UNIT 1 SIGNIFICANCE OF WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Political thought begins when there is an awareness of the possibility of attaining alternative political arrangements from the present one. Ever since organised life began with the invention of agriculture, slowly different forms of political organisations began. Predominantly this form was monarchy but the ancient Greek civilisation was marked by a remarkable variety of political forms, reflected by Aristotle's study of 158 constitutions and elaboration of the different typologies of political systems. It is for the prevalence of wide diversity and debate that western political thought begins with the Greeks and continues till the present.

Political thought means the five following things:

a) Exposition of ideas, values and proposals for influencing policy, changing it and revising it drastically for total break and a new beginning. The entire classical tradition of western political thought provides a wide variety dealing with the above propositions.

b) Political theory deals with political structure and institutions like dealing with the theories of the state, division of power, legal frameworks, variious forms of representation and links with other social sciences..

c) Political philosophy in the normative quest for what should be rather than what is in a large macro framework.

d) Political thought is a key component of the discipline of political science providing it the basic concepts and tools with which tlie other sub-areas of the discipline are intrinsically linked.

e) Comparative studies of different kinds of political theories originating and expanding with different civilisations like the western political thought, Indian or Chinese political thought.

1.2 WHAT IS POLITICAL THOUGHT?

Political thought is the description of the political ideas of a host of political philosophers from beginning to the end. It is the sum-total of ideas on matters relating to politics, state and government as expressed by the thinkers. It is historical in nature because it is described as history. It analyses, examines and evaluates issues that have a universal concern and are of perennial interest even though each political tlieorist responds to a particular political reality. It is written keeping the larger public in mind and is not confined to ivory towers for an intimate link is established between the political process, institutions, events and actors. Usually political theory flourishes in times of crises which act as stimulus though it is not necessary that all crises lead to political theorising.

Political tliought is the description, analysis, expression, and evaluation of the philosophies of the philosophers of a political tradition. It is a tradition in so far as it comes to us as a body of thought. It is the sum-total of what stays on, and an accumulation of what is changed and what continues. It is what keeps responding to our circumstances. What becomes out-dated is not the part of the tradition.

Political thought attempts to identify values and norms and makes them an inseparable part of a particular political trend. Western political thought, if we wish to identify its magic themes, evolves and revolves around values such as liberty and libertarian, democracy and democratic tradition, equality and egalitarian. Political thought as it has existed and/or exists in India, for example, seeks to establish ethical/moral values in politics, spiritualism, aooperative living and the like.

Poiitical thought is primarily the study of the state. It studies society insofar as society influences the state as political life and social life, though independent is inter-dependent. Similarly it focuses on economic institutions and process insofar it influences the political order and process. It also takes into consideration ethical questions for ultimately it is concerned with a just and good political order.

1.2.1 Distinction between Political Thought, Political Theory and Political Philosophy

Political thought and political philosophy have been used interchangeably. When we talk of the history of political thought, we refer to the classical tradition that began with Plato and ended with Marx though both Germino and MacIntyre consider Hegel's political philosophy as the ending of the classical tradition, for, both see Marx as re-interpreting Hegel. The works of the great philosophers depict not only the problems faced in their respective times, but also reflect their examination, enquiry and experience. Political philosophy may, thus, be said to be the political thought of a particular philosopher of a particular age. But political philosophy is larger than the political thought of a particular philosopher; it is the political thought of an age or of a community. Political thought is also intimately linked with political philosophy. It amplifies and clearly states political ideas, puts them in a time frame. So, political philosophy does include political thought even though all political thought is not political philosophy. The difference between political philosophy and philosophy is not about the mood or method but about the subject matter. Philosophy, according to Wolin attempts to understand the "truths publicly arrived and publicly demonstrable" while a political thinker tries to explain the meaning of the political and its link with the public sphere.

Political thought is a historical narrative, descriptive to a large extent. Though political thought is historical in its approacli, it is also, at the same time observational, empirical, operational, comparative and scientific. Political theory deals with concepts and ideas of a particular thinker. Its mode of inquiry is comparative and explanatory.

1.2.2 Relationship between Political Thought and Political Science

Political thought is the assemblage of the philosophies of the numerous political philosophers wherein each political philosopher theorises on political issues confronting his times. Each political philosopher discusses the political ideas of his times and the age he lives in. It is in this sense that the assertion is made that each philosopher is the child of his own age. It is through his own circumstances that each philosopher gets impetus as well as inspiration. He also, in this sense, represents his age. His philosophy/thought responds to the times he represents. His thought is his views on the numerous political concepts. Political thought becomes political thought by moving through political philosophy.

Political thought is history-oriented. It is the political history of a particular time. It is history vertically, and history horizontally. Vertically in the sense that a political philosopher theorises on concepts historically drawn. Plato discussed the concept of justice after having discussed the numerous notions of justice prevailing then: the father son (Cephalus-Polemerchus) traditional view of justice; (Thrasymachus) the radical view of justice and the two-brothers' (Glaucon and Adeimantus) pragmatic view of justice. As against the historically-horizontal view of justice, political thought discusses the concept of justice vertically when it examines the term 'justice' as it evolves in the writings of the subsequent political philosophers.

History is related to political science only casually, and to the extent it helps understand political phenomena. So understood, there is much that separates tlie two terms, political science and political thought. History is a characteristic feature of political thought; science, that of political science. The nature of political thought is philosophical while that of political science is empirical. Political thought is a value-laden exercise; political science is value-free. Political thought understands tlie present tlirough the help of past and thereafter builds future on the present; political science deals mainly with the present, and with the future, only marginally. These distinctions apart there is much that both need from each other.

Political science depends on political thought in more than one way. Political thought places data at the disposal of political science for the latter's scrutiny. A political philosopher's philosophy is examined by a political scientist through scientific tools. The political ideas of a political philosopher are examined in a way that he is described as an idealist or a scientist. There is a valid point when Plato is said to be the father of political philosophy, and Aristotle, as the father of political science—political idealism owes its inspiration to Plato, political realism, to Aristotle.

Political thinkers do not ignore scientific methodology while putting forth their political philosophy. Aristotle is said to have adopted the comparative method of analysing and classifying states of his times—he is said to have read and examined 158 constitutions of his age. Hobbes, and before him, Machiavelli too had followed the scientific method in expressing their ideas, if science means a study derived from intensive readings, experimentation, observations, leading to testable and consisterit conclusions. Marx, to take another example, is said to have given a scientific theory of socialism, I-Iowever, though all of them had reached certain finality in political theorising the subsequent developments negated much of this claim. As such political theory is always a mixture of fact and value incorporating the subjective considerations of the thinkers and the prevailing climate of his age.

1.2.3 Framework of Political Thought

Political thought is about politics or what is relevant to politics. It is an account given by numerous political philosophers relating to political institutions, political events, and political activities, their evolution and their growth. The content with which political thought relates itself is 'politics'. Politics, therefore, constitutes the very soul of political thought. What has Plato discussed in his *Republic*? The Republic is about justice in the state and in the individual and thereby leading to the ,construction of an ideal state. Aristotle's Politics is about the possible, the desirable, and the best practicable state. Locke, in his **Two** Treatises of Government, stated to have given the chief end of people uniting into commonwealth, and that chief end of the state is the protection of the property of the people and about limiting the powers of a state. Marx, in his numerous writings, sought to foresee a classless and a stateless society from where, .according to him, would begin the real freedom of man. It is, therefore, clear that political thought is the study of politics as expressed in the works of political philosophers.

Politics implies political activity. It is an activity, which helps a citizen participate in the composition and functioning of the government. It is an activity which helps the political parties seek and then rule the people. It is an activity through which political power is sought, maintained and retained. It is an activity of manipulation and bargaining, of seeking and exercising power. It is, therefore, rightly said to be an art of possible. It is about power, as Lasswell observed, who gets what, when and how. Politics, as an activity that helps secure political power, exercise it and retain it, is the central point of all political thought.

Political thought is thought about politics. When we take politics from its particularity to generality, we enter into the realms of political thought; when we take politics from its transitory and day-to-day form into its long-term and durable form, we tend to prepare the grounds of political thought. Political thought responds, in a general way, to the questions relating to politics, the state, political activities, state's policies and its functions, for various political philosophers, over the years, have done so. It seeks to find the permanent or near permanent solutions to the problems that confront politics. Political thought discusses not only the state, but also its highest form; it, through the philosophies of the political thinkers, not only examines the various theories of tlie origin of the state,. it seeks to develop a consistent theory regarding the origin of the state that appeals to our reasoning. The day-to-day issues relating to the nature of the state, forms of government, functions of the state, nature of political power become the issues discussed by tlie political philosophers. Machiavelli's reference of casual questions relating to the ruler's security became the characteristic questions of state-craft. Marx's attempt to analyse capitalism is a question of politics, but in the process of analysis, if Marx builds a socialist and communist society after capitalisin, it becomes a part of political thought.

Political thought obtains data from politics. Politics introduces political activities for discussion by the thinkers. Political thought, an the other hand, gives a direction to the activities concerning politics. Politics, during the Stuart period in England, for example, becomes the basis on which Hobbes and Locke build up their philosophies—Hobbes trying to prefer authority to freedom and Locke, doing just the reverse, i.e., giving freedom, a predominant place to authority. Marx, while analysing and studying capitalism and in the process seeking to obtain more truth, and thereafter keeping in the medieval and early history, was not only trying to know the functioning of the activities of capitalism, but was also building a new vision of political thought, creating history in what is known as the materialistic interpretation of history. Political philosophers are born in a particular political atmosphere; they study the atmasphere and in turn, build a new political environment, a new philosophy.

Politics assumes political activities; political thought studies them, seeks to know the objectives of those activities and gives them a shape, a vision and in the process, builds new concepts. Politics gives us the account of political activities; political thought gives up political education; politics is knowledge about the political conduct, political thought that of the theories of political conduct. Politics, therefore, identifies the way towards which political thought moves. Politics paves way for political thought, and political thought guides the future direction of politics. Marx's political theory inspired the Russians to launch the socialist revolution and the Soviet Union sought to guide the socialist movements in the underdeveloped world. The ever-continuing direction of politics makes the basis for political thought. If politics provides political thought, political thought provides politics a vision to look to.

1.3 WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT : NATURE AND CONTENT

It is impossible to imagine political thought of tlie West (for that matter, of any society without history, Political thought is related to politics, but it is history that provides political thought its very basis. We do not mean to say that political thought can be studied without politics, but we certainly want to insist that we cannot study political thought without history, Understanding political thought in the historical context is, in fact, understanding political thought in the real sense.' A political philosopher's political philosophy emerges in the age of philosopher breaths. In fact, his political philosophy is an answer to the times the philosopher lives in. His philosophy cannot be separated from history of his times. No political thinker builds up his political philosophy without taking an account of the age or his times. To put. the point in another sense, it may be said that a political philosopher is understood only in his milieu. Plato, though an idealist, could hardly be separated from his soil. his classification of states depicted the classification as it prevailed then; his theory of education was drawn heavily from what existed in Athens and Sparta then. Machiavelli's whole methodology depicted his debt to history. The contractualists—Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau—made history as the basis of their social contract theory. Karl Marx went all the way to advocate the materialistic interpretation of history. The objective conditions of history always provide the foundations on which the political philosophers have built their philosophy.

Furthermore, we can understand the political philosophy of a political thinker only in the historical context. Separate a political philosopher from his times, one will always find a Popper condemning Plato as an enemy of open society. A contextual study is always a safer method of understanding a text. A text without a context is a structure without a base. Machiavelli is better understood in the context of renaissance. Hobbes and Locke, with their views as apart as the north-south poles, can be better studied in the background of the English civil war. Marx can be understood in the light of the growing capitalism of the European/ Western society.

Western political thought is based on history, but its history, Professor Sabine rightly says, has no concluding chapter. It has grown and is growing, and in fact, will always keep growing. It has grown in a typical way; each subsequent philosopher condemns/criticises the philosophy or political ideas of an earlier philosopher, and in the process builds his own philosophy. Aristotle did so with Plato; Locke did so with Filmer; Bentham, with Blackstone; John Stuart Mill, with Bentham; Marx did so with Hegel, Adam Smith, Proudhon. So western political thought has grown; it proceeds on polemics, it changes, but it continues. It is continuing since the days of Plato and Aristotle. No wonder if then it is said that all philosophy is a footnote to Plato. Plato and Aristotle together gave the base on which stands the whole fabric of western

political thought; for political idealism and political realism are the two pillars of the western political philosophy from where rise numerous other related shades.

It is not easy to identify what the western political thought contains. The attempt, indeed, would be arbitrary. However, major contents of tlie western political thought can, for the sake of making a point, be stated, to be: (i) political institutions and procedures; (ii) political idealism and realism.

1.3.1 Western Political Thought, Political Institutions and Political Procedures

Western political thought deals, largely, with political institutions and procedures relating to them. If political theory deals with what is related to or is relevant to politics, political thought, coming as it is, from the writings of a host of political philosophers deals with political power, i.e., wherein it is vested and how it is exercised, and for what objects does it exist. The political thinkers from tlie earlier days to the present times have dealt with such questions relating to politics: Plato was more interested in the state as it ought to be than Aristotle who devoted all his energy on the best practicable state. The ancient Roman theorists talked about the nature and role of law in administration. With the medieval Church theorists, (Thomas Aquinas especially) political power was made to work under tlie divine law, the divine law under the natural law, the natural law under the eternal law. The early modern political theorists (Machiavelli and Bodin) were concerned with the supreme power (i.e., sovereignty) of the state or with actual and potential states). The contractualists (Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau) were eager to answer questions as to how the state came into existence and as to why people obey. laws. While political philosophy deals with institutions as they were, as they are, and as they need/ ought to be, Marx saw them in materialist terms. Sabine puts the point across when lie says, "An important function of political thought (meaning the theorists or the political thought) is not only to show what a political practice (i.e., politics, political activity of his time) is but also to show what it means. In showing what a practice means, or what it ought to mean, political theory can alter what it is."

Political philosophers have sought to understand tlie political institutions of their times, have given them the meanings and, in doing so, have suggested ways of altering them. Thus, we may say that political thought deals with institutions. Further more, and it is important as well, subsequent philosophers have after having suggested the changes in the institutions, maintained continuity, the political philosopher, to use Sabine's words, is a 'connector', a 'relator' who weaves the political fabric.

Western political thought is equally dominated, since the beginning, with an interest in the political procedures as to how and why political power is applied. Indeed, political thought deals witli political institutions, but it is also related to the working of political institution. The political pliilosophers were and are, primarily concerned not with what a state is or what it does, but also with how a state once entrusted with power, makes use of it. In other words, political thought has been, along with the study of political institutions, dominated with, if we want to give it a word, the rule of law, i.e., the procedure as to how the political power is put to use.

The rule of law means that there has to be the law that rules the people, and not the man that rules. It is a negation of the coercive, arbitrary and totalitarian rule. It is a justification of power and its use. The rule of law, as a concept, has certain features of its own: the law is to be applied impersonally; it cannot be used as a means for attaining individuals ends; it must be applied indiscriminately, though it is an act of particular circumstances, lias to be independent

from the particularities, it forbids people to use coercive power over others; it has to respond to the general norms of society and equilibrium; it has to be in consonance to 'reason'. Plato's ideal republic was a construction of reason and one of the major concerns of the Republic was the development of leadership that would not be corrupt and would remain subservient to its rational law. Aristotle preferred the rule of law to the rule of man, howsoever wise these may be. The Romans and the medieval thinkers advocate the efficacy of law: temporal or ecclesiastical. The contractualists did refer to the natural law. The jurists, from Austin to Blackstone, and Coke, never lost sight of the juridical and legal power. The Marxists denounce the State as an instrument of exploitation while the anarchists reject externally imposed authority. No modern political philosopher, if any, should preach a system without making rule of law as the foundation of society.

1.3.2 Western Political Thought, Political Idealism and Political Realism

The two major streams along with which the whole western political thought keeps marching on are: (i) political idealism or as one may see political philosophy, (ii) political realism, or as one may call it political science. Plato represents political idealism, and is rightly described as the father of political philosophy; Aristotle represents political realism, and is very aptly called the father of political philosophy.

Philosophy and science have dominated the course of the western political thought. For a long time in the history of the west, philosophy ruled political thought till about the first half of the 19th Century. It was then that science, owing largely to the development made in oilier social sciences and the urge to make political phenomena relevant, captured the attention of the political pliilosopliers, especially during tlie early years and the decades of 1950s-1960s in United States. Then came an era of debates between the normative political theory and the empirical one; tlie traditionalists and tlie beliaviouralist, the debate whether political theory is dead or alive. These debates characterised nothing but the tussle between philosophy and science, between idealism and realism. All these testified nothing but change and continuity in the western tradition. Berlin, in an article in Gould and Thurstoy, *Contemporary* ***Political*** *Thought*, writes, "Neo-Marxism, neo-Thomism, nationalism, historicism, existentialism, anti-essential liberalism and socialism, transposition *of* doctrines of natural rights and natural law into empirical terms...indicate not the death of a great tradition but, if anything, new and unpredictable developments." All political thought, as it has developed or evolved, has tossed between wliat it ought to be and what is and constantly moves between the two levels.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Western political thought, since its beginning from ancient Greece has dealt with diverse varieties of issues, and each philosopher has handled them from his own angle. Indeed, the political philosophers have, at times, disagreed on the solutions, but what is important is the continuity of the issues which have captured their intentions. The major issues relating to politics (i.e. the content of the western political tradition) have been the concerns of political philosophers. By attempting to find solutions to these political issues, the political theorists have given the western political thought not only a direction, but also a unity of thought processes. The significance of western political thought lies in the attempt of the political philosopliers to identify political issues, and provide solutions, thus giving political thought a meaning and a vision. Sheldon Wolin puts a point, saying, "the designation of certain activities and arrangements as political, the characteristic way that we think about them, and the coticepts

we employ to communicate our observations and reactions ... none of these are written in the nature of things but are the legacy accruing from the historical activity of political philosophers". He states these political issues: the power relations between government and subject, the nature of political authority, the problems created by social conflicts, purposes and objectives of political activity, and the character and utility of political knowledge.

1.4.1 characteristic Features of the Great Works of Western Political Thought

Any writing of a political discourse does not constitute part of the western political thought, but those which do are rightly described as the great works or the classics. It is a classic because it is a "class" by itself, "a work of the first rank and of acknowledged excellence" (Oxford English Dictionary). The classics in political thought include the works of Plato to that of Marx. The word 'classics' signify 'a conversation of many voices', 'a dialogue' between different perspectives and interpretations of reality as a work.

The works on political theory are written by political philosophers from time to time, and are related to a particular time, and yet they are timeless. They are timeless because they live in all times and live beyond their own time. They are timeless because they are relevant in all ages—part, present and future. They are timeless because they highlight problems which are problems for all times to come: corruption in politics had been a problem in Plato's times, and it is a problem even today. The works are timeless because they deal with issues confronting every age. They are timeless because the themes they touch reflect all times in all circumstances. They are timeless because they live in perpetuity.

