essay on Liberty*, 'the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.'

Mill defended the right of individuality, which means the right of choice. He explained that as far as self-regarding actions are concerned, coercion would be detrimental to self-development. First, the evils of coercion far outweighed the good achieved. Second, individuals are so diverse in the needs and capacities for happiness that coercion would be futile. Since individuals are the best judge of their own interest, they possess the information and the incentives to achieve them. Third, since diversity is in itself good, other things being equal, it should be encouraged. Finally, freedom is the most important requirement in the life of a rational person. He contended that positive liberty, i.e. autonomy and self-mastery, is inherently desirable and it is possible if individuals are allowed to develop their own talents and invent their own lifestyles, i.e. a great deal of negative liberty. Hence, he made a strong case for negative liberty, and the liberal state and liberal society are essential prerequisites.

Mill had no doubt of the utility of absolute liberty of thought and expression. He does not recognize any limitation of any kind whatsoever on the right of free discussion of individuals. According to him, no society in which these liberties are not on the whole respected is free, whatever be its form of government. He was not only concerned with the advocacy of thought

and discussion, but also with the development of the individuality of men and women in the community. The freedom of thought and discussion is not the only theme of his liberty. He wanted to promote the development of individual men and women because he was convinced that all wise and noble things come and must come from individuals. In his opinion, there can be no self-development without liberty. It is this connection between liberty and self-development which interested him, even though he went on to argue that liberty is also necessary for the happiness of society.

Mill justified restricted interference because of his inherent distrust of authority, and especially of democratically controlled authority. His contention was that individuals in democracy are swamped in general. Democracy prevents them from developing their individuality. From the arguments of Mill and his definitions of liberty, it became very clear that he was a reluctant democrat and all the more a prophet of empty liberty. Mill stated that 'liberty consists in what one desires. You would be justified in preventing a man crossing a bridge that you know to be unsafe. Liberty consists in doing what one desires, and he does not desire to fall into the river.' He had gone far towards admitting the extreme idealist contention that one can be forced to be free.

C.L. Wayper in his book *Political Thought* elaborates that Bentham must have gyrated in his grave much faster than ever he did from room to room at the thought that his favourite follower could ever contemplate such a non-utilitarian position. Another writer Davidson commenting on Mill's freedom of action writes that his freedom of action or conduct is admirable and his working-out of the theme is skillfully done. But there are certain points that lead themselves to criticism. First, in his argument he identified individual energy with 'genius' or originality. However, he forgot that this energy may be mere eccentricity rather than encouragement. Second, he did not sufficiently recognize that whereas men's desires and impulses are indispensable to the development of their nature, they are not a sure guide to the proper outlet for their activities.

Mill regarded the liberty of conscience, liberty to express and publish one's opinion, liberty to live as one pleases and the freedom of association essential for a meaningful life and for the pursuit of one's own good. His defence of the freedom of thought and expression was one of the most powerful and eloquent expositions in the western intellectual tradition. In his words, 'If all

humankind minus one were of one opinion, humankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, then he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing humankind.'

The early liberals defended liberty for the sake of an efficient government, whereas for Mill, liberty is good in itself, for it helps in the development of a humane, civilized, moral person. It is beneficial both to the society that permits them and to the individual who enjoys that. He accepted the observation of Tocqueville that the modern industrial societies were becoming more egalitarian and socially conformist, thereby threatening individuality and creativity. He was fearful, 'Lest the inevitable growth of social equality and of the government of public opinion should impose on humankind an oppressive yoke of uniformity in opinion and practice.'

According to Mill, the singular threat to an individual's liberty was from the tyranny of the majority in their quest for extreme egalitarianism and social conformity. This made him realize the inadequacy of early liberalism. He pointed out that in the area of thought and discussion the active and inquiring mind had become morally timid, for it concealed the true opinion when discussed in public. He further said, 'Our merely social intolerance kills no one, roots out no public, but induces men to disguise them, or to an extent from any active effort for their diffusion.'

For Mill, individuality means the power or capacity for critical inquiry and responsible thought. It meant self-development and the expression of free will. He stressed absolute liberty of conscience, belief and expression for they were crucial to human progress. He offered two arguments for the liberty of expression in the liberty of truth: (i) the dissenting opinion could be true and its suppression would rob humankind of useful knowledge; (ii) even if the opinion was false, it would strengthen the correct view by challenging it.

Mill applied the principle of liberty to mature individuals and excluded children, invalids, the mentally handicapped and barbarian societies in which the race itself was considered 'nonage'. Liberty could be withheld where individuals were not educated. He considered liberty as belonging to higher and advanced civilizations, and prescribed despotism or paternalism with severe restrictions in the case of lower ones. He also cautioned against sacrifice or infringement of liberty for the sake of making a state strong.