The works on political theory are not outstanding because what is expressed therein is original, a 'who said it first' type. All the terms such as 'class', 'class struggle', 'proletariat', 'bourgeois', 'revolution', 'surplus value', which Marx used, Isaiah Berlin says, were not his, i.e., he was not the first person who used them, for they have been used by many scholars earlier. But that was not what goes to the credit of Marx. Marx's contribution lies in giving these terms new and definite meanings, and above all, a new political thought built on them. What is original may be an important factor, but what is more important is the understanding of a political situation and giving to the world, a new interpretation. That is where lies the importance of Mam, and, for that matter, of any political philosopher.

The political texts have contributed a great deal to the evolution of the specialised language, expressed through words, symbols, concepts and has become the vocabulary of political philosophy. The concept of 'general will' used by Rousseau is an example of such vocabulary. The words such as 'state of nature', 'civil society' and the like are other examples, These works in politics by numerous philosophers have enriched our literature.

1.4.2 Relevance of Western Political Thought

western political thought is political theory spread over history. It is the embodiment of the writings of numerous political philosophers. These writings are works in the field of Political Science which have stood the test of'time. They have survived through ages because of their intrinsic worth. They remain interesting and instructive because of their perennial themes, sound comprehension, subtle style and profound analysis. They wield great influence, and are, basically, suggestive.

The works of political thought are outstanding not because they are universally praised. In fact, they are neither praised nor denounced. Plato is rated very high by some like Barker, Wilde,

Whiteliead who go to the extent of saying *(Adventures of Ideas*) that all subsequent philosophy is a footnote to Plato, while others such as Popper, Crossman and Winspear, condemn him as fascist, totalitarian, and enemy of democracy (see Karl Popper, Open Society *and Its Enemies, 1945).* Machiavelli, to take another example, has been denounced by Catholic writers such as Butterfield, but has been admired by secular scholars such as Allen, Gramsci and Wolin. These works on political thought flourish because they are continuously studied, interpreted, and discussed, each subsequent reading gives a new and fresh orientation. They are a great aid to thinking. It is in this sense tliat they are suggestive. Plato does not impose his 'communistic' devices for acceptance, but he does stimulate our mind and reactivate it to think other possible devices. They are not only suggestive, but are essentially inspirational.

About the importance of the western political thought, Sheldon Wolin writes: "In teaching about the past theories, the theorist is engaged in tlie task of political unitation, that is of introducing new generations of the students to the complexities of politics and the efforts of the theorist to confront its predicaments, of developing the capacity for discriminating judgement, and of cultivating that sense of significance... which is vital to the scientific enquiry but cannot be furnished by scientific methods, and of exploring the ways in which new theoretical vistas are opened." Dilthey also says; "In studying classics, we construct our life experience with the aid of experiences of the great thinkers. Communication with their experiences enriches our own experience. After all, did not Karl Marx write: only music can awaken the musical sense in man."

The great tradition of Western political theory from Plato to Hegel deals exhaustively with the major contradictions and dimensions of the political process. Their importance is exhibited by the fact that though they were primarily concerned with tlie immediate problems besetting their contemporary situation, yet they were able to transcend their localism. In the process they were able to provide a framework of analysis tliat would enrich other periods as well by their penetrating insights and thoughtful reflections on perennial problems of politics, power, authority, legitimacy, equity and order. They are masterpieces as they do not belong to any one culture, civilisation or time but cherished by the entire humankind.

1.5 SUMMARY

Political thought may be understood as the description of the political ideas of a host of political philosopliers from the ancient Greeks, if we are trying to know what it is in the West. It is the sum-total of the ideas as matters relating to politics, state and government as expressed by thinkers from time to time. It is the narration of the thought of the political theorists. It is, as in the West, a history, a tradition and a culture. It is not the entire political science because it refuses to reject its historical basis. It is essentially historical, logical, ideological, evaluational and methodological.

Western political thought is rich in its contents. It has helped in stating the utility of political institutions, politicai procedures to be followed. It has given the western tradition values such as democracy, nationalism, liberty, justice and above all the two parallel pillars—idealism and realism--on which rest the major frameworks of political theory within which most theorists .operate.

Western political theory is objective, illuminative, ethical, and educative. Wolin concludes; "... since the history of political philosophy is... an intellectual development wherein successive thinkers have added new dimensions to the analysis and understanding of politics, an enquiry into that development is not so much a venture into antiquarianism as is a form of political education."

1.6 EXERCISES

1) What is political thought? Distinguish political thought from political theory and political philosophy?

2) Describe the nature of the western political thought.

3) What are, in your opinion, the major contents of western political thought?

4) Amplify the significance and relevance of western political thought.

UNIT 2 PLATO

Structure

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Introducing Plato

- 2.2.1 The Man and His Times
- 2.2.2 His Works
- 2.2.3 His Methodology

2.3 Philosophical Foundations of Plato's Political Theory

- 2.3.1 Socratic Base
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- 2.4.3 Community of Wives and Property
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2.5 Evaluation of Plato's Political Theory

- 2.5.1 Plato's Adversaries
- 2.5.2 Plato's Place in Western Political Theory

2.6 Summary

2.7 Exercises

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Plate (428/7-348/7 BC), a Greek philosopher, is one of the most creative influential thinkers in political philosophy. A great deal of writings on Plato has appeared from time to lime. Some have described Plato as the real intellectual founder of Christianity, 'a Christian before Christ', while others, of Marxian socialism. With some, Plato is a revolutionary, a radical at that, with others, a reactionary, a fascist at that. Plato's modern critics include C.M. Bowra (Ancient Greek *Literature*, 1933), W. Fite (The *Platonic* Legend, 1934), R.H. Crossman (Plato *Today*, 1937), A.D. Winspear (The *Genesis* d *Plato's Thought*, 1940) and Karl Popper *(The* Open Society and Its *Enemies,* Vol. I, 1945). Plato's admirers include Roland R. Levinson (In *Defence of Plato*, 1953) and John Wild (*Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law*, 1953). The descriptive and interpretative, and yet sympathetic account of Plato can be found in Ernest Barker (Greek Political *Theory: Plato and His Predecessors*, 1918) and Richard Lewis Nettleship (*Lectures* on *the* Republic d Pluto, 1929). This is merely a brief reading of works on/about Plato intended to introduce the great philosopher.

Political philosophy in the West begins with the ancient Greeks and Plato, inheriting a rich tradition of political speculation became its first embodiment. Plato was an idealist, for he laid down the basis for political idealism in the West. He was a philosopher, for he had seen the forms beyond those which could be seen as appearances. He was a rationalist, for he gave his philosophy a definite vision. He was a revolutionary, for he attempted to build a new and novel fabric on the ruins of the society around. Obviously, in the process, Plato drifted away from the prevailing system, and was, thus, consequently damned as utopian, impracticable, idealist and the like.

Plato's place, in western political thought, would always remain unparalleled. Numerous idealists regard Plato as their teacher and they feel great in calling themselves his disciples. Some admire Ptato while others condemn him, but none dare ignore him. It is here where Plato's greatness lies. He was, indeed, the idealist among the idealists, the artist among the artists, the philosopher among the philosophers, and the revolutionary among the revolutionaries.

2.2 INTRODUCING PLATO

2.2.1 The Man and His Times

Plato an aristocrat by both birth and temperament was born in democratic Athens, at a time when it was engaged in a deadly war against Sparta—The Peloponnesian War. The war lasted for about 28 years, and resulted in the fall of Athens. On his father's side, Plato traced his descent from Codrus, the last of the tribal kings of Africa, or even from the God Poseidon, and on the mother's side, from that of Solon, the great law-giver.

Plato was a child, when his father, Ariston, died, and his mother Perictione married Pyrilampes, an associate of Pericles, the statesman. As a young man, Plato had political ambitions, but he became a disciple of Socrates, accepting his basic philosophy and dialectical style of debate: the pursuit of truth through discussions and dialogues. In fact, Plato was disillusioned the way things were going around. He was invited to join public life when the Spartan puppet government, the Rule of Thirty, was established in 404 BC and where his maternal uncles, Critias and Charmides, were members of that group. Plato declined the offer, because he was disappointed by the functioning of political leadership, in general, and by his disgusting experiences of the two successive governments in particular, first by the Rule of Thirty, and later by the returned democratic faction, tlie former entrapping Socrates on charges of corrupting the youth, and the latter executing him on charges of impiety. All this convinced Plato that all politics are evil if not given proper management and direction. Plato himself writes in the *Seventh Letter,* supposed to be his autobiography, saying: "... eager though I had been at first to go into politics, as I looked at these things (the course of political life in the city-states) and saw everything taking any course at all with *no direction or management, I* ended by feeling dizzy. ... But at last I saw tliat as far all states *now existing are concerned, they* ***are*** *all badly governed.* For the condition of their laws is bad almost past cure, except for some miraculous accident. ***So,*** I was compelled to say, in praising true philosophy, that it was from it alone that one was able to discern all true justice, private as public. And so I said that *all the nations of men will never cease* ***from*** *private trouble until either the true and genuine breed of philosophers shall come to political office or until that of the rulers in the states shall by some divine ordinance take to the true pursuit of philosophy".* (Italic added)

After Socrates' execution in **399** BC, Plato, fearing for his own safety, and in all disillusionment, set himself for long travels temporarily abroad to Italy, Sicily and Egypt. In 388 BC, Plato, after his return to Athens, founded the *Academy,* the institution often described as the first European University. It provided a comprehensive curriculum, including such subjects as astronomy, biology, political theory, philosophy and mathematics, inscribing, on the very gate of the *Academy,* about mathematics: "Those having no knowledge of mathematics need not enter here."

Pursuing an opportunity to combine philosophy and practical politics, Plato went to Sicily in 367 to tutor the new ruler of Syracuse, Dionysius, the younger, in the art of philosophical rule. The experiment failed. Plato made another attempt to Syracuse again, in 361 BC, but once

again, he met with a failure. The last years of Plato's life were spent lecturing at the Academy, and in writing. Plato died at about the age of 80 in Athens in 348 or 347 BC leaving the management of the Academy to Specesippus, his nephew.

2.2.2 His Works

Plato's writings were in dialogue form, and the hero in all writings except in the Laws was none but his teacher, Socrates. In the dialogue-type writings, philosophical ideas were advanced, discussed, and criticised in the context of a conservation or debate involving two or more persons.

The collection of Plato's works includes 35 dialogues and 13 letters, though doubts are cast on the authenticity of a few of them. The ***dialogues*** may be divided into early, middle and later periods of composition. The ***earliest*** represent Plato's attempt to communicate the philosophy and dialectical style of Socrates. Several of these dialogues take the same form. Socrates encountering someone who claims to know much professes to be ignorant and seeks assistance from the one who knows. As Socrates begins to raise questions, it becomes, however, clear that the one reputed to be wise really does not know (i.e., Cephalus, Polemarchus, Thrasymachus on 'Justice') what he claims to know, and Socrates emerges as the wiser one because he, at least, knows that he does not know. Such knowledge, of course, is the beginning of wisdom. Included in this group of dialogues are ***charmides*** (an .attempt to define temperance), *Lysis* (a discussion of friendship), ***Leaches*** (a pursuit of the meaning of courage), ***Protagoras*** (a defence of the thesis that virtue is knowledge and can be taught), ***Euthyphro*** (a consideration of the nature of piety) and Book I of the ***Republic (A*** discussion of justice).

The ***middle*** and the ***lute*** dialogues of Plato reflect his own philosophical development. Most scholars attribute the ideas, in these works, to Plato himself, though Socrates continues to be the main character in many of the dialogues. The 'writings of the middle period include *Gorgias* (a consideration of several ethical questions), ***Meno*** (a discussion of the nature of knowledge) the ***Apology*** (Societies' defense of himself as his trial against the charges of atheism and corrupting Athenian youth), ***Crito*** (though half-finished, Socrates' defence of obedience to the laws 'of the state), Phaedo (the death scene of Socrates, in which he discusses the theory of Forms, the nature of the soul, and the question of immorality), the *Symposium* (Plato's outstanding dramatic achievement, which also contains several speeches on beauty and love), the *Republic* (Plato's supreme philosophical achievement), which is also a detailed discussion of the nature of justice).

The works of the later period include the ***Statesman,*** the ***Theaetetus (a*** denial that knowledge is to be identified with sense ,perception), ***Promenades*** (a critical evaluation of the theory of forms), Sophist (further consideration of the theory of Ideas, or Forms), *Philebus* (a discussion of the relationship between pleasure and the good), ***Timaeus*** (Plato's views on natural science and cosmology), and the Laws (a more practical analysis of political and social issues).

Of all his writings, the ***Republic*** (written over a period of Plato's early life as a writer, though finished around the year (i.e. about 386 BC) he established his Academy, the ***Statesman*** (written about the year 360 BC.), and the ***Laws*** (published after his death in 347 BC and written a couple of months earlier) may be said to have contained his entire political philosophy.

The ***Republic*** of Plato is by all means the greatest of all his works. It is not only a treatise on politics, but is also a treatise dealing with every aspect of human life. It, in fact, deals with metaphysics (the idea of the Good), moral philosophy (virtue of human soul), education (the

scientific training the rulers ought to have), politics (the Ideal State), the philosophy of history (the process of historical change from the Idea State to tyrannical regime), economy (communism of property and families)—all combined in one. The *Republic* has ten books whose subject-matter can be summed up as under:

i) Book I deals with man's life, nature of justice and morality.

ii) Books II to IV explain the organisation of the State, and of the system of education. Here, Plato lays down the features of good man, and ideal society, stating three elements in human nature (appetite, spirit and reason) and their corresponding characteristics in the ideal state (the producers, the auxiliaries, the rulers).

iii) Books V to VII, while stating the organisation of the ideal State, refer to such a system based on communism (of families and property) and headed by the philosopher-ruler.

iv) Books VIII and IX tell us how anarchy and chaos visit when the individuals and States get perverted.

v) Book X has two parts: Part I relates philosophy to art, and Part II discusses the capacity of the soul.

The *Statesman* and the *Laws* deal more with the actual states and ground realities, and as such do not have the same idealism and radical overtures, which the *Republic* possessed. Plato of the *Republic* is what is known to the world: the idealist, the philosopher and the radical.

2.2.3 His Methodology

It is usually said that Plato's methodology was deductive, also called the philosophical method. The philosopher, while following this methodology, has his pre-conceived conclusions and then seeks to see them in actual conditions around him: general principles are determined first, and thereafter, are related to particular situation. The deducfive method of investigation stands opposite to the inductive one where the conclusions are reached after studying, observing, and examining the data available at hand. Plato, it is said, followed the deductive method in so far as he attempted to find the characteristic features of the state lie founded in his imagination in the existing conditions prevailing in the city-states of the ancient Greek Society. Obviously, he did not find what he had imagined, and that was why he felt dizziness (See the quotation from *Seventh Letter* above).

That Plato's methodology is deductive is an important aspect, but it is, at the same time, an amalgam of numerous methodologies is something more important a fact if one seeks lo understand Plato. Nettleship is of the opinion that Plato's methodology is inductive as well, for it relates theory with practice. The fact is that Plato follows a variety of methods in expressing his political thought.

Plato's methodology is dialectical, for 'dialect' has been a tradition with the ancient Greeks. Socsates followed this methodology in responding to the views of his rivals by highlighting fallacies in their thinking. Plato, following his teacher Socrates, pursued this methodology in his search for 'the idea of good' and the way it could be reached. In the process, he was not imparting knowledge as much as he was trying to explain how the people could achieve it themselves. By following the dialectical method, Plato discussed the views of numerous individuals, examined each such view, and ultimately reached the conclusion. Plato's notion ofjustice was the result of debate, which went on among actors such as Cephales, Polemarchus,

Thrasymachus, Glaucon and Adeimantus—a dialectal method of reaching true meaning of justice.

Plato's methodology is analytical in so far as he divided a phenomenon into its possible parts, analysing each part fully and thereafter knitting the results of all parts together. We see in Plato an .analytical mind while he talked about what constitutes human nature: appetite, spirit and reason; he found these elements in body-politic as well: 'appetite' in the producing class,, 'spirit' in the soldiers' class; and 'reason' in the ruling class, thus stating that the constituents of tlie ideal state are producers (who provide tlie material base), soldiers (who provide the military base) and the rulers (who provide the rational base): "proper provision, proper protection and proper leadership" as C.L. Wayper calls them.

There is also a teleological method in Plato's thinking. Teleology means 'the object with an objective'. It follows that every phenomenon exists for itself and keeps moving towards its desired goal. Plato's teleological approach can well be seen in his theory of Forms. Plato was convinced that what appears is the shadow of what it can be. Form is the best of what we see—realities can attain their forms.

Plato is known for having pursued the deductive method of examining any phenomenon and also expressing liis philosophy. He, following the deductive methodology, had liad his pre-conceived conclusions and on their basis, constructed his ideal state—explaining how it would be organised, and what characteristic features it would have. The *Republic* was nothing but tlie creation of liis deductive method.

Analogy as a method has also been followed by Plato in his philosophy. Analogy means a form of reasoning in which one thing is inferred to be similar to another thing in a certain respect on the basis of known similarity in other respects. There is a clear analogical method in Plato, a method pursued by Socrates who found analogy in his thought processes by taking recourse to the realms of arts. Plato saw such analogies in the realms of the material world. For the producers of liis ideal state, Plato used tlie word 'human cattle', 'the copper' or 'the bronze'; for tlie soldiers, he used tlie word 'the watch dogs' or 'the silver'; and for the rulers, 'the shepherd' and 'the gold'. Such analogies are too common in Plato.

Plato pursued the historical method as well. His *Statesman* and the Laws have been written by following the liistorical methodology wherein he traced the evolution and growth of numerous types of state historically. Even in the Republic, Plato did not lose sight of history. He found the solution of all evils prevailing in the then city-states in history. Furthermore, the *Republic*, Barker tells us, "is not only a deduction from tlie first principles, it is also an induction from the facts of Greek life", meaning thereby that it is based on actual conditions existing then.

2.3 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PLATO'S POLITICAL THEORY

2.3.1 Socratic Base

The Socratic influence on Plato is well known. Professor Maxey (Political Philosophies, 1961) writes: "*In Plato Socrates lived* again. The unrivalled protagonist whose matchless logic, flashing irony, and sovereign intellect dominate the writings of Plato was no mortal of flesh and bone, but an apotlieosised Socrates, speaking not only what the actual Socrates might have spoken but also what the resplendent imagination of Plato would have him say, How much of what is

ascribed to Socrates in the works of Plato is of genuine Socratic origin and how much is of Platonic inversion, we cannot tell; but it is certain that the genius of Plato deserves no less credit than *the influence* of *Socrates"* (Italics added).

There was never a time when the Socratic image was out of Plato's mind. Plato would never find himself complete without his master, Socrates. He wrote with a sense of pride: "I thank God that I was born a Greek, and not Barbarian; a freeman and not a slave, a man, and not a woman; but above all, that I was born in the age of Socrates."

It is welt said, as George Sabine *(A* History of *Political Theory, 1973)* says, that the fundamental idea of the *Repzrblic* came to Plato in the form of his master's doctrine that virtue is knowledge: ".... The proposition", Sabine writes for Plato, "tliat virtue is knowledge implies that there is an objective good to be known and that it can in fact be known by rational or logical investigation rather than by intuition, guessworlc, or luck? The good is objectively real, whatever anybody thinks about it, and it ought to be realised not because men want it but because it is good". Plato gave his teacher's doctrine—virtue is knowledge—a prime place in his philosophy. Like his teacher, Plato firmly believed that virtue can be attained through knowledge. He, like his teacher, was convinced that human nature has four elements: reason, courage, temperance and justice. Through these, a man could attain virtue which makes man capable to work towards his end; it inspires man.

From Socrates, Plato learnt that the ruler, like a physician or a navigator is an artist and to that extent, administration is an art. Accordingly, taking a lesson from his teacher Socrates, Plato urged that the ruler should be one who knows the art, science and knowledge of administration. Socrates used to say: "The public is ill, we must cure our masters."

The Socratic imprint on Plato can be observed in every sentence the pupil wrote. Socrates was Plato's hero, the character from whose mouth Plato spoke both for himself and for the master. In most of Plato's writings, Socrates was seen almost everywhere, particularly in the *Repzrblic.* One may conclude with Sabine: "It may very well be, then, that some considerable measure of the political principles developed in the Republic really belonged to Socrates, and were learned directly from him by Plato. However, this may be, the intellectualist cast of the *Republic* the inclination to find salvation in an adequately educated ruler, is certainly an elaboration of Socrates' conviction that virtue, political virtue not excluded, is knowledge."

2.3.2 Theory *of* Ideas

Theory of Forms or Ideas is at the centre of Plato's philosophy. All his other views on knowledge, psychology, ethics, arid state can be understood in terms of this theory. I-lis theory of Forms or Ideas taken from the Greek word "Edios" is so inter-related to his theory of Knowledge tliat they can be understood together. Following Socrates, Plato believed that knowledge is attainable and believed it to have two essential characteristics: one, knowledge is certain and infallible; two, tliat it is to be contracted with which is only appearance. Knowledge, being fixed, permanent, and unchanging is, according Plato (following Socrates), identified with the realm of 'ideal' as opposed to the physical world which is seen as it appears. In other words. 'Form', 'Idea'. 'Knowledge'—all constitute what is ideal, and what appears to the eye is actual. There is, thus, a difference between what is ideal and what is actual; between what are 'forms' and what are appearances; and between what is knowledge arid what is an opinion; and between what 'can be' and what it is or what it is 'becoming'.

Plato's theory of Forms or Knowledge, or Idea is found in the *Republic* when he discussed the image of the divided line and the myth of the cave. In tlie former, Plato made a distinction

between two levels of awareness: opinion and knowledge. Claims or assertions about the physical or visible world are opinions. The higher level or awareness, on the other hand, is knowledge because there reason is involved.

The myth of the cave, as discussed by Plato, described individuals chained deep within tlie recesses of a cave where the vision is restricted and no one is able to see another man; the only visible thing is the wall of the cave. Breaking free, one of the individuals escapes from the cave into tlie light of the day. With the aid of the sun, that person sees for the first time the real world, telling his fellow men that the only thing they have seen heretofore are shadows and appearances and that the real world awaits them if only they are willing to struggle free of their bonds.

The essential characteristics of Plato's theory of Forms would, thus, include: (a) There is a difference between 'Form' or 'Idea'; 'Knowledge' and 'Appearance'; 'Actual', or 'Opinion' as there is difference between tlie ideal/invisible world and the physical/visible world. (b) The form is the ultimate object of appearance. (c) The actual world can attain the ideal world. (d) Knowledge can replace opinion and is attainable. (e) The visible world is the shadow of the real world. (f) What appears to be is not the Form, but is a form of the Form.

Plato explained that there is a difference between things which are beautiful and what beauty is: former lies in the realm of opinion while the latter, in the realm of knowledge. What is more important is Plato's insistence that the journey from 'appearances' to 'form' is possible through knowledge.

Plato had conceived the Forms as arranged hierarchically—the supreme form is the form of the Good, which like the sun in the myth of the cave, illuminates all the other ideas. The forms of the Good (i.e., tlie idea of the Good) represents Plato's movement in the direction of attaining goodness. In a way, the theory of Forms, as propounded by Plato, is intended to explain how one comes to know, and how things have come to be as they are, and also how they are likely to attain their ideals.

Plato's theory of Form is closely related to his belief that virtue is knowledge. According to Plato, the idea of virtue is the idea of action; the ultimate object of virtue is to attain knowledge; the knowledge of virtue is the highest level of knowledge; knowledge is attainable; and so is virtue attainable.

Plato's theory of Form has been extended by him to his political theory. The types of rulers Plato sought to have should be those who have the knowledge of ruling people. Until power is in the hands of those who have knowledge (i.e., the philosophers), states would have peace, so thought Plato.

2.4 POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF PLATO

2.4.1 Theory of Justice

For Plato, justice does not consist in mere adherence to tlie laws, for it is based on the inner nature of the human spirit. It is also not the triumph of the stronger over the weaker, for it protects the weaker against the stronger. A just state, Plato argues, is achieved with an eye to the good of the whole. In a just society, the rulers, the military, the artisan all do what they ought to do. In such a society, the rulers are wise; the soldiers are brave, and the producers exercise self-control or temperance.

'Justice' is the central theme of the Plato's Republic; its sub-title entitled "Concerning Justice". For Plato, justice is a moral concept. Barker says: "Justice is, for Plato, at once a part of human virtue and the bond which joins men together in tlie states. It makes man good and makes him social." Almost a similar view lzas been expressed by Sabine. He says: "Justice (for Plato) is a bond which holds a society together."

Justice gives the resemblance of what is used in the Greek language 'Dikaiosyne', a word which has a more comprehensive meaning than the word 'justice'. 'Dikaiosyne' means 'just' 'righteousness'. That is why Plato's notion of justice is not regarded legal or judicial, nor is it related to the realms of 'rights' and 'duties', it does not come within the limits of law; it is, as such, related to 'social ethics'. The essential characteristics of Plato's notion can be stated as these: (i) Justice is another name of rigliteousness. (ii) It is more the performance of duties than the enjoyment of rights. (iii) It is individual's contribution to the society in accordance with his abilities, capacities and capabilities. (iv) It is a social morality; man's obligation. (v) It is the strength of the social fabric as it involves a web of social system.

Before stating these views through Socrates, Plato refuted the then prevailing theories ofjustice. He denounced the father-son's (Cephalus- Polemarchus) theory ofjustice of traditional morality—justice giving every man his due, in other words, 'doing to others what is proper' (Cephalus) or 'doing good to friends and harming enemies' (Polemarchus). Plato recognised the worth of the traditional theory of justice which compels men to do what they are supposed to do or justice as phenomena creating unity. But he did not approve of justice being good for some and evil for others. Justice is, Plato held, good for all—the giver as well as the receiver, for friends as well as foes.

Plato also rejected Thrasymachus' radical notion of justice according to which justice is always in the interest of the stronger. He did agree with Thrasymachus that the ruler because he knows the art of ruling, has all the power but did not agree that the ruler rules in his own interest. Plato argued through Socrates that the shoe-maker does not wear all the shoes he makes; the farmer does not eat all the crops he prepares; accordingly the ruler does not make all the laws which benefit him. Plato agreed with Thrasymachus that justice is an art, and that one who knows the art is the artist, and none else.

And yet, there is another theory ofjustice advocated by two brothers—Glaucon and Adeimantus, Plato's own brothers. The theory is a conventional theory of justice and one which was favourably agreed to by Plato's hero, Socrates. Glaucon held the view that justice is in the interest of the weaker (as opposed, to Thrasymachus' view that it is in the interest of tlie stranger), and that it is artificial in so far as it the product of customs and conventions. Glaucon says: "...men do not suffer injustice freely and without restraint. But the weaker, finding that they suffer more injustice than they can inflict, make a contract one with another neither to do injustice, nor to suffer it to be done; and in pursuance of the contract, they lay down a law, the provisions of which are henceforth the standard of action and the code of justice". Plato did see limitations in Glaucon's theory by describing justice as natural and universal as against Glaucon's notion of it as 'artificial' and 'product' of conventions and customs.

Plato's own theory, as stems from the discussion which went on among characters such as Cephalus, Polemarchus, Thrasymachus, Glaucon, Adeimantus and Socrates, appears to be as under:

1) Justice is nothing but tlie principle that each one should pursue a function for which one is fitted by nature; each one to do one's own for one's own and.for common good.

2) Justice means specialization and excellence.

3) Justice helps people to be in a society; a bond that holds society; a harmonious union of individuals, of classes with the state. It is a bond that brings together individuals, classes and state into one frame.

4) Justice is both a 'public' and 'private' virtue. It aims at tlie highest good of the individual (private), and of the whole society (public).

Plato's theory ofjustice leads to division of labour, specialisation and efficiency. It is, therefore, a principle of specialisation, unity, non-interference and harmony. His notion of justice implies a social virtue, a private and public ethics and a moral dictate. And yet Plato's theory ofjustice is totalitarian in the sense that it subordinates individual to the slate.

2.4.2 Scheme of Education

Plato's *Republic* is not merely an essay on government, it is, as Rousseau informs us, a treatise on education. The essence of his whole philosophy, as stated in the Republic, was to bring about reforms (political, economic, social as well as moral, intellectual, cultural) in the ancient Greek society. The object of tlie Republic was to locate and thereafter establish justice in the ideal state and his scheme of education aimed, precisely, at that. For Plato, social education is a means to social justice. It is, therefore, not incorrect to say that education, for Plato, had been a solution to all the vexed questions. Education, as Klowsteit tells us, has been an instrument for moral reforms.

Plato's theory of education is an attempt to touch the evil at its very source. It is an attempt to cure a mental malady by a mental medicine. Barker rightly says that Plato's scheme of education brings the soul into that environment which in each stage of its growth is best suited for its development.

Plato's theory of education is important in his political theory. It is important in so far as it provides a basis for the ideal state designed to achieve justice. Following his teacher, Socrates, Plato had a belief in the dictum that Virtue is knowledge and for making people virtuous, he made education a very powerful instrument. Plato also believed that education builds man's character and it is, therefore, a necessary condition for extracting man's natural faculties in order to develop his personalities. Education is not a private enterprise for Plato; it is public in so far it provides a moral diagnosis to the social ailments. Barker, speaking for Plato, says that education is a path of social righteousness, and not of social success; it is a way to reach the truth. Education, Plato emphasised, was necessary for all the classes in society, especially for those who govern the people. The rulers, for Plato, are supreme because they are educated by philosophers, for the rule of the philosophers, as Barker explains, is the result of the education they receive.

Plato, in his proposed scheme of education, accepts certain assumptions: (i) soul, being initiative and active, throws up, through education, the best things that are latent in it; (ii) education moulds the character of the growing young; it does not provide eyes to the blind, but it does give vision to men with eyes; it brings soul to the realms of light; it activates and reactivates the individual (iii) each level of education has a pre-assigned function: the elementary education helps individuals give direction to their powers; middle level education helps individuals understand their surroundings; and higher education helps individuals prepare, determine and decide their course of education; (iv) education helps people earn a living and also helps them to become better human beings.

Plato does not want to make education a commercial enterprise. He wants, as Sabine tells us, that education must itself provide the needed means, must see that citizens actually get the training they require, and must be sure that the education supplied is consonant with the harmony and well-being of tlie state. "Plato's plan, Sabine states, "is therefore, for a state-controlled system of compulsory education. His educational scheme falls naturally into parts, the elementary education, which includes the training of the young persons up to about the age of twenty and culminating in the beginning of military service, and the higher education, intended for those selected persons of both sexes who are to be members of the two ruling classes and extending from the age of twenty to thirty-five".

Plato's scheme of education had both the Athenian arid the Spartan influence. Sabine writes: "Its must genuinely Spartan feature was the dedication of education exclusively to civic training. Its content was typically Athenian, and its purpose was dominated by the end of moral and intellectual cultivation." The curriculum of the elementary education was divided into two parts, gymnastics for training the body, and music for training the mind. The elementary education was to be imparted to all the three classes. But after the age of twenty, those selected for higher education were those wlio were to hold the highest positions in the guardian class between twenty and thirty five. The guardians were to be constituted of the auxiliary class, and the ruling class. These two classes were to have a higher doze of gymnasium and music, greater doze of gymnastics for the auxiliaries, and greater doze of music for the rulers. The higher education of the two classes was, in purpose, professional, and for his curriculum Plato chose the only scientific studies—mathematics, astronomy and logic. Before the two classes could get on to their jobs, Plato suggested a further education rill the age of about fifty, mostly practical in nature.

In conclusion, we may identify the characteristic features of Plato's scheme of education as these: (i) His scheme of education was for the guardian class, i.e., the auxiliary class and the ruling class; he had ignored the producing class completely; (ii) I-Iis whole educational plan was state controlled; (iii) It aimed at attaining the physical, mental, intellectual, moral development of human personality; (iv) It consisted of three stages: elementary between *6* to 20; higher, between 20 and 35; practical, between 35 and *50;* (v) It aimed at preparing the rulers for administrative statesmanship; soldiers for militarily skill; and producers for material productivity; (vi) It sought to bring a balance between the individual needs and social requirement,

Plato's plan of education was undemocratically devised in so far as it ignored the producing class. It was limited in nature and was restrictive in extent by laying more emphasis on mathematics than on literature. The whole plan was unexpectedly and unduly expensive. It was un-individual in the sense that it restricted man's thinking process and his autonomy. It was too abstract and too theoretical, so much so, it lost sight of administrative intricacies.

2.4.3 Community of Wives and Property

Plato's consistency is beyond any doubt. If his theory of communism of property is a logical corollary ol his conception of justice, and his theory of communism of families was a logical corollary of his views on communism of property. Justice, as Plato had put it, was the very objective of the ideal state. The ideal state, Plato went on to say, consisted of the three classes—those of the rulers, of the auxiliaries, and of the producers, each doing its own assigned job. Justice would be ushered in, Plato argued, if the guardians (the rulers and tlie auxiliaries) do away with property, for property represents the elements of appetite, and to do away with property demands the communism of families. As Barker, writes for Plato: "The abolition of family life among the guardians is, thus, inevitably a corollary of their renunciation of private

property. According to Dunning: "As private property and family relationships appear to be the chief sources of dissension in every community, neither is to have recognition in the perfect state." According to Sabine, so firmly was Plato convinced of the pernicious effects of wealth upon government that lie saw no way to abolish the evil except by abolishing wealth itself. The same is true also of Plato's purpose in abolishing persons, as another (first being property) potent rival to tlie state in competing for tlie loyalty of rulers. "Anxiety for one's children", Sabine concludes on behalf of Plato, "is a form of self-seeking more insidious than the desire for property...".

Plato's communism, to put his theory very briefly, takes two forms. Sabine says: "The first is the prohibition of private property, whether houses as land or money, to the rulers (and auxiliaries) and the provision that they shall live in barracks and have their meals at a common table. The second is the abolition of a permanent monogamous sexual relation and the substitution of regulated breeding at the behest of the rulers for the purpose of securing the best possible offspring". This two-type of communism is applied on the rulers and the auxiliaries called the guardians by Plato.

Plato's argument for communism of property and families was that tlie unity of the state demands their abolition. "The unity of the state is to secure; property and family stand in the way; therefore, property and marriage must go" (Sabine).

To find similarities between Plato's and Marx's communism, as Professor Jaszi or Professor Maxey do, is to draw wrong parallels. Plato's communism has a political objective—an economic solution of a political ailment; Marx's communism has an economic objective—a political solution of an economic ailment. Plato's communism is limited to only two classes—the rulers and tlie auxiliaries while Marx's communism applies to tlie whole society. Plato's basis of communism (or property) is material temptation and its nature is individualistic while Marx's basis is tlie growth of social evils, which result from the accumulation of private property.

Plato's reasons for offering his scheme of community of wives and property were the following: Those who exercise political power should' have no economic motives, and those who arc engaged in economic activities should have no share in political power. Pragmatic as his message was, Plato had learnt from the Spartan successful experiment whose citizens were denied the use of money and where they all had to consume everything in common.

Plato's defense of the communism of families was no less effective. Barker sums up Plato's argument in this regard: "Plato's scheme has many facets and many purposes. It is a scheme of eugenics; it is a scheme for the emancipation of women; it is a scheme for the nationalisation of the family. It is meant to secure a better stock, greater freedom for women and for men—to develop their highest capacities, a more complete and living solidarity of tlie state or at any rate, of the rulers of tlie state."

Plato's plan of communism has been denounced by many, from his disciple Aristotle down to Karl Popper. Aristotle criticises Plato for having ignored the natural instinct of acquisition, making the scheme partial in so far as excluding tlie producing class from it and declaring it ascetic and aristocratic, surrendering all the best for the guardians. Others, including Karl Popper, condemn Plato's scheme of communism on numerous grounds, especially the following:

a) It is doubtful if communism of families would bring greater degree of unity by making the guardians a single family.

b) Communism of wives and families, that Aristotle hints at, was bound to create confusion if not disorder—one female would be wife of all the guardians and one male, the husband of all the females. One may add, as Aristotle really does: a father would have thousand sons, and a son, thousand fathers.

c) Common children would tend to be neglected, for everybody's child would be nobody's baby.

d) It is also doubtful if tlie state-controlled mating would ever be workable; it would rather reduce men and women to the levels of mere animals by suggesting temporary marital relationship.

e) The whole scheme of communism is too rigid, too strict, and too stringent.

f) Plato's communism of families suggests a system of marriage which is neither monogamy, nor bigamy, nor polygamy, nor polyandry.

g) Plato's theory of communism is too idealistic, too utopian, too imaginary, and accordingly, far away from tlie realities of life.

2.4.4 Ideal State : The Ruling Class/Philosophic Ruler

In all his works on political theory, there is a strong case, which Plato builds in favour of an omni-competent state. Living is one thing, but living well is another and perhaps a different thing altogether. It is the job of the government, Plato affirmed more than once, to help people live a complete life. The problem which Plato addressed was not how best a government could be created but how best a government could be installed. It was, thus, with Plato, a matter of just not a government, but a just government; just not a government any how, but a perfect government; just not a government any way, but an ideal government, the ideal state.