Isaiah Berlin is of the opinion that it is generally believed that Mill's *Essay on Liberty* was essentially written with the purpose of defending the idea of negative liberty. It is true that Mill

advanced a notion of positive liberty but he valued choice and individuality as ends in themselves, and not because they promoted general happiness. He did not propose a single overarching principle or values which normally accompanied theories of positive liberty. The theme on liberty was not the absence of restraints but the denial of individual autonomy by the coercion exercised by moral majority and/or an intrusive public opinion. It is criticized that Mill's linkage between individuality and liberty made him conclude that only a minority were in a position to enjoy freedom. The majority of the people remained enslaved in customs, and hence unfree. However, in spite of his elitism, he remained an uncompromising liberal for he ruled out paternalism, the idea that the law and society could intervene in order to do good to the individual. He explicitly ruled out interference in self-regarding actions. Mill stated that the right to liberty could be sacrificed only for some 'other right', a point that has been reiterated by Rawls. However, he tried to analyse and establish a relationship between freedom and responsibility. It is also argued that Mill failed to specify the proper limits of legislation, and was unclear when it came to actual cases. For instance, he supported compulsory education, regulations of business and industry in the interest of public welfare and good, but regarded prohibition as an intrusion on liberty. Barker has criticized Mill as the 'prophet of an empty liberty and an abstract individual'. This observation flowed from the interpretation that the absolutist statements on liberty like the rights of one individual against the rest were not substantiated when one accessed Mill's writings in their totality.

For Mill, the sole end for which humankind is allowed, individually or collectively, to interfere with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinion of others, to do so would be wise, or even right. The only part of the conduct of anyone, for which they are amenable to the society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns them, their independence is absolute. Over himself, and over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.

Controversially by today's standards, in *On Liberty*, Mill also argued that in 'backward' societies a despotic government is tolerable as long as the despot has the best interests of the

people at heart because of the barriers to spontaneous progress. Mill's principles in *On Liberty* seem to be clear. However, there are certain complications. For example, Mill's definition of 'harm' includes both acts of omission as well as acts of commission. Thus, for Mill, not saving a drowning child or not paying taxes are harmful acts of omission that need to be regulated. On the other hand, it does not count as harming someone if— without force or fraud—the affected individual consents to assume the risk. Therefore, it is acceptable according to Mill's standards to offer unsafe employment to others provided that this is done without fraud and deceit. While reading Mill's arguments in *On Liberty* it is important to keep in mind that Mill was a product of his time and also that his arguments are based on the principle of utility and not on appeals to natural rights.

Mill in *On Liberty* also delineates an impassioned defence of free speech. For Mill, free speech is a necessary condition for intellectual and social progress. According to Mill, 'We can never be sure that a silenced opinion does not contain some element of the truth'. He also suggests that the airing of false or uninformed opinions is productive for two reasons. Firstly, he states that an open and frank exchange of ideas will result in people abandoning incorrect beliefs. Secondly, Mill argues that debate forces people to examine and affirm their own opinions and thus prevents these beliefs from declining into mere dogma. In Mill's view, it is simply not good enough if one believes in something that happens to be true; one must also know why the belief in question is true.

Mill believed that people should have the right to have a say in the government's decisions. For Mill then *Social liberty* meant limiting the power of rulers so that they may not be able to use power based on whims and thereby bring harm to society. Mill wrote that social liberty is, 'the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual'. Mill believed that to bring about this social liberty one needed the recognition of certain immunities, called political liberties or rights and also by establishing a system which had 'constitutional checks'.

The limiting of a government's power is not enough for Mill. Mill believed that a society can and does execute its own mandates, and if it issues wrong mandates instead of right, or any mandates at all in things with which it ought not to meddle, it results in a social tyranny more fearsome than many kinds of political oppression, since, though not usually upheld by such

extreme penalties, it leaves fewer means to escape, piercing much more deeply into the details of life, and enslaving the soul itself.

Mill co-wrote *On Liberty* with Harriet Taylor; the work was published a year after Harriet's death and is dedicated to her. *On Liberty* begins with Mill's assertion that democratic nations like the United States would replace absolute monarchies of the past. However, Mill goes on to examine a new problem that would arise with people being control of their governments. Deeply influenced by the works of Alexis de Tocqueville, especially his *Democracy in America*, Mill fears that will of the people in democracies would result in the 'will of the majority'. Mill believed that a tyranny of the majority is a huge threat to individual liberty and self-development if the majority started acting to oppress minority viewpoints and lifestyles. To overcome this threat, Mill proposed what philosophers today call 'harm principle'. Mill's harm principle stated that, 'the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others'. This principle for Mill negates the tyranny of the majority and thus would block democratic majorities from interfering with the liberty of any adult unless that person threatened harm to others.