In the Republic, Plato constructs the ideal state in three successive stages: The *healthy state* or what Glaucon termed as 'tlie city of pigs', is more or less a social grouping where men get together, on the principles of 'division of labour', and of 'specialisation', to meet their material needs; the *luxurious state*, arising out of tlie men of a healthy state to quench their thirst of 'sofas and tables', also of 'saucer and sweets', and requiring, thus, a band of 'dogs keen to scent, swift of foot to pursue, and stray of limb to fight,' the auxiliaries; the just *state*, the ideal one, where among the 'dogs', the philosophers are able to judge by 'the rule of knowing; whom to bite,' that is, 'gentleness to friends and fierceness against enemies', are there to guide the rest. Thus, there is a clear hint of tlie classes, which constitute the ideal state—the producing class, the auxiliary class, arid the ruling class. In tlie Republic, the state is led by tlie philosophers; in the *Statesman*, it is a mixed state ideally led by statesman, and in the *Laws*, it is actual state as it is, led by the laws. The ideal state of tlie *Republic* is the *form* of the historical (Politics) and *actual* (laws) states.

Plato's rulers, either the philosophers of the *Republic*, or statesman of the *Politics* or the impersonal laws of the *Laws* have the responsibilities of preserving and promoting the interests of the whole community. Their aim is, as Plato expressed in the *Republic*, giving order and happiness to the state: "Our aim is founding tlie state", Plato continues, "was ... the greatest happiness of the whole; we thought that in a state which is ordered with a view to the good of the whole we should be most likely to find justice." Or again, "we mean our guardians to be true saviours and not the destroyer of the State." In the Politics, Plato said that the governors ought to "use their power with a view to the general security and improvement." In the *Laws*, Plato was worried about the "wetl-being of the state." What he wanted were rulers, and not pretenders—rulers who tnust know their job and should be able to perform it in the interests

of all. They should be wise, courageous, temperate and just—the qualities as expressed in the *Republic*; wise and versed in the traditional customs, tlie unwritten laws of the divinely remote past, as in the Politics, and work under the dictates of the written laws as in the *Laws*.

The use of analogies in tlie writings of tlie ancient Greek thinkers was a usual exercise, showing, as Barker says; "a characteristic of the transition from tlie old philosophy of nature to the new philosophy of man." His use of analogies demonstrated liis love for the art of ruling, planning his ruler in the image of an artist. There are the 'dog-soldiers' for guarding and watching the human cattle and also for keeping tlie wolves—enemies—at bay; 'the shepherd—guardian' for looking after the human sheep—all these are mentioned in the Republic. There is 'the physician-statesman' responsible for the general health of the ailing-state; 'the pilot-statesman', skilled in his art, wise in his job and rich in his experiences, for orderitig the affairs of the ship of the state; 'tlie weaver-states-man' for a creating a 'just harmony' uniting different elements of human nature—all these are mentioned in tlie Politics.

Knowledge is the merit which qualifies the rulers to rule tlieir people. It helps them, Plato said, perform their responsibilities in the most perfect manner. The rulers, he insisted, ought to know the science of politics; they ought to use this science, he held, as the artist uses his art. What Plato urged was tlie very competence of tlie rulers and strict discipline in the performance of their functions. His rulers do the job of ruling as tlie peasant docs the tilling; tlie peasant is a peasant because he knows tlie job of tilling, so that ruler is a ruler because lie knows the job of ruling.

Plato did not take any chance which could put the rulers away from tlieir ideals. So there are the communistic devices applied on the rulers as in the *Republic*; tlie promises froni them to be alive to the divinely customs as in tlie *Politics*, and tlie demands from them to be loyal to the written codes as in the *Laws*. Plato wanted the art and science of politics to be directed toward tlie attainment of a just order in which each individual, or each group of individuals does his own appointed function. This is why he makes his rulers experts in their branch of business; this is why lie makes liis rulers undergo an intensive system of education and training; this is why lie makes liis rulers lead a life clevoid of any personal temptations. His anxiety was to build a perfect and hierarchical society where tlie rulers are expected to uphold and maintain ideals of justice (Republic), sustentation (Politics) and public good ***(Laws)***. Plato vested in his philosophic ruler absolute powers on the premise that reason ought to be supreme. However, what lie did not safeguard, as rightly pointed out by Popper against was tlie possible abuse and misuse of unchecked absolute powers no matter how just or wise the ruler might be.

Plato writes in the *Laws*: "[I]f anyone gives too great a power to anything, loo large a sail to vessel, too much food to tlie body, too much authority to the mind, and does not observe the mean, everything is overthrown, and, in the wantonness of excess runs in the one case to disorders, and in tlie other to injustice ....". His rulers have power, they have power because they have responsibilities, maintaining 'the rule of justice', allowing, 'no innovation in the system of education', and watching 'against the entry either of poverty or of wealth into the state', and keeping the size of the state 'neither large nor small, but one and sufficient.'

2.5 EVALUATION OF PLATO'S POLITICAL THEORY

2.5.1 Plato's Adversaries

Plato has been interpreted in so different ways that they make conclusions wry. If for one set of people, Plato is a revolutionary arid a prophet of socialism, for others, he is a fore-runner

of fascism and an advocate of reactionaries. Aristotle, Plato's disciple, was his greatest critic. R.H.S. Crossman (*Plato* Today), C.M. Bowra (Ancient Greek Literature), W. Fite (The Platonic *Legend*), B. Farrington (Science of Politics in the *Ancient* World), A.D. Winspear (The Genesis of *Plato's Thought*) Karl Popper *(The* Open Society *and* its *Enemies*) are men who have condemned Plato. G.C. Field *(Plato and* his *Contemporaries*), Ronald B. Levinson *(In Defence of Plato),* John Wild (*Plato's Modern Enemies* and the *Theory* of Natural *Law),* A.E. Taylor (*The Man and His* Work), Ernest Barker (Greek Political Theory), R.L. Nettleship (Lectures on the *Republic* of *Plato*) admire him.

Of all the critics, Popper's criticism of Plato is the most devastating. Plato, to Popper, was an enemy of the open society. Popper holds the view that Plato advocated a closed system, which was not different from an idealised reproduction of the tribalism of the past. To Popper, Plato's philosophy and its theories—of justice, communism, and education etc, are but so many subtle ways of justifying authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Plato's philosophy sought to perpetuate or eternalise the ideal—the ideal of anti-democracy, anti-change and anti-open society. Popper's tirade against Plato can be summed up in his own words: "Plato's fundamental demands can be expressed in either of the two formula, the first corresponding to his idealist theory of change and rest, the second to his naturalism. The idealist formula is: Arrest all political change. Change is evil, rest divine. All change can be arrested if the state is made an exact copy of its original, i.e., of the Poem or Idea of the city. Should it be asked how this is practicable, we can reply with the naturalistic formula: Back fo *the Nature.* Back to the original state of our forefathers, the primitive state founded in accordance with human nature, and therefore, stable; back to the tribal patriarchy of tlie time before tlie Fall, to the natural class rule of the wise few over the ignorant many." (Popper Italics)

Condemning Plato's political programme, Popper says that it "far from being morally superior to totalitarianism, is fundamentally identical with it." Popper asserts that Plato's ideal state would lead to a closed system. To quote Popper: "Excellent as Plato's sociological diagnosis was, his own development proves that the therapy he recommends is worse than the evil lie tries to combat. Arresting political change is not the remedy; it cannot bring happiness. We can never return to the alleged innocence and beauty of tlie closed system. Our dream of heaven cannot be realised on earth. Once we begin lo rely upon our reason, and to use our powers of criticism ... we cannot return to a state of implicit submission to tribal magic. For those who have eaten of the tree of knowledge, paradise is lost. The more we try to return to the heroic age of tribalism, the more surely do we arrive at the inquisition, at the secret police, and at a romanticised gangsterism. Beginning with the suppression of research arid truth, we must end with the most brutal and violent destruction of all that is human. There is no return to a harmonious state of' nature. *If we turn* buck, *then* we *must go* the *whole way ...we must return* to the best" (Popper's Italics).

John Jay Chapman, a devout anti-Platonist, called Plato 'the prince of conjurers'. W. Fite holds the view that Plato had the vacillations of an adolescent. R.H.S. Crossman says that Plato was wrong, both for his times and for ours.

Plato's adversaries have been active in all the ages beginning fsom his own days and even including his pupils, Aristotle particularly. Plato's enemies have been really unfair to him. Popper's condemnation is an illustration of such treatment of Plato. If Plato were truly totalitarian, then he would have built a police state; would have made provisions for secret police; would have suggested severe and harsh punishments; would have provided concentration camps. Would have landed terror. But nowhere do we find Plato saying all this. On the contrary, lie pictures an ideal state whose aim is ethical, whose rulers are guided by a rational plan and who have to have a particular type of education, a systematic training and a life of dedication and almost of renunciation.

2.5.2 Plato's Place in Western Political Theory

Plato's political philosophy, which emerges from his writings has its special importance in the history of the Western Political Theory. Jowett (*The Dialogues of Plato*, 1902) rightly describes Plato as the father of philosophy, politics and literary idealism. He says: "[N]owhere in Plato is there a deeper irony or a greater wealth of humor or imagery, or more dramatic power (as in tlie *Republic*). Nor in any other of his writings is the attempt made to interweave life and speculation, or to connect politics to philosophy." Professor Maxey (Political *Philosophies*, 1961) writes: "... But tlic midrib of his (Plato's political philosophy was timeless and universal. As a Greek of the post-Periclean period, he was an anti-expansionist, a disbeliever in democracy, a foe of commercialism, and an admirer of Lacedaemonian militarism. But as an analyst of social and political institutions and a seeker of the ideal lie was the forerunner and inspirer of most of the anti-materialistic political philosophies, reconstructive political theories, and radical political programs which have appeared in subsequent ages". For Emerson, "Plato was philosophy and philosophy, Plato".

Plato's contribution to tlie western political thought is without any parallel. He has given it a direction, a basis and a vision. Political idealism is Plato's gift to western political philosophy. **An** idealist, as Plato really was, he was more interested in future than in the present; in a model that a state can be than in tlic actual state; in the form of the state than in a state that appears at present. This docs not mean that the idealists do not take into account what the present or tlic actual statc is. In fact, tlic idealists build the fabric of the future on tlie basis of tlie present; it is the present that dictates their future. Plato's idealism was grounded in tlie circumstances of the then city-states; his was a movement to change tlie Greek of his own times, not for the past as Popper says, but for a future, for a model and that too through a rational plan. Accordingly, Plato can bc described as an idealist, but not a utopian; a physician and not a life-giver; a reformer and not a dreamer.

There is originality in Plato in so far he had build not very uncommon institutions on postulates he thought basic. Plato's significance lies in making education as the bedrock on which is structured tlie whole ideal state. If the whole scheme of education is practised completely, the development of the statc is certainly assured. Sound education and sound nurturing are guarantees for full-fledged betterment. He was of the opinion that the state could be structured afresh as against Popper's view of piecemeal social engineering.

Plato is a philosopher and at tlic same time an idealist. A philosopher is one who thinks more than lie sees; he sees things in general, and avoids what is particular. Plato was such a philosopher who saw the general deteriorating conditions of the city-states of his time. He sought to diagnose the ailment, rather than tlie symptoms. What ailed tlie ancient Greek society was the ever-sickening corrupt rulers, and his diagnosis, then, was to give tlie people a set of rulers who knew the art of ruling. Plato was such a philosopher who never lost sight of philosophy, one that was idealistic, purposive, future-oriented and normative, and yet within the framework of actual conditions. He did reach the heights but lie remained within tlie reacli of what was practicable. He **was,** thus, a philosopher who remained within the boundaries of realities; he was a philosopher wlio looked toward the sky but with his feet grounded on tlie earth. Plato may not be a saint, but he is a teacher of all of us. We can criticise him but we cannot ignore him.

Plato's another contribution to western political thought was liis radicalism. He innovated novel ideas and integrated them skillfully in a political sclieine. His radicalism lies in tlie fact that his rulers are rulers without comforts and luxuries possessed by men of property; they are masters without owning anything; they arc parents without calling tlie children tlieir own; they have

powers, absolute powers but they also have absolute responsibilities. It was a plan to organise the entire social order on .the basis of knowledge, skill and expertise. It was a total negation to the Periclean idea of participatory democratic order with emphasis on capacity and individuality rather than equality.

Plato's attempt in the *Republic* is to portray a perfect model of an ideal order. With primacy of education he conceived of an elite which would wield power not for themselves but for the good of the society. But there was no prescription for checking degeneration or abuse of power. It is because of such an important omission, his more realistic pupil, Aristotle conceived of an ideal state not on the blueprint of the Republic but of the *Laws*. The beginning of the modern democratic order based on the rule of law could be traced to the ***Laws*** and not to the *Republic*.

However, Plato's place in western political thought is matchless. His legacy spreads with age and it is really difficult to prepare a list of subsequent political philosophers who might not have Plato's imprint, either explicitly or implicitly.

2.6 SUMMARY

Plato was one of the prolific writers, a philosopher, of the ancient Greece, born in 428/7 BC and died in 348/7 BC. His works have come to us in the forms of dialogue which have an appeal to the educated, and an interest in philosophy. He was a great political philosopher. In him, myth, metaphor, humor, irony, paths and a rich Greek vocabulary captivate those who read him as his philosophy leads to the most pressing issues of the mind and reality. Plato was influenced by his teacher, Socrates, and by the then conditions of the ancient Greek.

The theme of Plato's social and political thought, especially of the *Republic* is that philosophy alone offers true power—it also is the way to knowledge. The philosopher knows the forms, the ideals. He alone is fit to rule—those who are guided by reason and knowledge alone should have the power. They alone are capable of establishing justice, to see that everyone contributes to the best of his abilities, of maintaining the size and purity and unity of the state. These rulers, possessed with the element of gold, together with man of silver and of copper, constitute the ideal state. Justice, for Plato, lies in each class (and in each individual in his own class) doing his own job. Plato gives to these three classes education which each one needs. Plato, being a perfectionist, does not take any chance and seeks to have a corruption-free administration. That is why he applies communistic devices on the guardians.

Plato's friends and foes are numerous. His admirers describe him as an idealist and a philosopher, as also a teacher of all; his adversaries condemn him as the enemy of open society, an anti-democrat and a fascist. His contribution to western political thought is without any parallel. He has given western political thought a basis, a vision and a direction.

2.7 EXERCISES

1) Critically examine Plato's Theory of Education.

2) Evaluate Plato's Theory of Justice is the light of the prevailing theories of justice.

3) Explain the importance of community of wives and property in Plato's ideal state.

4) Discuss Plato's theory of ideal state. What qualities does Plato suggest for the ruling class?

5) Assess Popper's critique of Plato.

6) Evaluate Plato's political philosophy. What is Plato's contribution to western political thought?

UNIT 3 ARISTOTLE

Structure

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Introducing Aristotle

3.2.1 The Man and His Times

3.2.2 His Works

3.2.3 His Methodology

3.3 Philosophical Foundations of Aristotle's Political Theory

3.3.1 Plato and Aristotle

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3.4.3 Theory of Revolution

3.4.4 Theory of State

3.5 Evaluation of Aristotle's Political Theory

3.5.1 Influence

3,6 Summary

3.7 Exercises

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Unlike Plato, Aristotle (384-322 BC) was not an Athenian by birth, He was born in Stagira, was a pupil of Plato and subsequently taught Alexander and then established his own school, the Lyceum. Aristotle's relationship to Plato was similar to J.S. Mill's relationship to Bentham as both Aristotle and Mill repudiated major portions of the teachings of their master—Plato and Bentham respectively. This fundamental difference between Plato and Aristotle led them to initiate two great streams of thought which constitute what is known as the Western Political Theory, From Plato comes political idealism; and from Aristotle comes political realism. On this basis, it is easy to understand the comment by Coleridge, the poet, that everyone is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian.

The difference between Plato and Aristotle is the difference between philosophy and science. Plato was the father of Political Philosophy; Aristotle, the father of Political Science; the former is a philosopher, the latter is a scientist; former follows the deductive methodology; the latter, an inductive one. Plato portrays an unrealisable utopia—the ideal state whereas Aristotle's concern was with the best possible state. Professor Maxey rightly (Political Philosophies, 1961) says: "All wlio believe in new worlds for old are the disciples of Plato; all those who believe in old worlds made new by the tedious and toilsome use of science are disciples of Aristotle."

Aristotle, like Plato, wrote voluminously. We know Aristotle has written on many subjects, His admirer claimed for him the title of 'The Master of Them That Know'. For about thousand years, according to Maxey: "Aristotle on logic, Aristotle on mechanics, Aristotle on physics, Aristotle on physiology, Aristotle on astronomy, Aristotle on economics, and Aristotle on politics was almost the last word. The unimpeachable authority than which none was more

authentic." "I-lis information was so much vaster and more exhaustive, liis insight so much more penetrating, his deductions so much more plausible than true of any of his contemporaries or any of his successors prior to tlie advent of modern science that he became the all-knowing master in whom tlie scholastic mind could find no fault" (Maxey). Whatever subject lie treated, lie treated it well; whatever work lie wrote, he made it a master piece. His legacy, like that of his teacher Plato, was so rich that all those who claim themselves as realists, scientists, pragmatists and utilitarian look to him as teacher, guide and philosopher.

Referring to Aristotle's contribution to social science, Abraham Edel (Aristotle's International Encyclopaedia of Social Science) says: "Aristotle's distinctive contributions to social science are: (a) a methoclology of inquiry that focuses on man's rationality yet stresses the continuity of man and nature rather than a basic cleavage; (b) the integration of the ethical and the social, as contrasted with the dominant modern proposals of a value-free social science and an autonomous ethics; and (c) a systematic foundation for morals, politics and social theory and some basic concepts for economics, laws and education."

3.2 INTRODUCING ARISTOTLE

3.2.1 The Man and His Times

Aristotle (384-322 BC) was born at Stagira, then a small Greek colony close to the borders of the Macedonian kingdom. His father, Nicomachus was a physician at the court of Amyntas II. A longer part of his boyhood was spent at Pella, the royal seat of Macedonia. Because of his descent from a medical family, it can well be imagined that Aristotle must have read medicine, and must have developed his interest in physical sciences, particularly biology. Upon the deatli of his parents, Aristotle's care fell upon a relative, Proxenus, whose son, Nicaner, Aristotle later adopted.

Although not an Athenian, Aristotle lived in Athens for more than half of his life, first as a student at Plato's *Academy* for nearly twenty years (367-347 BC), and later as the master of his own institution, the *Lyceum,* for about twelve years or so, between 335 and 323 BC. Me died a year later in Chaleis (the birth place of his mother, Phalstis) while in exile, following fears of being executed by the Athenians for his pro-Macedonian sympathies: "I will not allow the Athenian to commit another sin (first being the execution of Socrates in 399 BC)", he had said. During the intervening period of twelve years (34.7-335 BC), lie remained away from Athens, his "journeyman period." Between 347-344 BC he stayed at Assus with one Hermias, a tyrant, and an axe-slave but a friend of the Macedonian King, Philip. He married Hermias's niece and adopted daughter, Pythias, and on whose death, later he began a union, without marriage, with Herphyllis, a Stagirite like Aristotle and they liad a son named Nicomachus, after Aristotle's father.

Aristotle's relationship, with Hermias got Aristotle close to tlie Macedonian King whose son, Alexander and later Alexander tlie Great was Aristotle's student for some time, much before the establishment of Lyceum in 335 BC. Like his teacher Plato, Aristotle had kept his association with men of the ruling classes; with Hermias between 347-344 BC, with Alexander between 342 and 323 BC and with Antipater after Alexander's death in 323 BC. Such an association with rulers helped Aristotle's penetrating eyes to see the public affairs governed more closely. From Hermias, he came to value tlie nature of one-man role, learn something of economics and the importance of foreign relations and of foreign policy, some reference to these are found in his ***Politics.*** From Alexander, Aristotle got all possible help that could impress upon the

collections (Alexander is said to have utilised the services of about 800 talents in Aristotle's service, and inducted all hunters, fowlers and fishermen to report to Aristotle any matter of scientific interest). From Antipater came Aristotle's advocacy of modern polity and of the propertied middle-class, something tliat Aristotle had advocated in Politics. From Lycurgus, the Athenian Statesman (338-326 RC) and a Platonist and Aristotle's classmate, Aristotle learnt the significance of reforms which he made a part of his best practicable state. But that was not all that was Aristotle's. Aristotle, indeed, had his own too: his family background of looking at everything scientifically, Plato's impact over a period of twenty years, his keen observation of political events, his study of 158 constitutions of his time, and his elaborate studies at the *Lyceum* through lectures and discussions—all these combined to make him an encyclopedic mind and prolific writer.

3.2.2 His Works

Aristotle is said to have written about 150 philosophical treaties. About the 30 that survive touch on an enormous range of philosophical problems from biology and physics to morals to aesthetics to politics. Many, however, are thought to be 'lecture notes' instead of complete, polished treaties, and a few may not be his but of members of the school. There is a record that Aristotle wrote six treaties on various phrases of logic, twenty-six on different subjects in the field of natural sciences, four on ethics and morals, three on art and poetry, one each on metaphysics, economics, history and politics, and four or more on miscellaneous subjects.

Aristotle's works can be classified under three headings: (1) dialogues and other works of a popular character; (2) collections of facts and material from scientific treatment; (3) systematic works. Among his writings of a popular nature, the only one, which we possess is the interesting tract On the *Polity* of the *Athenians*. The works on the second group include 200 titles, most in fragments. The systematic treatises of the third group are marked by a plainness of style. Until Werner Jaeger (*Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Developments*, 1912), it was assumed that Aristotle's writings presented a systematic account of his views. Jaeger argues for an early, middle and late period where the early period follows Plato's theory of forms and soul, the middle rejects Plato and the late period, including most of his writings, is more empirically oriented.

It is not certain as to when a particular work was written by Aristotle. W.D. Ross (*Aristotle*, 1953) presumes that Aristotle's writings appeared in the order of his progressive withdrawal from Plato's influence. The dialogues, especially in Rhetoric (also the *Grylus*), On *the* Soul (also the *Endemus*), the *Protrepticus (On Philosophy*) were written during Aristotle's stay in the Academy. Dialogues like Alexander and On *Monarchy* were written during the time or later when Alexander assumed power. To the period between 347 and 335 BC, belong Aristotle's the *Organon*, the *Physics*, the *De Daele*, a part of *De Anima* and the '*Metaphysics*', the *Eudemian* Ethics and a greater part of the Politics—all these are largely Platonic in character, but in the forms of dialogues. To the period of his headship of the *Lyceum* belong tlie rest of the works, notably the *Meteorological*, the works on psychology and biology, the *Constitutions*, the *Nicomachean* Ethics after his son (and not father), Micomachus from Herpyllis, the Poetics, and the Politics.

Aristotle's political theory is found mainly in the Politics, although there are references of his political thought in the *Nicomachean* Ethics. His *Constitutions* analyses the system of government on the basis of his study of about 158 constitutions. Notable among them is the *Constitution* of Athens. Aristotle's Politics, like any otlier work of his, has come down to us in the form of lecture notes (See Barker: The Political *Thought* of *Plato and Aristotle*, 1948) and consists of

several essays written at various times about which the scholars have no unanimity. Jaeger argues that there is a distinction to be made between "The Original Politics" (Books, 2, 3, 7, 8) which is Platonist in inspiration and which deals with the construction of the Ideal state or the best possible, and the truly "Aristotelian Politics" (Books 4, 5, 6) which contain a much more empirical grasp of how politics works to tlie real political world. Barker puts tlie order of the eight books of the ***Politics*** on the basis of internal development of Aristotle's ideas: the first three books deal with the beginning of preliminary principles and criticism, the fourth and the fifth books (traditionally arranged as tlie seventh and eighth boolts) deal with the construction of the ideal or the best possible state, the last three books, i.e., sixth to eighth (traditionally, fourth to sixth) deal witli tlie analysis of tlie actual states, and also with the causes and cures of revolutions.

3.2.3 His Methodology

Aristotle's methodology was different from Plato. While Plato adopted the philosophical method in his approach to politics, Aristotle followed the scientific and analytical methodology. Plato's style is almost poetic whereas that of Aristotle, prose-like.

Scientific as Aristotle's method of study is, it is, at the same time, historical, comparative, inductive, and observational. Barker comments that Aristotle's methodology is scientific; his work is systematic, his writings are analytical. Aristotle's each essay begins with the words: 'Observation shows ...". It is said that Aristotle had employed over a thousand people for reporting to him anything of scientific nature. He did not accept anything except which he found was proven empirically and scientifically. Unlike his teacher Plato who proceeded from the general to the particular, lie followed the path from the particular to the general. Plato argued with conclusions that were pre-conceived while Aristotle, in a scientific way arrived at his conclusions by the force of his logic and analysis. Empiricism was Aristotle's merit. Aristotle's chief contribution to political science is to bring the subject matter of politics within the scope of the methods, which he was already using to investigate other aspects of nature. Aristotle the biologist looks at the developments in political life in much the same way tliat lie looks at the developing life of other natural phenomena. Abraham Edel identifies features of scientific methodology in Aristotle. Some such features are: "His (Aristotle's) conception of systematic knowledge is rationalistic"; according to him: "Basic concepts and relations in each field are grasped directly on outcomes of an inductive process"; "Data are furnished by accumulated observation, common opinion and traditional generalisation"; "Theoretical principles emerge from analytic sifting of alternative explanation"; "The world is a plurality of what we would today call homeostatic systems, whose ground plan may be discovered and rationally formulated"; "Matter and form are relative analytic concepts. Dynamically, matter is centred as potentiality ... and form as culminating actuality"; "Man is distinctively rational".

Major characteristic features of Aristotle's methodology can be briefly explained as under:

a) ***Inductive and Deductive***: Plato's method of investigation is more deductive than inductive where Aristotle's methodology is inductive than deductive. The deductive features of Aristotle's methodology are quite visible, though shades of Plato's seasoning remain in the margins. Aristotle's *Nicomachean* Ethics does contain ideals of normative thinking and ethical life. Same is true about his ***Politics*** as well. Like Plato, Aristotle does conceive 'a good life' (his deductive thinking) but he builds, 'good' and 'honourable life' on the inductive approach about the state as a union of families and villages which came into existence for satisfying the material needs of man. His inductive style compels him to classify states as he observes them but lie never loses sight of the best state that he imagines.

b) ***Historical and Comparative***: Aristotle can claim to be the father of historical and comparative methods of studying political phenomena. Considering history as a key to all the secrets, Aristotle takes recourse in the past to understand the present. The fact is that all his studies are based on his historical analysis: tlie nature of the causes and description of revolution, which Aristotle takes up in the ***Politics,*** have been dealt historically. Aristotle also follows the comparative method of study both intensively and extensively. His classification of states together with the consequent cycle of change is based on his intensive study of 158 constitutions of liis times. Through comparative analysis he speaks about the 'pure' and 'perverted' forms of states.

c) ***Teleological and Analogical***: Aristotle pursued teleological and analogical methods of analysing and investigating political phenomena. His approach was teleological using the model of craftsmanship. Aristotle insisted that nature works, like an artist and in the process it seeks to attain the object for which, it exists. Nature, Aristotle used to say, did nothing without a purpose—man lives in society to attain his development; state helps man to achieve liis end. Following his teacher Plato, Aristotle found much in common between a ruler and an artist, between a statesman and a physician.

d) ***Analytical and Observational***: Aristotle's methodology was both analytical as well as observational. In his whole thought-process, he observed more than lie thought; all his studies were based on data and facts, which came under liis keen observation. Through study, experiments and observation, Aristotle analysed things and, therefore, reached conclusions. Regarding state as something of a whole, for example, Aristotle went on to explain its constituents—families, and villages. He declares man, a social animal by nature, considers family as the extension of man's nature, village as the extension of family's nature, and state as tlie extension of village's nature.

3.3 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ARISTOTLE'S POLITICAL THEORY

3.3.1 Plato and Aristotle

There was much that separated Aristotle from Plato, the pupil from tlie teacher. Their view about life was different; their vision about the world was different; their approaches were different and accordingly, they differed in conclusions. Maxey writes: "Where Plato let his imagination take flight, Aristotle is factual arid dull; where Plato is eloquent, Aristotle is terse; where Plato leaps from general concepts of logical conclusions, Aristotle slowly works from a multitude of facts to conclusions that are logical but not final; where Plato gives us an ideal commonwealth that is the best liis mind can conceive, Aristotle gives us the material requisites out of which, by adapting them to circumstances a model state may be constructed."

Aristotle was Plato's disciple but he was liis critic as well. It is, therefore, common to project Aristotle against Plato as Andrew Hacker (***Political*** Theory, 1961) really does. One is acclaimed to be a scientist while the other, a philosopher, one a reformist, the other, a radical; one willing to work and build on the actual state, the other, anxious to recast the state afresh. On tlie farthest possible extreme, one advocating political realism, the other adhering to political idealism; one beginning with particular and ending at general, the other starting from the general and coming down to particular.

Aristotle's criticisms of Plato were on the following grounds. His greatest complaint against Plato was that he made a departure from experience. Aristotle says: "Let us remember that we should not disregard the experience of ages; in the multitude of years these things, if they were good, would certainly not have been unknown...". He admitted Plato's works were "brilliant and suggestive" but were at the same time "radical and speculative" (See Sabine, *A* History of *Political Theory*, First Indian Edition, 1973).

Aristotle criticised Plato's state as an artificial creation, built successively in three stages with producers coming first and thereafter followed by the auxiliaries and the rulers. As an architect, Plato built the state. Aristotle, on the contrary, regarded tlie state as a natural organisation, the result of growth and evolution. He says that if the numerous forms of the society before society were natural, so was natural the state as well. With Plato, Aristotle does recognise the importance of the state for the individual, and also, like Plato, considers the state like a human organism, but unlike him, he docs not think of the state as a unity. For Aristotle, the state was a unity in diversity.

Aristotle did not agree with Plato on the notion of justice, for he, unlike Plato, found justice more in the realms of enjoying one's rights rather than performing one's duties. For Aristotle, .justice was a practical activity virtue and not doing things in accordance with one's nature. Plato's justice was ethical in nature while that of Aristotle juridical or more specifically, legal in nature. Plato's justice was, as Aristotle believed, incomplete in so far as it dealt predominantly with duties, and more or less ignored rights. In otlier words, Aristotle labelled Plato's justice as moral in nature since it gave primacy to the performance of one's duties.

Aristotle did not approve of the three classes of Plato's ideal state, especially the guardians having the political power with them. He disagreed with the idea of one class (guardians consisting of the rulers and the auxiliaries) enjoying all power of the state. The failure to allow circulation, says David Young (Rhetorical *Discourse*, 2001), "between classes excludes those men who may be ambitious, and wise, but are not in the right class of society to hold any type of political power." Aristotle, he continues, looks upon this ruling class system as an ill-conceived political structure.

Plato, in his Republic did not consider laws as important. He was of the opinion that where the rulers were virtuous, there was no need of laws, and where they are not, there the laws were useless. Aristotle realised the significance of laws and held the view that rule of law was any day better than the rule of men, howsoever wise those rulers might be. Even Plato realiscd the utility of laws and revised his position in his *Laws*.

Aristotle doubted if Plato's community of wives and property would help produce the desired unity. Rather, he regards these devices as impracticable for communism of property created conflicts while that of the family led to a system where love and discipline within the family would evaporate. By providing communistic devices, Plato, Aristotle Felt, had punished the guardians and deprived them of intrinsic love among the members of the family. Plato's communism created a family of the state which, according to Aristotle, led to a point where the state ceases to be a state. Sabine says: "A family is one thing and a state is something different, and it is better that one should not try to age the otlier."

Aristotle's criticism of Plato, violent as it is at times on grounds mentioned herein, is a matter of fact. But there is the other fact as well and that is that there is a Plato in Aristotle. Foster (Masters of Political *Thought*, 1969) says: "Aristotle tlie greatest of all Platonists that he is, is permeated by Platonism to a degree in which perhaps no great philosopher bcsidcs him has

been permeated by the thought of another." Every page which Aristotle writes bears the imprint of Plato. In fact, Aristotle begins From where Plato ends up. "The ideas, expressed by Plato as suggestions, illusions or illustrations are taken up by Aristotle." (Dunning: *A* History of Political Theories, 1966 edition). It would not be unfair if the pupil is thought to be an extension of the teacher. Aristotle, instead of damaging Plato's ideals, builds on them. Ross (*Aristotle*, 1923) points out: "But of his (Aristotle's) philosophical, in distinction from his scientific, works, there is no page which does not bear the impress of Platonism". Both; Plato and Aristotle, start with ideal, examine tlie actual and stop at the possible. There is, in each, a belief in natural inequality, in the dominance of reason over the passion, in the self-sufficing state as the only unit necessary for individual development. Like his teacher Plato, Aristotle thinks that the ethical perfection of man is possible only in a state and that the interest of the state is the interest of those who constitute it.

Indeed, Aristotle's criticism of Plato cannot be ignored, and in fact, he had no regrets on that count. Will Durant rightly says: "As Brutus (a character of Shakespeare Julius Caesar) loves not Caesar less, but Rome more, so Aristotle says—dear is Plato, but dearer still is truth." So writes Ebenstein (Great Political thinkers): "Plato found the corrective to his thinking in his own student."

3.3.2 Politics and Ethics

Aristotle is not a philosopher of Plato's type, but the philosophical basis of his political ideas cannot be ignored. There is the philosophical basis in whole of his political theory. There is a belief of God in Aristotle: this provides a spiritual outlook to him, considering God as the creator of everything. According to him, every phenomenon has two aspects: form and matter. As against Plato, Aristotle gives significance to what constitutes matter, whereas Plato believes that whatever is visible is the shadow of the form. Aristotle, on the other hand, is convinced that what is visible is also important in so Far as it is itself tlie result of numerous elements constituting it, tlie form only activates it, guides it and helps it to attain its end which is ethical. Aristotle also believes that man's soul has two parts, logical and illogical, and through ethical virtues, man attains rationality, the logical part of the soul.

Aristotle is a political realist, but in it, he has not lost sight of politics existing to achieve its moral ends. In fact Aristotle does not regard politics as a separate science from ethics; politics is the completion and a verification of ethics. To say it in other words, politics is, in Aristotle's views, continuation of, and continuation with ethics. If one would like to put Aristotle's point, one would say that as it is part of human nature to seek happiness, it is also a part of human nature to live in communities; we are social animals, and the state is a development from the family through the village community, an off-shoot of the family; formed originally for the satisfaction of natural wants, state exists for moral ends and for the promotion of the family, formed originally for the satisfaction of natural wants, state exists for moral ends and for the promotion of the higher life; the state is a genuine moral organisation for advancing the development of human beings. In Nicomachean *Ethics*, Aristotle clearly says: "We regard the object of politics as supreme which is the attainment of a good and honourable life of the members of the community." Ethics guides his political theory, seeking the co-relation of political and ethical life. His Nicomachean Ethics is an inspiration to his Politics:

1) For Aristotle, tlie state is not merely a political community; it is at the same time a government, a school, an ethics, and culture. It is what expresses man's whole life; gives man a good life which, in turn, means a moral and ethical living.

2) In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, he describes the moral qualities a man should possess. In *Politics* as well, be points out the qualities of a citizen; a good man can only be a good citizen. As in a good man, so in a good citizen there ought to be qualities such as cooperation, tolerance, self-control, qualities which Aristotle says, are imbibed by practice. Thus practice helps attain qualities and politics helps achieve ethical ends.

3) Ethics and politics are so closely related that it is through politics, Aristotle asserts, that we see ethical life. As politics, he continues is a science of practice and as through our activities we seek the achievement of moral virtues, it is, he concluded, in our own hands to adopt good or bad virtues. Through our efforts we can attain qualities and leave what is not virtuous.

4) Aristotle's basis of political theory is his ethics. In his work on ethics, he says emphatically that man is different from animal in so far as he is more active and more rational than animals. It is through his rationality, the element of reason in him, that man does what is in his interest or is in the interest of the community of which he is a part; he seeks what is good for him and for his fellow-beings. Men, Aristotle holds the view, and not animals, have had lessons of ethics.

5) Aristotle's political theory is intimately related to his ethical theory. His theory ofjustice, for example, is ethical-oriented. For Aristotle, justice is virtue, a complete virtue, morality personified and all that is good. This is his notion of justice in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. In his *Politics*, the view about justice is distributive linked to the notion of proportionate equality which for Aristotle meant to treat equals equally, and unequals, unequally. Ethics is not only a basis for his political theory, it is its escort on inspiration as well. Nowhere in the discussion of his political ideas does Aristotle say anything which is not ethical.

3.4 POLITICAL IDEAS OF ARISTOTLE

3.4.1 Theory of Justice

Like his teacher Plato, Aristotle believed that justice is the very essence of the state and that no polity can endure for a long time unless it is founded on a right scheme of justice. It is with this consideration in view that Aristotle seeks to set forth his theory of justice. He held the view that justice provides an aim to the state, and an object to the individual. "When perfected, man is the best of animals, but when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all."

Like his teacher, Plato, Aristotle regarded justice as the very breadth of the state/polity. According to him, justice is virtue, complete virtue, and the embodiment of all goodness. It is not the same thing as virtue, but it is virtue, and virtue in action.

Justice is virtue, but it is more than virtue; it is virtue in action, i.e., virtue in practice. Reason is, for example, a virtue, but the reasonable/rational conduct is justice; truth is a virtue, but to be truthful is justice. What makes a virtue justice is the very practice of that virtue. So Aristotle says: "The good in the sphere of politics is justice, and justice contains what tends to promote the common interest."

For Aristotle, justice is no less significant, for he regards justice as the very virtue of the state. It is justice that makes a state, gives it a vision and coupled with ethics, it takes the state to the heights of all ethical values. Justice saves the state from destruction, it makes the state and

political life pure and healthy. Ross says: "Aristotle begins by recognising two senses of the word. By 'Just', we may mean what is lawful or what is fair and equal".