In *On Liberty* Mill identified various types of liberties. They are enumerated below:

- Liberty of conscience
- Liberty of thought and feeling
- Absolute freedom of opinion
- Liberty of expressing and publishing opinions (freedom of speech and press)
- Freedom to unite, for any purpose (freedom of assembly)
- Liberty of making the plan of our life to suit our own character, of doing what we like, even if this appeared to be foolish, perverse, or wrong

Mill stressed that a society that does not have such liberties is not really free. According to Mill, 'The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it.' Mill argued that truth is found through the 'collision of adverse opinions'. He further wrote, 'He who knows only his side of the case, knows little of that.' When people

listen only to one viewpoint, he explained, ‘errors harden into prejudices, and truth itself ceases to have the effect of truth, by being exaggerated into falsehood’. At the same time Mill believed that there needed to be limits on individual liberty so as to prevent harm to others. To explain his point Mill provided the example of an ‘excited mob’ outside the house of a grain dealer who are shouting that the grain dealer is starving the poor. Mill believed that in such situations the police are justified in arresting those who might incite violence among the crowd.

Mill was also against the censoring of newspaper articles by the government. In Mill’s view, ‘an atmosphere of freedom’ was essential to make sure that all citizens of a nation had the opportunity to develop their own individuality. Condemning the conformist nature of British society, Mill supported original thinkers and non-conformists who experimented with different lifestyles, thus preventing human life from becoming a ‘stagnant pool’. Mill declared that the purpose of government was only to provide the necessary conditions so that people could achieve the higher objective of self- development. He cites the example of the prohibition of gambling and also the harassment of Mormons to prove that the government is wrong in stamping out certain lifestyles and behavior. On the other hand in *On Liberty* Mill also argued for not permitting people from getting married if they could not afford to have children. He declared, ‘To have a child without a fair prospect of being able not only to provide food for their body, but also to nurture their mind is a moral crime both against the unfortunate offspring and against the society.’

From the moment it was published *On Liberty* was criticized from all quarters. Some said that the work promoted anarchy and godlessness, other’s critiqued Mill’s notion of ‘harm’ and questioned his assumption that people actually wanted to pursue self-development. Mill himself stated that *On Liberty* was ‘likely to survive longer than anything else that I have written’. Mill’s prophecy proved to be accurate, *On Liberty* remains one of his most popular works and has never gone out of print.

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## **16.5: REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT**

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While in his *Essays on Liberty*, Mill’s main concern was his passion for freedom of thought and expression, in the treatise *Representative Government*, Mill’s concern is institutional reforms in the government so as to make it more representative and responsible. In *Representative*

*Government* Mill asserts that progress requires representative democracy as only representative democracy can permit the full development of the faculties of its citizens. For Mill representative democracy promotes virtue, intelligence and excellence. He strongly believed that interactions between individuals in a democracy ensure that only the best and the wisest leaders emerge. Representative Democracy for Mill encourages free discussion which is necessary for the emergence of the truth. According to Mill, representative democracy should be judged on the basis of how far it 'promotes good management of the affairs of the society by means of the existing faculties, moral intellectual and activity of its various members and by improving those faculties'. Unlike Bentham, Mill has assigned some positive reaction of the state. He wants the state to have a positive role in the sphere of education, factory law, economic life, etc. In order to perform its duties well and exercise its power within the limits, every state must have a constitution. Of course, in those countries which have no written constitution, the conventions or customs prescribe the limits of the powers of the government. However, Mill argued there will always be a single repository of ultimate power, whether by a constitutional prescription or by an unwritten custom.

According to Andrew Hacker, Mill tried to reconcile the principle of political equality with individual freedom. Mill asserted that all citizens regardless of their status were equal and that only popular sovereignty could give legitimacy to the government. Democracy was good because it made people happier and better. Mill had identified several conditions for the representative government. First, such a government could only function with citizens who were of an 'active self-acting character'. They must be willing to accept it. The passive citizens in backward civilizations would hardly be able to run a representative democracy. Second, they must be willing and able to do what is necessary to keep it functional. Third, the citizens must be willing and able to do what it requires from them to enable it to fulfil its purpose. Mill was an advocate for liberal democracy where the powers of legally elected majorities were limited by the protection of individual rights against majorities. Mill pleaded for balancing the numerical majority in a democracy by adjusting franchise. For Mill, it was only through political participation that a citizen's intellectual qualities of reason and judgment are developed. Therefore, People had to be free to be able to participate in the government of their country, the management of their work place and to act as bulwarks against the autocracy of modern-day bureaucracy. This feeling of belonging to a community could only come about if all were