For Aristotle, justice is either general or it is particular justice as a part of general justice; a part of complete virtue if by general justice we mean complete virtue. According to Aristotle, "General justice is complete goodness....It is complete in the fullest sense, because it is the exercise of complete goodness not only in himself but also towards his neiglibours." Particular justice is a part of complete/general justice; it is, therefore, a part of coniplete goodness, its one aspect. A person seeking particular justice is one who observes laws but does not demand from the society more than what he deserves.

Particular justice is of two types—distributive and corrective. For Aristotle, distributive justice hands out honours and rewards according to the merits of the recipients—equals to be treated equally and unequal, unequally. The corrective justice takes no account of the position of the parties concerned. But simply secures equality between the two by taking away from the advantage of the one and adding it to the disadvantage of the other, giving justice to one who has been denied, and inflicting punishment to one who has denied others their justice.

One can compare the notion of justice as given by Plato and Aristotle:

i) for Plato, justice is the performance of one's duties to the best of one's abilities and capacities; for Aristotle, justice is the reward in proposition to what one contributes;

ii) Plato's justice is related to 'duties'; it is duties-oriented whereas Aristotle's justice is related to 'rights'; it is rights-oriented;

iii) Plato's theory of justice is essentially moral and philosophical; that of Aristotle is legal;

iv) Both Iiad a conception of distributive justice. For Plato, that meant individual excellence and performance of one's duties while for Aristotle it meant what people deserve, the right to receive.

v) Plato's justice is spiritual whereas Aristotle's, practical, i.e., it is virtue in action, goodness in practice,

vi) Plato's justice is related to one's inner self, i.e., what comes straight from the soul; Aristotle's justice is related to man's actions, i.e., with his external activities.

Aristotle's theory ofjustice is worldly, associated with man's conduct in practical life, of course with all ethical values guiding him. But he was unable to co-relate the ethical dimension of justice to its legal dimension. His distributive justice (rewards in accordance to one's abilities) is far, far away from the realities of the political world. It is, indeed, difficult to bring about a balance between the ever-increasing population and ever-decreasing opportunities of the state.

3.4.2 Property, Family and Slavery

Aristotle's theory of property is based on his criticism of Plato's communism of property. Plato thought of property as an obstacle in the proper functioning of the state and, therefore, suggested communism for the guardian class. But for Aristotle, property provided psychological satisfaction by fulfilling the human instinct for possession and ownership. His chief complaint against Plato was that he failed to balance the claims of production and distribution. Ill Plato's communism of property, those who produce do-not obtain the reward of their efforts, and those

who do not produce (the rulers and the auxiliaries), get all comforts of life. His conclusion, therefore, is that communism of propesty, ultimately, reads to conflicts and clashes. He was of the opinion that property is necessary for one who produces it and for that matter, necessary for all. Professor Maxey expresses Aristotle's voice when lie says: "Man most eat, be clad, have shelter, and in order to do so, must acquire property. Tlie instinct to do so is as natural and proper as the provision nature makes in supplying wild animals, and the means of satisfying the needs of sustenance and production". Property is necessary, Aristotle says himself: "Wealth (property) is a store of things, which are necessary or useful for life in the association of city as household."

According to Aristotle: "Property is a part of the household and the art of acquiring property is a part of managing the household; for no man lives well, or indeed live at all unless he is provided with necessaries." With regard to the ownership of property, Aristotle referred to: (i) individual ownersliip, and individual use, which is, for Aristotle, the most dangerous situation; (ii) common ownership, and individual use, a situation which can begin with socialism, but would end up in capitalism; it is also not acceptable; (iii) common ownership and common use, a devise invariably iiiipracticable; (iv) individual ownership and common use, a device generally possible and equally acceptable. Aristotle says: "property ought to be generally and in tlie main private, but common in use."

Private property is essential and therefore, is justified, is what is Aristotle's thesis, but it has to be acquired through honest means: "Of all the means of acquiring wealth, taking interest is the most unnatural method." Aristotle was also against amassing property. So lie said: "To acquire too much wealtli (property) will be as gross an error as to make a hammer too heavy".

As against Plato, Aristotle advocated the private family system. According to Aristotle, family is the primary unit of social life, which not only makes society but keeps it going. Criticising Plato's communism of families, Aristotle writes: "For that which is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it. Everyone thinks chiefly of his own, hardly at all of the common interest, and only when lie is himself concerned as an individual. For besides other considerations, everybody is more inclined to neglect something which he expects another to fulfil, as in families many attendants are often less useful than a few. Each citizen will have a thousand sons who will not be liis sons individually, but anybody will be equally the son of anybody, and therefore, will be neglected by all alilte."

Aristotle believed that family is one institution where an individual is born, is nurtured, gets his identity, his name and above all attains intellectual development. He asserts tliat family is the primary school of social virtue where a child gets lessons of quality such as cooperation, love, tolerance, and sacrifice. It is not merely a primary association, but is a necessary action of society. If man is a social animal which Aristotle insists he is, family becomes the extension of man's nature; the village, tlie extension of families; and the state, an extension, and union of families and villages.

A family, Aristotle says, consists of husband, wife, children, slaves and property. It involves three types of relationships that of the master and slave, marital (between the husband and wife) and parental (between tlie fatlier and the child). The master, Aristotle held, rules the slave; the husband rules tlie wife (Aristotle regards women inferior to man, an incomplete male), and the father rules the son. With his belief in patriarchy Aristotlc wanted to keep women within the four-walls of tlie house, good only for household work and reproduction and nurture of the species. For him, man is the head of the family. Likewise, Aristotlc affirmed that man is superior to woman, wiser than tlie slave and more experienced than the children.

Aristotle was convinced that family is the very unit, which makes LIP, ultimately, the state: from man to family, families to village, from villages to the state—that is how the natural growth of the state takes place:

Aristotle's views on family are quite different from Plato's. And yet, Aristotle is, philosophically, no better than Plato. Plato regards filial affection contrary to the interests of the ideal state; Aristotle makes families tlie very basis of the state for lie upheld the divide between the public and private sphere. This view was later incorporated and elaborated by the liberal feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft and J.S. Mill.

Aristotlc justifies slavery, which in fact, was the order of the day. He writes: "For that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, same are marked out for subjection, others for rule." So foster rightly says: "In fact, Aristotle justifies slavery on grounds of expediency". According to Barker: "Aristotle's conception of slavery is more a justification of a necessity than a deduction from disinterested observation of facts." Maxey is more clear than numerous others in expressing Aristotle's justification of slavery: "Some persons, remarks Aristotle, think slavery is unjust and contrary to nature, but he is of the opinion that it is quite in accord with the laws of nature and the principles of justice. Many persons, lie asserts, are intended by nature to be slaves; from the hours of their birth they are marked for subjection. Not tliat they are necessarily inferior in strength of body or mind, but they are of a servile nature, and so are better off when they are ruled by other man. They lack somehow the quality of soul that distinguishes the freeman and master.... Consequently it is just that they should be lield as property and used as other property is used, as a means of maintaining life."

Why should a person be a slave and another, a master? Aristotle's answer is: "For he who can be, and therefore, is, author's and lie who participates in rational principle enough to apprehend, but not to have, such a principle, is a slave by nature," and one who is one's own, and participates in the rational principles because lie has such a principle is a master. What distinguishes a master or freeman from a slave? Aristotle makes the point: "Nature would like to distinguish between the bodies of freeman and slaves, making the one (slave) strong for servile and labour, the other (freeman) upright, and although useless for such services (as labour), useful for political life, in the arts both of war and peace." So lie concludes: "It is clear, then, tliat some men are by nature free, and otliers slave, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right." The argument supporting Aristotle's contention may be stated in his own words: "Where then there is such a difference as that between soul and body, or between man and animals (as in the case of those whose business is to use their body, and who can be nothing better), the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they sliould be under the rule of a master."

Slavery is not only natural, it is necessary as well. It is natural, Aristotle argued, because nature does not admit equality; it is necessary, lie continues, because if the master needs a slave so that he is able to enjoy a free life, the slave also needs a master so that he is able to attain the virtues of freeman only in the company of freemen.

A slave, according to Aristotle, is not a human being. He is sub-human, incomplete, and a barbarian. However, he is an animate means for action and not intended for production, for he helped in the business within the household. He belonged to the master. But Aristotle rejected inhumane treatment of slaves, and advocated their emancipation as a reward for their good behaviour. Aristotle had emancipated his slaves a year before his death. In contrast to Aristotle

it is argued that Plato abolished slavery in the Republic. But the actual fact is probably that Plato accepted it as given as it was a universal institution then and to abolish it would have been economically destructive. Aristotle on the contrary merely described the facts as they existed in the ancient West. However, he anticipated a time when there would be no slavery when the spinning wheel will move of its own, when machine will replace the human worker and this is what precisely happened. Slavery ended with the coming of the industrial revolution.

3.4.3 Theory of Revolution

In Book V of the *Politics*, Aristotle discussed one of the most important problems, which made it a handbook for all the statesmen for all times to come. The problem, which he took up, was one that related to political instability or the causes and cures of revolutions. The analytical and the empirical mind of Aristotle gives numerous causes, which would affect the life of the state. As a physician examines his patient and suggests remedies, so does Aristotle, the son of a medical pntctitioner, Nicomachus, ascertains the causes of what aids the states and thereafter suggests remedies. Gettel says: "Politics is not a systematic study of political philosophy, but rather is 3 treatise on the art of government. In it, Aristotle analyses the evils that were prevalent in tlie Greek cities and the defects in the political systems and gives practical suggestions as to tlie best way to'avoid threatening dangers." Dunning writes the same thing: "In Book V of the *Politics*, Aristotle follows up his elaborate array of the causes that produce revolutions by an equally impressive array of means of preventing them."

Revolution means, according to Aristotle, a change in the constitution, a change in the rulers, a change—big or small. For him, tlie change from monarchy to aristocracy, an example of a big change, is a revolution; when democracy becomes less democratic, it is also a revolution, though it is a small change. In Aristotle's views, political change is a revolution; big or small, total or partial. So to sum up Aristotle's meaning of revolution, one may say revolution implies: (i) a change in the set of rulers; (ii) a change, political in nature: (iii) a palace revolution; (iv) political instability or political transformation; (v) a change followed by violence, destruction and bloodshed.

Aristotle was an advocate of status quo and did not want political changes, for they brought with them catastrophic and violent changes. That is why he devoted a lot of space in the Politics explaining the general and particular causes of revolutions followed with his suggestions to avoid them.

Professor Maxey identifies the general causes of revolutions as stated by Aristotle in his ***Politics.*** "They are (1) that universal passion for privilege and prerogative which causes men to resent and rebel against condition which (unfairly in their opinion) place other men above or on a level with them in rank or wealth; (2) The overreaching insolence or avarice of rulers or ruling classes which causes men to react against them; **(3)** The possession by one or more individuals of power such as to excite fears that they design to act up a monarchy or an oligarchy; (4) The endeavours of men guilty of wrong doing to foment a revolution as a smokescreen to conceal their own misdeeds or of men freeing the aggressions of others to start a revolution in order to anticipate their enemies; (5) The disproportionate increase of any part (territorial, social, economic or otherwise) of the state, causing other parts to resort to violent means of offsetting this preponderance; (6) The dissension and rivalries of people of different races; (7) The dynamics and family feuds and quarrels; and (8) struggles for office and political power between rival classes and political factions or parties."

To the general causes of revolutions, Aristotle adds the particular ones peculiar to the various types. In *democracy* the most important cause of revolution is the unprincipled character of

the popular leaders. Demagogues attack the rich, individually or collectively, so as to provide them to forcibly resist and provide the emergence of oligarchy. Tlie causes of overtiirow of oligarchies can be internal as when a group within the class in power becomes more influential or rich at the expense of tlie rest, or external, by the mistreatment of the masses by the governing class. In *aristocracies*, few people share in honour. When the number of people benefiting becomes smaller or when disparity between rich and poor becomes wider, revolution is caused. *Monarchy*, *Kingship* and *tyranny* are bad forms of constitution to begin with and are very prone to dissensions.

To these causes of revolutions, Aristotle suggested means to avoid them. Maxey, in this connection, says: "The *first* essential, he (Aristotle) says is jealously to maintain the spirit of obedience to law, for transgression creeps in unperceived, and at last reins the state", ... "The *second* thing is not to maltreat any classes of people excluded from tlie government, but to give due recognition to the leading spirits among them...". "Tlie *third* device for preventing revolution, according to Aristotle, is to keep patriotism at fever pitch." The ruler who has a care of the state should invent terrors, and bring distant dangers near, in order tliat tlie citizens may be on their guard, and like sentinels in a night-watch, never relax tlieir attention". "The *Fourth* expedient is to counteract tlie discontent that arises from inequality of position as condition by arrangements which will prevent the magistrates for making money out of their positions by limiting tlie tenure of office and regulating tlie distribution of honours so that no one person or group of persons will become disproportionately powerful...". *Fifth*, and finally, tliis: "... of all the things which I have mentioned, that which most contributes to tlie permanence of constitutions is the adaptation of education to tlie form of government...". The young, in other words, must be trained in the spirit of the constitution whatever that constitution may be; must be disciplined to social habits consonant witli the maintenance of the constitution; must learn to think and act as integral parts of a particular form of political society.

Profound and realistic analysis of tlie general and particular causes of revolution together with the suggestion to cure the ailing system as is of Aristotle, the whole treatment of the subject of revolution is not without serious weaknesses. He has given a very narrow meaning of revolution ... a political change only, forgetting that revolution is always a comprehensive social change in tlie fabric of tlie whole system. He also has a negative role for tlie revolution, i.e., brings witli its destruction, violence and bloodshed, without recognising the fact that revolutions, as Marx had said, are locomotives of history, violence only a non-significant attending characteristic of tliat wholesome change. With Aristotle, revolutions should be kept away, making him the status-quoist of his times.

3.4.4 Theory of State

For Aristotle, as witli Plato, the state (*polis*) is all-important. Both, Plato and Aristotle, see in the *polis* more than *a* stale. The *polis* is, for both, a community as well as a state, state as well as a government; government as well as a school; school as well as a religion. What is more is the fact that both regard tlie *polis* as a means for the attainment of complete life. The state with Aristotle, as with Plato too, began for the satisfaction of basic wants, but as it developed, it came to perform more elevated aims essential for good life. Aristotle says: "But a state exists for the sake of a good life, arid not for the sake of life only."

The characteristic features of Aristotle's theory of state can be, briefly, stated as under:

i) The state, for Plato, is a natural organisation, and not an artificial one. Unlike Plato's ideal state, Aristotle's state is not structured or manufactured, not a make, but is a growth,

growing gradually out of villages, villages growing out of families, and the families, out of man's nature, his social instincts. The state has grown like a tree.

ii) The state is prior to the individual. It is so in the sense, the whole is prior to the past: "The state "Aristotle says, "is by nature clearly prior to the family and the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the past; for example, if the whole body be destroyed, there will be no foot or hand, except in an equivocal sense, as we might speak of a stone hand; for when destroyed the hand will be no better than that. But things are defined by their working and power; and we ought not to say that they are the same when they no longer have their proper quality but only that they have the same name." "The proof that the state is a creation of nature, and prior to the individual, he continues is that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing; and therefore, lie is like a part in relation to the whole. But he who is unable to live in society, or who lias no need because he is sufficient for himself, must either be a beast or a god; lie is no part of a state."

iii) The state is not only an association or union as Aristotle calls it, but is an association of associations. The other associations are not as large as is the state; they are specific, and, therefore, limited in their objective and essence. The state, on the other hand, has general and common purposes, and, therefore, has larger concerns as compared to any or other associations.

iv) The stale is like a human organism. Aristotle is of the opinion that the state, like the human organism, has its own parts, i.e., the individuals. Apart from the state, he argues, the individuals have no importance, and separated from the body, the parts have no life of their own. The interest of the part of the body is inherent in the interest of the body—what separate interest a hand has when away from the body. Likewise, the interest of the individuals is inherent in the interest of the state.

v) The state is a self-sufficing institution while the village and the family is not. The self-sufficient state is higher than the families and the villages—it is their union. As a member of the family the individuals become social.

vi) The state is not, Aristotle says, a unity which it is for Plato. Plato seeks to attain unity within the state. Aristotle too seeks to attain the unity, but for him, it is unity in diversity. For Aristotle, tlie state is not a uniformity, but is one that brings all the diversities together.

vii) Aristotle's best practical state is according to Sabine what Plato called second-best state. Aristotle's state is the best possible state, the best practicable. McIlwain sums up Aristotle's best possible state, saying: "Aristotle's best possible state is simply the one which is neither too rich nor too poor; secure from attack and devoid of great wealth or wide expansion of trade or territory, homogeneous, virtuous, defensible, unambitious community, self-sufficient but not aggressive, great but not large, a tightly independent city devoted to the achievement of tlie highest possible measure of culture and virtue, of well-being and true happiness attainable by each and by all." It is one (i) which is a small city-state; (ii) whose territory corresponds to the population it has; (iii) that is geographically located near the river and where good climatic conditions exist; (iv) where the rule of law prevails, and (v) where authority/power is vested in the hands of the rich.

On the basis of his study of 158 constitutions, Aristotle has given a classification which became a guide for all the subsequent philosophers who ventured to classify governments. For him, the rule of one and for tlie interest of all is monarchy and its perverted form is tyranny if such

a rule exists for tlie benefit of tlie ruler. The rule of the few and for the interest of all is aristocracy, and its perverted form is oligarchy if such few rule in their own interest. The rule of many and for the interest of all is polity, and its perverted form is democracy if such a rule exists for those who have the power. Aristotle too refers to the cycle of classification—monarchy is followed by tyranny; tyranny, by aristocracy; aristocracy, by oligarchy; oligarchy, by polity; polity by democracy; and democracy, by monarchy and so goes on the cycle of classification.

Aristotle's classification has become out-dated, for it cannot be applied to the existing system. What he calls the classification of states is, in fact, the classification of governmelit, for, like all the ancient Greeks, lie confuses between the state and the government.

3.5 EVALUATION OF ARISTOTLE'S POLITICAL THEORY

Aristotle's encyclopedic mind encompassed practically all the branches of human knowledge, from physics, biology to ethics and politics. Though his best state is Plato's second best state, tlie tone and temper of Aristotle's *Politics* is very different from the vision in the Republic. One important reason for the marked difference is the tact that tlie ***Politics*** unlike the *Republic* is a collection of lecture notes and a number of different essays written over a period of time. Unlike Plato's Republic, which was written in tlie background of defeat of Athens by Sparta in the Peloponnesian War and the execution of Socrates by the Athenian democracy, Aristotle's works were measured in thinking and analysis, reflectin, the mind of a scientist rather than that of a philosopher.

Aristotle is rightly regarded as the father of Political Science', as by his meticulous and painstaking research of political institutions and behaviour he provided the first framework of studying politics empirically and scientifically. His classification of constitutions provided the first major thrust for studying comparative politics. The primacy of the political was most forcefully argued when he commented tliat man by nature is a political animal, distinguishing between individualistic animals like tlie lions and tigers to the gregarious ones like the humans, elephants, ants, bees and sheep. His most lasting importance was in his advocacy of the rule of law rather than personalised rule by the wisest and the best. The entire edifice of modern civilisation is based on respect for constitutional provisions and well-defined laws. The origin of both is with Aristotle. In this sense being a less ambitious but more a practical realist than Plato, Aristotle's practical prescriptiotis have been more lasting and more influential than the radical and provocative ideas of Plato.

3.5.1 Influence.

It is because of such extraordinary acumen that Aristotle's influence on the subsequent political philosophers is without a parallel in the history of political theory. In fact, he is accepted more than his teacher is. His views about the state and particularly the nature of the state have not been challenged. All those who ventured to classify state start from Aristotle. His views on revolution were the last words on the subject until Marx came to analyse it differently. However, the collapse of communism has revived more interest in Aristotle's perceptions than that of Marx. Polybius (204-122 BC), Cicero (106-43 BC), Thomas Aquinas (1227-74), Marsilio of Padua (1270-1342), Machiavelli (1469-1527), John Locke (1632-1704) and the recent communitarians like MacIntyre, Sandel, Taylor follow Aristotle in spirit. This spirit is evident in all the major works of political theory originating even in contemporary times.

3.6 SUMMARY

Aristotle, as the first political scientist, was a disciple of Plato, though he criticised his teacher severely. He considered man as a social animal and the state as a natural organisation, which exists not only for life but for the sake of good life. Polity that combined oligarchic with democratic characteristics was the best form of government and was the best way of preventing revolutions and violent changes. It was not the ideal, but one that is possible and practicable. Aristotle is convinced that the individual can develop only in a state. Since men by nature are political, it is the responsibility of the state to ensure they are socialised.

True to the times he belonged, Aristotle is an advocate of inequality for he considered men as unequal. A slave is a slave because his hands are dirty, lie lacks virtues of a freeman, namely rationality, lie has to be mastered arid ruled until the time he has acquired reason for securing emancipation. Aristotle is for the best form of government but one that is within the realm of possibility. The scientist in Aristotle does not allow him to reach the extremes. He believes in the golden rule of mean. He quotes Empedocles with approval: "Many things are best for the middling. Fain could I be of the state's middle class". The scientist Aristotle is not a philosopher and this makes him the advocate of the status quo, conservative for some.

3.7 EXERCISES

1) Evaluate Aristotle's criticism of Plato.

2) Discuss Aristotle's theory of justice and compare it with that of Plato.

3) State and examine Aristotle's theory of slavery.

4) "Aristotle is 'a status-quoist". In the light of this statement, examine Aristotle's views on revolution.

5) Critically examine Aristotle's theory of state.

6) What is Aristotle's contribution to the Western Political Theory?

UNIT 4 ST. AUGUSTINE AND ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Structure

4.1 Introduction

4.2 St. Augustine

4.2.1 Life and Work

4.2.2 Civitas Dei Versus Civites Terrena

4.2.3 Justice and the State

4.2.4 State, Property, War and Slavery

4.2.5 Augustine's Influence

4.3 St. Thomas Aquinas

4.3.1 St. Thomas Aquinas and the Grand Synthesis

4.3.2 Law and the State

4.3.3 Church and the State

4.4 Summary

4.5 Exercises

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the declining years of the Roman civilisation St. Augustine (354-430) became a major political theorist. His fame rests on his work *The City of God* (413-15), which effectively answered the attacks on the Christian faith, blaming the fall of Rome to the Christian indifference to the continued survival of the Roman Empire.

Augustine imbibed, reinterpreted and transformed the entire Graeco-Roman philosophical tradition of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Plotinus incorporating Hebrew thought and strengthening Cliristian theology and metaphysics. He left behind a profound body of knowledge and religious faith as a rich legacy to European civilisation. In political thought he represented a turning point. The masters of the Greek political theory, Plato and Aristotle had conceived the state as man's natural destiny, as the realisation of all his intellectual and moral potentialities. Augustine introduced the Christian idea of the dual nature of tnan consisting of both a body and soul, and insisted that both these elements must be given due importance in any political organisation, There is a divine life above and beyond the earthy or material life of man and the church is the institution which performs the function of looking after this aspect of life. Thus the theory of dual allegiance and conflict between the terrestrial and the spiritual authorities become a serious matter for the consideration of political theory after St.Augustine.

4.2 ST. AUGUSTINE

4.2.1 Life and Work

Augustine (Aurelius Augstinus) was born in 354 AD at Thagaste, now Algeria. Hė finished his higher education at Carthage, the capital of Roman Africa. His mother professed Christianity but the boy did not find solace in the Christian doctrine and gave his adhesion to a gnostic cult called Manichaeanism. But within a few years he broke with it and became a convert to Christianity under the inspiration of St. Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, Returning to North

Africa from Italy after his conversion he devoted his life to teaching and writing. He became the Bishop of Hippo and lived a monastic life. He died in 430 AD.

Augstine's most famous writings are ***Civitas Dei*** and the ***Confessions***. The ***Civitas Dei*** was written to refute the charge that Christianity was responsible for the fall of Rome in 410 AD at the hands of Visigoths under Alaric. The *Confessions* recount Augustine's early life of pleasure and indulgence and depicts his spiritual pilgrimage with great philosophic depth and emotional intensity.

4.2.2 *Civitas Dei* versus *Civites Terrena*

Augustine's answer to the critics of Christianity was in the form of enunciation of an evangelical eschatology presenting history as a constant struggle between the good and evil culminating in the ultimate victory of the good. Man's nature is twofold—he is spirit and body. By virtue of this dual nature lie is a citizen of two cities, the Divine City representing heavenly peace and spiritual salvation and the earthly city centred on appetite and inclinations directed towards mundane objects and material happiness. "Two loves have created two cities: love of self, to the contempt of God the earthly city; love of God, to the contempt of self, the heavenly." The Divine City, the Kingdom of God on earth, which was first embodied in the Hebrew nation is symbolised by the Church and the Christianised Empire. The earthly city is the Kingdom of Satan exemplified in pagan empires. The pagan empires are ephemeral based as they are on the transient and mutable aspects of human nature. Only the Christian state can withstand the vicissitudes of history and lead man to blessedness and eternal peace.

It must be remembered, however, that Augustine does not posit a complete separation between the two cities in actual historical experience. These are theoretical constructs, ideal types devised to explain the nature of regimes which are always intermingled in history. No visible church is completely free from evil and no state is absolutely satanic. "The only basis and bond of true city", says Augustine in one of his letters, "is that of faith and strong concord, when the object of love is universal good, which is, in the highest and truest character, God himself, and men love one another, with full sincerity, in Him, and the ground of their love for one another is the love of Him from whose eyes they cannot conceal the Spirit of their love". "And these two cities, **and** these two loves, shall live together, side by side, and even intermix, until the last winnowing and the final separation shall come upon the earth on the Day of Judgement." (Ernest Barker, 1971, p.223)

4.2.3 Justice and the State

An important question closely related to the distinction between the two cities is the relationship between justice and commonwealth, or *res publica.* Augustine refers to Cicero's view that the object of the state is the realisation of justice and himself says that people without law and justice are nothing but band of robbers. But he also contends that only a Christian state can be just, for one cannot give to man his due without giving to God what is due to Him. Love of man cannot be real without love of God. Augstine's comment on Cicero on this point has led some noted scholars like A.J. Carlyle and J.N. Figgis to conclude that according to Augustine justice is not an essential feature of the state.

"It would appear that the political theory of St. Augustine is materially different in several aspects from that of St, Ambrose and other Fathers, who represent the ancient tradition that justice is the essential quality, as it is also the end, of the slate " (R.W. Carlyle and A.J. Carlyle, 1936, p.170). The argument is that since according to Augustine only a Christian State can be

really just, a complete identification of state and justice would disqualify all pre-Christian states to be called states in any sense.

But this is certainly not a correct interpretation of St. Augustine's views. McIlwain and Sabiae have rightly taken exception to the interpretation of Augustine's point, quite in consonance with his unwillingness to identify the earthly stale with the kingdom of Satan. Though only a Christian state can be just in the absolute sense of tlie term, one cannot but attribute a kind of relative justice to the non-Christian, or pre-Christian, states which look after the worldly need of man and provide means and opportunities for the cultivation of spiritual life (C.H. McIlwain, 1932, and G.H. Sabine). The distinction between absolute justice and relative justice enables us to evaluate the states according to the proportion in which they embody these two aspects, always remembering: "Not from man but from above man, proceedeth that which maketh a man live happily." What Augustine's criticism of Cicero amounts to is: "though a people may be a people without confessing tlie true God, no people can be a good people without that confession" (E. Barker, p. 237).

4.2.4 State, Property, War and Slavery

As we have already pointed out, Augustine does not regard the state as natural, though according to him man has an innate disposition for social life. State as a repressive institution, as an instrument of coercion for enforcing order and peace is the product of sin and it was not found in the primal state of innocence before the 'Fall' of man. This disparaging view of the state by no means implies that we have no moral duty of political obedience. Though the state is the result of sin, it is also a divine remedy for sin. Even the Christian subjects of a pagan king are under bounden duty to obey their ruler.

St. Augustine had no doubt that powers that be are ordained of God and even a wicked and sinful ruler has a right to full obedience. Any one who resists "duly constituted authority" resists "the ordinance of God." So long as the rulers do not force their subjects into impiety and a conduct which violates spiritual injunctions and the will of God, they should be obeyed without reservation.

Though on the whole St. Augustine, like all Christian thinkers of his time, believed in the doctrine of the Two Swords and the independence of the church and the state in their respective spheres, he was firmly of tlie view that heresy was a deadly sin and the state has a right to suppress it. The position of St. Augustine on religious toleration and freedom of conscience was not without contradiction. The argument offered by him proved a weapon in 'hands of Inquisitionists later on.

About property and slavery, Augustine's view marked a clear departure from Aristotle's. Both property and slavery, according to the saint, are contrary to original human nature. But they become necessary in the actual condition of the fallen man.

In the natural condition property is held in common. After the 'Fall', in view of man's avarice and instinct of self-possession it becomes almost impossible for common ownership to work satisfactorily. Thus state control and organisation become necessary. In the words of A.J. Carlyle: "Private property is therefore practically the creation of the state, and is defined, limited and changed by the State." But while the legal right to private property is recognised by the Fathers, "as a suitable and necessary concession to human infirmity . . . the institution cannot override the natural right of a man to obtain what he needs from the abundance of that which the earth brings forth"(McIlwain, p.162).

Augustine's views on war and slavery are also explicated in the context of the sinful condition of man after Adam's Fall. In the ideal conditions of idyllic innocence and eternal peace, war would be unthinkable, but in the present state of strife and insecurity war becomes a necessity. Even from the moral and religious point of view, the state must wage war to protect the Empire and to destroy the heretics. St. Augustine, as against the early Christians, approves of military service for the Christians. He lays the foundation for the theory of "just war" which was developed by medieval thinkers. Like war, enslavement of man by man is also not strictly in accordance with Eternal law. But it is also justified by what Troeltsch calls the Augustinian doctrine of "relative natural law". It is both a punishment and a corrective for the sinful act of men. St. Augustine's views on slavery are opposed to Aristotle's; they are more akin to Stoicism modified in the light of Christian theology, that is, the notion of the Fall of man.

4.2.5 Augustine's Influence

Augustine contended that a person's true end was beyond history. Human history could be understood as consisting of good and bad events the ultimate meaning of which was unfathomable to human beings but graphed by God. Beyond the outward flux was the hidden historical drama of sin and redemption which only time could resolve in due course. No earthly state as a result could eternally guarantee security from internal and external attack. The classical political traditions of Greece and Rome were wrong and egotistical in contending that human fulfillment came with citizenship in a rational and just state. This could not be attained.

Augustine believed that God ordained government even though human history narrated a list of destructive wars. The classical tradition's belief in the rationality of human beings and in his capacity for rational and just government was naive. Because of Adam's sin, the human being was forever a victim of irrational self-love and of lack of self-knowledge and self-control. Government was instituted with divine authorisation for preservation of relative world peace and not as a means of human fulfillment. Governments could exist without justice but that would mean that they were large-scale bands of thieves seeking peace through arbitrary domination and force. A good Christian State ought to be just.

Augustine did not advocate the establishment of a theocracy in the world. Instead he described the sanctified role of the priests playing a crucial role in good government to remedy the corrupt nature of human beings, a corruption belying any hope for rational self-improvement. Augustine argued that the whole human race after Adam's sin could not escape its consequences and were incapable of any act of pure good. Although human beings were naturally social they could still choose wrongly and if they chose well it was because of divine grace and help. Strict justice would condemn most persons to hell. Believing in faith and in God's mercy Augustine interpreted the Bible as denoting that God had chosen a small number of souls for salvation through an unfathomable decree of predestination superior to any merit or act historical persons might perform.

Augustine developed his theory of grace in course of a debate with the British monk Pelagius. He held that God knew about Adam's sin. Moral evil in the world was a result of a conscious decision to abuse free will. However, human history and society would always contain ungovernable elements of conceit and desire that made governments, even tyrannical governments necessary. It was with divine grace that governments were instituted in order to ensure civil peace and order. In interpreting Cicero's republican theory of government, Augustine contended that a just commonwealth consisted of a rational multitude united by a common love of God rather than a common love of material wellbeing of the social order. Cicero's Rome brought together people for material reasons rather than spiritual ones. For Augustine a true state was a true church.

Augustine contended that a secular state was a moral entity and that states could choose to do what was morally right as well as what was morally wrong. The Christians desirous of a secular state ought to assume responsibility for maintenance of civil peace. They have duties towards the state and assume public responsibilities including the need to fight a just war. A just war had to be fought in order to secure a just state. Since no earthly state was entirely just it was not possible to realise a Christian utopia in history.

Christianity while affirming equality among human beings loathed the female body and looked upon the ideal woman as one who is chaste, modest, silent and obedient. The early Christian texts "insisted that all persons—father-husband, mother-wife, children, and finally, slaves—were to be maintained in a fixed, hierarchical social order, all subordinated to each other and, finally, all were to be subject in fear to God the Father and Lord (dominus meaning 'slave owner') as his children and slaves". (Shaw: 1994:24). Within the Church, women not only occupied separate places from those of men and were also ranked depending whether they were matrons, virgins, widows or young girls. Gradually they were made to wear a veil as a symbol of submission to the 'head' of the household and God the Father. All these measures had one aim "a purposefully imposed inconspicuousness and silence". (Shaw: Ibid:24). Christianity placed tremendous importance on virginity and was hostile to remarriage and divorce. It glorified widowhood.

St. Augustine dismissed the female as inferior for her weaker body, which she would bc able to transcend in the universal community united in one's love for God. In *The City of God,* lie divided human beings into two communities, one focusing on (wo)man and the other on God. Like Cicero he defined the *civitas* as a group of men joined in their agreement about the meaning of *ius,* right. While Cicero looked to the republic of Rome as the expression of *ius,* for Augustine a community was unified by love of God or *civitas dei* or the love of self, *civitas hominum.* Both tlie *civitates* were by citizens.

In the City of Men the individuals were concerned with this world. It was one of deceit, ambition and vice, and one of slavery, hierarchy and repression. In the City of God the individuals were concerned with their love for God and they aspired for complete happiness. There was no need for political institutions for there was no inequality and hierarchy, It was here that the female could become a part of a community for when oriented towards God she became an equal to the male. When identified with the body the female reflected carnality and was considered as sin.

Augustine emphasised virginity and chastity in sexual matters. He debarred widows from remarrying. In marriage one succumbed to the temptations of one's soul and was distracted from the love of God. Ideally man-iage ought to he based on continence. In the City of God when the soul found its spiritual meaning the female had no functions within the households.

Augustine's theory helped subsequent ages to develop a doctrine of the Church as a perfect society witli powers necessary to any self-sufficient community regarding property and governance. Implying in principle that it was not possible to attain salvation outside the church Augustine roused support for the idea of papal monarchy during the medieval times. Although be did not subscribe to the idea of two distinct demarcated spheres—civil and ecclesiastical, yet his theory was used to justify a two-swords theory of world rule, spiritual and temporal, pope and emperor. He did not support the idea that the state ought to be subordinate to the church for he viewed the state as a distinct institution. It was not a secular wing of the church though the church could advise it. Theorists of the medieval ages developed these arguments into a theory and practice of a theocratic state controlling law for spiritual ends. Augustine's ideal corresponded with Plato's ideal of justice as outlined in the Republic.

Augustine's views on war and slavery are also explicated in the context of the sinful condition of man after Adam's Fall. In the ideal conditions of idyllic innocence and eternal peace, war would be unthinkable, but in the present state of strife and insecurity war becomes a necessity. Even from tlie moral and religious point of view, the state must wage war to protect the Empire and to destroy the heretics. St. Augustine, as against the early Christians, approves of military service for the Christians. He lays the foundation for the theory of "just war" which was developed by medieval thinkers. Like war, enslavement of man by man is also not strictly in accordance with Eternal law. But it is also justified by what Troeltsch calls the Augustinian doctrine of "relative natural law". It is both a punishment and a corrective for the sinful act of men. St. Augustine's views on slavery are opposed to Aristotle's; they are more akin to Stoicism modified in the light of Christian theology, tliat is, the notion of the Fall of man.

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4.3 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

4.3.1 St. Thomas Aquinas and the Grand Synthesis

In the 13th Century the works of Aristotle resurfaced in Europe through the contact with the Arab scholars mainly Averoes. It was a turning point in western political thought as it greatly helped in formulating an idea of a secular community. Initially the church was opposed to this newly discovered treasure of Aristotle's works. The greatest contribution of St. Thomas Aquinas (1224-74) was linking Greek thought to Christianity. Though Aristotelianism was the major element in his thought yet there were other strands of thought like Roman, Patristic, Augustinian and Jewish. These, he integrated into 'an organic whole under the broad rubric of Christian philosophy and an overarching metaphysic of Eternal Law (*Lex Aeterna*) or Reason of God conceived as the eternal, universal and immutable principle pervading the whole of creation.