granted the right to vote. At the same time Mill worried about the consequences that granting universal adult franchise would entail, namely the trampling of wise and educated minorities by the mass of people. He prescribed compulsory elementary education for that would make citizens wise, competent and independent judges. Mill always emphasized that representative democracy was only possible in a state that was small and homogeneous. Mill also advocated for open ballot for voting. According to Mill, voting was a public trust which 'should be performed under the eye and the criticism of the public'.

Mill also prescribed some conditions for voting. He favoured registration tests to assess performances, universal education for all children and plurality of votes to the better educated in order to balance the lack of voting rights to the uneducated. His idea of representative democracy also entailed the disqualification of three other categories of dependence:

- those who were unable to pay local taxes
- those who were dependent on public welfare, who would be excluded for five years from the last day of receipt
- those who were legal bankrupts and moral deviants like habitual drunkards.

Mill, however, wanted equal voting rights for people irrespective of their gender or skin colour.

Mill also gave his views on the best form of government. According to Mill, the best form of government is the representative government. A despotic government however benevolent can never be a good government as its subjects suffer in their intellectual, moral and political capacities. There is no such thing as a good despotism. An ideal representative government must safeguard the aggregate interest of the society as a whole. The representative government must be supported by any active and critical body of citizens. The government should not be the representative of a minority but of the entire community. The representative body should represent all classes. According to Mill, the first element of a good government was the virtue and intelligence of the human beings composing the community, and it is the foremost duty of the state to foster these elements in the members of the community. He argues that the sovereign power of the state should reside in the organ of the government which is representative of the people. He was in favour of a representative government, but it does not mean that the representative government could be uniformly applied to all people. This

government should be adopted by people who are sufficiently advanced and trained in self-government.

According to J.S. Mill, people may be unwilling or unable to fulfil the duties which a particular form of government requires from them. Rude people, though in some degree alive to the benefits of a civilized society, may be unable to practise the forbearance which it demands: their passions may be too violent, or their personal pride too exacting, to forego private conflicts and leave to the law the avenging of their real or supposed wrongs. In such a case, a civilized government, to be really advantageous to them, requires to be despotic to a considerable degree: to be one over which they do not themselves exercise control, and which imposes a great amount of forcible restraint upon their actions. Again, people who do not cooperate actively with the law and the public authorities in the repression of evil doers must be considered unfit for more than limited and qualified freedom; who are more disposed to shelter a criminal than to apprehend; who perjure themselves to screen those who has robbed them, rather than taking trouble or exposing themselves to vindictiveness by showing evidence against them; and who are revolted by an execution, but not shocked at an assassination require that the public authorities should be armed with much sterner powers of repression than elsewhere, since the first indispensable requisites of civilized life have nothing else to rest on. These deplorable states of feeling in any person who has emerged from savage life, are, no doubt, usually the consequence of the previous bad government, which has taught them to regard the law as made for other ends than their good, and its administrators who are worse enemies than those who openly violate it. However, little blame may be given to those in whom these mental habits have grown up, and those habits may be ultimately conquerable by a better government, yet while they exist people so disposed cannot be governed with as little power exercised over them as people whose sympathies are on the side of the law, and who are willing to give active assistance in its enforcement. Again, representative institutions are of little value, and may be a mere instrument of tyranny or intrigue, when the generality of electors is not sufficiently interested in their own government to give their vote, or, if they vote at all, they do not bestow their suffrages on public grounds, but sell them for money, or vote at the beck of someone who has control over them, or whom for private reasons they desire to propitiate. Popular election thus practised, instead of a security against misgovernment, is but an additional wheel in its machinery.

Besides these moral hindrances, mechanical difficulties are often an insuperable impediment to forms of government. In the ancient world, though there might be, and often was, great individuals or local independence, there could be nothing like a regulated popular government beyond the bounds of a single city community, because there did not exist the physical conditions for the formation and propagation of a public opinion, except among those who could be brought together to discuss public matters in the same agora. This obstacle is generally thought to have ceased by the adoption of the representative system.

It is a quality in which different nations, and different stages of civilization, substantially differ from one another. The capability of any individual of fulfilling the conditions of a given form of government cannot be pronounced by any sweeping rule. Knowledge of particular people, and general practical judgment and sagacity, must be the guides. There is also another consideration not to lose sight of. People may be unprepared for good institutions, but to kindle a desire for them is a necessary part of the preparation. To recommend and advocate a particular institution or form of government, and set its advantages in the strongest light, is one of the modes, often the only mode within the reach of educating the mind of the nation not only for accepting or claiming, but also for running the institution.

But this mode of stating the problem gives less aid to its investigation than might be supposed, and does not even bring the whole of the question into view. For, in the first place, the proper functions of a government are not fixed, but vary from state to state in a society, much more extensive in a backward than in an advanced state. Second, the character of a government or set of political institutions cannot be sufficiently estimated while we confine our attention to the legitimate sphere of governmental functions. Though the goodness of a government is necessarily circumscribed within that sphere, its badness unhappily is not.

A government is said to preserve its orders if it succeeds in getting itself obeyed. But there are different degrees of obedience, and it is not every degree that is commendable. Only an unmitigated despotism demands that the individual citizen shall obey unconditionally every mandate of persons in authority. We must at least limit the definition to such mandates as are general and issued in the deliberate form of laws. Orders, thus understood, express, without any doubt, an indispensable attribute of the government. Those who are unable to make their ordinances obeyed cannot be said to be governing. Although a necessary condition, this is not

the objective of the government. That it should make itself obeyed is a requisite, in order that it may accomplish some other purpose.

The first element of a good government, therefore, being the virtue and intelligence of the human beings composing the community. The most important point of excellence which any form of government can possess is to promote the virtue and intelligence of the people themselves. The first question in respect of any political institutions is how far they tend to foster in the members of the community the various desirable qualities: moral and intellectual, or rather moral, intellectual and activeness. The government that does this the best has every likelihood of being the best in all other respects, since it is on these qualities, so far as they exist in the people, that all possibility of goodness in the practical operations of the government depends. The goodness of a government is measured by the degree by which it tends to increase the sum of good qualities in the governed, collectively and individually; since besides that their well-being is the sole objective of the government, their good qualities supply the moving force which makes the machinery work. The study on Mill's ideas of a representative government reveals that he was a reluctant and distrustful democrat.

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## **16.6: SUMMARY**

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J.S. Mill is one of the greatest liberals and individualists in the history of political thought. The state, according to him, exists for the individual and not the individual for the state. J.S. Mill is one of the greatest and most enlightened champions of individualism and individual liberty, and ranks with Milton, Voltaire, Rousseau, Paine and Jefferson. He observed that the existence of a state depends on the all round development of its individuals. J.S. Mill's contribution remains unparalleled in history so far his recognition of the value of human personality and his insistence on the development of a full individual as the goal of the government is concerned. J.S. Mill is also regarded as one of the true and the most efficient democrats that the world has ever produced. He not only advocated the cause of democracy, but also made aware of the dangers of the excesses and misuse of democracy. According to him, the ultimate political sovereignty should lie with the people. J.S. Mill's advocacy of rights and freedom for women also deserves utmost appreciation. He was a bold advocate of the enfranchisement of women. He earnestly thought for the rights of women. He championed the cause of their emancipation in both public and private life. There is no denying the fact that J.S. Mill was a

great man and a great political thinker. His contribution to the growth of political thought is really remarkable. Mill through his writings gave a new direction to the utilitarian tenants so as to enable them to be acceptable in the high political and intellectual circles in particular and the masses in general. The world will always remember him for his advocacy of the emancipation of women and their suffrage, liberalism, individualism, classic advocacy of liberty, cautious approach towards democracy and realization of the possible tyranny of the majority rule. Today, most consider that J.S. Mill was Britain's greatest philosopher of the 19th century. J.S. Mill was also one of the last major thinkers to write on nearly every philosophical topic, ranging from logic to religion. His farsighted views on democracy, individual liberty and equality for women make him the most relevant in the contemporary world.

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### 16.7: KEY TERMS.

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- **Individual liberty:** It defines the state of being free to enjoy various social, political or economic rights, free from any government control or restraints in the exercise of those rights. It forms the core of democracy.
- **Good governance:** It defines a form of governance where public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in a way to guarantee the realization of human rights.
- **Subjugation:** It defines the state of gaining control over somebody or something.
- **Representative government:** A form of government which is elected by the people; in such a form of government, only those who are the elected representatives have the power to make laws and institute taxes.

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### 16.8: SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- Examine J.S. Mill as a political thinker.
- Critically examine Mill's concept of liberty.
- Discuss Mill's contributions towards the emancipation of women.

- According to Mill, the position of the wife under the common law of Britain was worse than that of slaves in the laws of many countries. Discuss the condition of women during Mill's time in light of his statement.

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## 16.9: REFERENCES

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