The problem of the relationship between Faith and Reason or Divine Illumination and rational recognition, which Aquinas attempted to resolve, was created in particular by the onslaught of Averroist Aristotelianism. The latter influenced greatly the intellectual life of Christendom in the wake of the spread of Islam and the rise of Muslim power in Europe. It was an encounter that threatened to undermine the faith in revelation and divine dispensation which had been the fundamental postulate of Christian orthodoxy since the days of Augustine and the Fathers. St. Thomas's argument was that faith does not contradict reason, but complements it. It is not the denial, but reaffirmation and consummation of reason. It is on this basis that he sought to recoticile the conflicting claims of the church and the state. It is also on this basis that he resuscitated the Aristotelian view that the state is natural and also claimed, in accordance with tlie Christian tradition, that though natural and necessary, it is not the highest institution. Man has a life beyond his existence because lie is a spiritual being with a divine end. "The City is, in fact, the most important thing constituted by human reason", says St. Thomas in his Commentary on the Politics of Aristotle. But beyond the life of action in the state there is a higher life, that is the life of contemplation and worship of God. Church is the symbol of the higher life. This is how St. Thomas Cliristianised Aristotle, interpreted his rationalism to bring it into line with Augustine's religious philosophy.

To look at St. Thomas in this way does not mean that he djd not introduce important changes in Augustine's theory of the state and society and left it in tact. On tlie contrary, he rejected many of the accepted dogmas of Christian theology. One of the most important of them was that the state was the result of sin and also a divine remedy for sin. St. Augustine's views about slavery and property were not accepted by St. Thomas. The Augustinian theory of the state, property and slavery had to be re-evaluated and considerably revised in order to make the synthesis of Aristotle's ideas and Christian thought possible and intelligible. A.J. Carlyle arid A.P. D'Entreves have rightly pointed out, St. Thomas did not clearly and categorically contradict tlie traditional opinions of the early Middle ages regarding the state, property and slavery, but reinterpreted them in the light of Aristotle's ideas. "The ideas of sin, and of its consequences remained for him", says D'Entreves, "and could not but remain, a fundamental dogma of the Christian faith. But sin itself had not invalidated *ipsa principia naturae*. Its consequences, therefore, only concern the possibility of man's fulfilling the dictates of the *naturalis ratio*, not his capacity for attaining to their knowledge; in other words, they do not shatter the existence of a sphere of purely natural ethical values, and it is in this sphere that the state finds its *raison d'etre*... Instead of considering tlie State as an institution which may well be necessary and divinely appointed, but only in view of the actual conditions of corrupted mankind, Thomas Aquinas followed Aristotle in deriving the idea of the State from the very nature of man." (D'Entreves, *Aquinas, Selected Political Writings)*.

About government, St. Thomas says in the *De Regimine Principum* that if man could live alone, lie would require no government or 'dominium'. But God has made him for society. In the *Summa Theologica* lie presents the same idea with greater precision. 'Dominium' he says, is of two kinds: (1) tlie lordship of man over a slave, and (2) the rule of a free man over other free men. In the first sense, of course there could not have been rulership in the state of primal innocence before the Fall of man. But in the second sense the rule of one man over others would be lawful even in that state. The reason is that man is essentially a social being and social life is impossible unless there is some authority to direct it toward common good. Moreover, it would have been a matter of inconvenience if some one who excelled others in knowledge and virtue could not be made use of for the benefit of others.

As regards property, St. Thomas was confronted with the thesis of Augustine and the Fathers that private property is the outcome of the vicious and greedy nature of man. This was in direct opposition to Aristotle's view that property is natural and an essential instrument of good life. St. Thomas steered a middle course declaring property contrary to the original nature of man, but made necessary and useful in the present degenerate conditions. It provides better conditions and efficient means for the utilisation and management of common resources given to man by God. There is a distinction, according to St. Thomas, between the power of acquiring and distributing things, and this is lawful for it leads to efficiency, and their use which must be made for the common good. He says tliat according to natural law all things are common, nothing belongs to individuals alone. But private property is created by positive law which is added to natural law by human reason. It is an extension of natural law in the interest of efficiency and better administration.

Though St. Thomas approves of the institution of private property, he does not regard it as an inalienable, idivisible natural right. There is no theory of right in St. Thomas in the modern liberal sense. The ultimate ownership of property belongs to the community and it has full power to take away individual property if it is needed for the common good. Even an individual, if he is in genuine need, is fully justified in taking a thing from one to whom it legally belongs without his consent or knowledge. A hungry man may commit theft if lie has no other means for saving himself from starvation.

As regards slavery, the same spirit of compromise and reconciliation appears in St. Thomas. Unlike Aristotle, lie cannot justify slavery outright in view of the accepted doctrine of the Church that in the state of innocence every one was free. In fact, on the question of slavery St. Thomas is more ambivalent and vague than on other questions. Sometimes he seems to say that slavery rests on the ground that for some men it is better to be slave than free. At other times he says that slavery could not liave existed in the natural and primitive condition of mankind. In brief, his position, as summarised by Carlyle, is that slavery is not an institution of nature, but is rational and in a secondary sense natural in the actual corrupt conditions.

4.3.2 Law and the State

The basic postulate and ultimate foundation of St. Thomas's political theory is Eternal Law or Divine Reason which manifests itself on four levels of cosmic reality but remains the same reason throughout. It is eternal, immutable and inviolable. It is both transcendent and immanent in all manifested existence. It is identical with the 'Reason of God and is unknowable in its entirety; man can grasp it only in part. Natural law *(lex naturalis)* is "the participation of a rational creature in eternal law." It is that part of *Lex Aeterna* which man can understand by his reason which is also a divine faculty. What is revealed to man by God and also given in scriptures is called Divine Law. An example of Divine law is the code of conduct which God

gave to the Jews or revealed to Christ. Divine Law, though higher than natural law, does not annul it. It adds to it. Human law is the application of Natural law to human affairs and political authority. This law, though it emanates from Natural Law, is relative and contingent, it varies with changing conditions and requirement of society. A competent human authority that has the care of the community must therefore, promulgate it. St. Thomas defines it as follows:

"A law is some ordinance of reason for the common good promulgated by him who has the care of community."

It is clear that for St. Thomas law is the source of all political authority. He is opposed to the voluntarism theory of law, which regards law as the expression of the will of the sovereign authority. He draws a distinction between the *principum* or essential substance of authority which is ordained of God, its *modus* or constitutional form which is determined by people and its *exercitium*, or actual enjoyment that is conferred by people. "But properly a law is first and foremost an ordinance for the common good, and the right to ordain anything for the common good belongs either to the whole multitude or to some one who acts in the place of the whole multitude; therefore the authority to establish law pertains either to the whole multitude, or it pertains to a public person who has the care of the whole multitude."

St. Thomas theory of political authority emphasises the responsibility of the government to the community which is tlie custodian of tlie common good. But it should not be taken to imply either a doctrine of popular sovereignty or a constitutional system of government in the modern sense. The responsibility of tlie prince to the people or to the assembly is not enforceable by any independent agency of the community. As McIlwain puts it, "the prime responsibility of St. Thomas's prince is to God, the author of the law on which all his authority rests; and, in a general, or even in a loose political sense, he might be said to be responsible to the 'multitude' which raised him or his house to the throne and might conceivably sweep them away for acts of tyranny. But in the strict legal sense he is "absolute" in the ordinary administration of human law in his realm. Within this sphere he is without a superior, and is responsible to no man. Of human law, in the sense of coercive force, St. Thomas says, he is wholly free, a monarch '*legibus solutus*'—the equivalent of Bracton's legal dictum that no writ runs against the King" (C.H. McIlwain, pp. 330-331). It is true that St. Thomas was strongly opposed to tyranny. He condemned it as vehemently as John of Salisbury, but he did not go so far as to justify tyranny. Lord Acton's famous aphorism that St. Thomas was the first Whig, might be a rhetorical way of highlighting the principle of moral limitation on the power of the government or the state, but, strictly speaking its implications are not very precise or illuminating. If Acton "had in mind a legal. limitation of tlie monarch, St. Thomas was no Whig; if only a moral one, he was certainly not the first"(McIlwain, p.331).

4.3.3 Church and the State

The implication of St. Thomas's theory of law and the state for the relations between church and the state are clear. These institutions represent different interests and concerns of man in the world, and they must work in a spirit of harmony and cooperation to fulfill their respective ends. Of course, in a truly philosophical sense, church is superior to the state, as soul is superior to body; but both have to work together for the attainment of the ultimate purpose which is salvation or the attainment of the beatific vision. Possibility of conflict is inherent in actual life, but what is of vital importance is restraint and balance.

For Aquinas the art of politics was just a mere technique, which could not be measured solely by its achievements, by standards of efficiency and success. The reason for this is that politics would always imply a moral responsibility, a deliberation, a willingness and a choice. It was not part of purely pragmatic science but part of morals. He emphasised on tlie importance of choosing the right means and the means in turn depended on the end, and the end was a moral one. The end was the common good, an end which was higher in value than that of the individual and that of the family, and which constituted the proper end of politics. As far as the problem of ends and values was concerned Aquinas did not find any contradiction between tlie revealed truths of Christianity with that of human reasoning. Reason and faith, human nature and supernatural values were harmonious in nature. Human beings were endowed by God with the capacity to know the good and, although inclined to do wrong, were capable of performing the good. The Fall did not impair individuals' reasoning capacity. Though human beings know their good they required the help of God to attain salvation.

Aquinas also laid down the limits of sovereignty both with regard to internal and international relations. He regarded war as an evil but a necessary evil. It could be justified only within strictest limits. It had to be a 'just war', and for a war to be just special conditions were required—a legitimate authority, a just cause and rightful intention. War was the ultimate resort in the absence of a superior authority. It was connected with the very existence of the particular State, a consequence of its sovereignty and the same time the proof that such sovereignty was neither absolute nor unlimited.

Aquinas spoke of secular politics but did argue that temporal sphere was ultimately subject to the spiritual. He placed the common interest of the faithful and their spiritual well being within the sphere of the church as educator, promoting a life of virtue and therefore arguing for a harmony of tlie two jurisdiction, CHURCH and STATE in the Christian polity. Felicity on the eartli would lead to happiness in heaven.

Aquinas' theory of the state enabled subsequent western political thought to move in the direction of conceptualising a secular state based on rationality and autonomy. The subsequent 14th Century carried Aquinas' argument to its logical end by developing the ideas of a secular liberal order, rudimentary ideas of representation and outlines of the present day constitutional framework in the representative writings of Marsilio of Padua and William of Ockham.

4.4 SUMMARY

St. Augustine was the greatest Christian philosopher of the early middle ages and St. Thomas Aquinas of the late medieval period in Europe. St. Augustine reinterpreted and transformed the tradition of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Plotinus with the idea of dual nature of man with a body and soul, both of which should be given equal importance. Though he did not regard the state as natural, it did not imply that there is no moral duty of political obedience on part of the citizens.

St, Thomas Aquinas brought together different strands of thought—Aristotelian, Roman, Patristic, Augustinian and Jewish to integrate them into an organic whole under the rubric of Christian philosophy. St. Thomas thought that faith does not contradict reason, but complements it, It is reaffirmation of reason rather than its denial. He agreed with Aristotle that the state is natural and claimed that it is not the highest institution. He christianised Aristotle's theory and brought it to line with Augustine's religious philosophy. But he rejected many of the accepted dogmas of Christian theology and did not accept Augustine's view on slavery and property.

4.5 EXERCISES

1) Explain St. Augustine's concept of the two cities. In what way was it supportive of Christianity?

2) What were St. Thomas Aquinas' views on the relations between faith and reason?

3) In what ways were St. Augustine's views different from those of St. Thomas Aquinas?

UNIT 5 NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI

Structure

5.1 Introduction
5.2 Machiavelli: A Child of His Time
5.3 Methods of Macliiavelli's Study
5.4 Machiavelli's Political Thought
5.5 Concept of Universal Egoism
5.6 The "Prince"
5.7 Machiavelli's Classification of Forms of Government
5.8 The Doctrine of Aggrandisement
5.9 Evaluation
5.10 Summary
5.11 Exercises

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Many forces shattered the ideal of a monolithic united Christian order. The growth of commerce made possible by economic development, the growth of cities, the rise of tlie printing press, the changeover from a barter economy to money and banking, new scientific and geographical discoveries, emergence of centralised states with a distinctive national language, a new respect for scientific explorations, crystallisation of humanistic philosophy, demographic changes and the rise of a secular order were some of the key determining forces. The emergence of universities ended the monopoly of the church over education and with increasing literacy and the revival of human spirit during the Renaissance, individualism and humanism came to the forefront. Buckhardt remarked that the core of tlie Renaissance was the new man, with prime concern of glory and fame replacing religious faith and asceticism with self-realisation and tlie joy of living.

Laski commenting on this extraordinary change asserted that the entire Renaissance was in the writings of Machiavelli who portrayed the new character of the state by comprehending the intricacies of statecraft in which decisions reflected the political compulsions rather than religious precepts and what ought to be. Machiavelli is the father of political realism with tlie primacy to the real world of politics.

5.2 MACHIAVELLI: A CHILD OF HIS TIME

Born in the year 1469 in Florence (Italy) Machiavelli belonged to an affluent family and was well educated for a public career. At a young age he attained one of tlie higher posts in the government of Florence. Later he was sent on a diplomatic mission to several foreign countries where lie acquired first hand experience of political and diplomatic matters. However, political upheavals in the Florentine Republic caused the fall in the career of Machiavelli in 1513, and he was even put to a year's imprisonment. He was released from prison by the influence of his political friends on condition that he would retire from political life and refrain from all. political activities. It was during this period of forced retirement that he induced his most

memorable literary works out of which the "Prince" and the "Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius" stand out most prominently. Their contents spelt out his political thought and earned him notoriety such as indifference to tlie use of *immoral means* to achieve political purposes and tlie belief tliat government depended largely on *force* and *craft*. His writings are mainly influenced by the then prevailing situation which half the time was the battle ground of conspirators and ambitious politicians—local as well as foreign. The public leaders were activated more by selfish motive than by public interest. Public morality was very low, the Papal authority in Ttaly constituted greatly towards political degradation. Popes were opposed to the unification of Italy, which was divided into five states viz. the Kingdom of Naples in the south, the Duchy of Milan in north-west, the aristocratic Republic of Venice in tlie north-east, and the Republic of Florence and the Papal state in the centre. The Catholic Church and the clergy of Machiavelli's time wanted to maintain a shadow of their spiritual power over whole of Italy, which left Italy in a state of arrested development. There was no power which appeared great enough to unite the whole of Italian peninsula. Italians suffered all the degradation and oppression of the worst type of tyranny and the land became a prey to the French, Spanish and the Germans. And, unlike other European countries none of the rulers of Italian states was able to consolidate the whole of Italy under their sway. The political situation in Italy was embarrassingly complex and depressing; and Machiavelli as a patriotic Italian could not help being overwhelmingly moved by that. Securing the independence of Italy and restoring prosperity of its cities became a master passion with him. The unification of the entire country under one national monarch on the model of France and Spain was the ideal for Machiavelli which particularly inspired him. If the rotten politics of Italy affected his thought, he was also influenced by the growing spirit of Renaissance which impelled men to re-examine things from other than the clerical point of view. Being the chief exponent of this school of thought, Machiavelli, according to Dunning, "stood on the borderline between the Middle Ages and the Modern Ages. He ushered in the Modern Age by ridding politics of tlie vassalage of religion."

5.3 METHODS OF MACHIAVELLI'S STUDY

As to the spiritual ancestry of Machiavelli tlie great Greek philosopher Aristotle held his imagination. Machiavelli quietly put aside the Church's scriptures, the teachings of Church fathers and the conflict for supremacy between the Church and the State. He believed that human nature, and therefore, human problems were almost the same at all times and places, and so the best way of enlightening the present, according to him, was possible with the help of the past. Thus, Machiavelli's methods, like that of Aristotle, was historical. But, it was more so in appearance than in substance and reality. He was more concerned with the actual working of the governmental machinery than the abstract principles of constitution. A realist in politics his writings expound a theory of the art of government rather than a theory of State. The actual source of his speculation was the interest he felt in the men and conditions of his own time. He was an accurate observer and acute analyst of the prevailing circumstances. He, tlterefore, adopted a form and method of political philosophy which ignored completely the scholastic and juristic ideals, He adopted the ancient Greek-Roman philosophy because the Romans had established a well organised empire which tlie Greeks could not which led him to perceive the true relation between history and politics and it is front history that he drew his conclusions as political truths. His conclusions were reached empirically based on common sense and shrewd political foresight. According to Sabine: "[H]e used history exactly as he used his own observation to illustrate or support a conclusion that he had reached without reference to history." He was a political realist, and like Aristotle he amassed historical facts to overwhelm readers, but his political writings belong less to political theory than to the class of diplomatic literature. It was Dunning who called his study as "the study of the art of government rather than a theory of

the State". Thus, the substance of his thought covers-a much narrower field than Aristotle. But, in this narrow field his treatment of the problems exhibit, in the words of Sabine, "tlie shrewdest insight into points of weakness and strength in a political situation, the clearest and coolest judgement of the resources and temperament of an opponent, the most objective estimate of the limitations of a policy, the soundest common sense in forecasting the logic of events, arid the outcome of a course of action".

These qualities of Machiavelli made him a favourite with the diplomats from his own day to the present, but these qualities are also associated with a possibility that the importance of the end would override tlie means. That is why, his conceptions are expressed in terms like—might is right; end justifies the means; necessity knows no law, etc., but liis thoughts carry more import by what is understood by these terms.

5.4 MACHIAVELLI'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

Out of his two most important works, the "Prince" is an analysis of the political system of a strong monarchy while the "Discourses on Livius" of a strong republic. In the first one, the main theme is the successful creation of a principality by an individual, in the other it is the creation of an empire of free citizens. But in both, tlie centre of liis thought is the method of those who wield the power of the state rather than the fundamental relationship in which the essence of the state exists. Me viewed things from tlie standpoint of the ruler and not the ruled, Preservation of the state rather than the excellence of its constitution were his main consideration. He writes of the mechanisms of the governments by which the state can be made strong and the politics that can expand their powers. He points out the errors that bring about their downfall too. In the words of Sabine: "The purpose of politics is to preserve and increase political power itself, and the standard by which he judges it is its success in doing this. He often discusses the advantage of immorality skillfully used to gain a ruler's ends, and it is this which is mainly responsible for his evil repute. But for the most part he is not so much immoral as non-moral." A thing which would be immoral for an individual to do, might, if necessary, in interest of the state, be justifiably done by a ruler or a monarch. His indifference towards morality, therefore, can be explained in terms of political expediency.

Machiavelli based liis thought on two premises. First, on tlie ancient Greek assumption that the state is the highest form of human association necessary for tlie protection, welfare and perfection of humanity and as such tlie interests of the state are definitely superior to individual or social interests. The second premise was that tlie self-interest in one form or another, particularly material self-interest, is the most potent of all factors of political motivation. Hence, the art of statecraft consists of the cold calculations of elements of self-interests in any given situation and the intelligent use of the practical means to meet the conflicting interests. Both these premises are reflected in his two books.

5.5 CONCEPT OF UNIVERSAL EGOISM

Another cardinal principle besides the principle of 'moral indifference', which forms Machiavelli's political philosophy, is tlie principle of "Universal Egoism". He did not believe in the essential goodness of human nature, lie held that all men are wicked and essentially selfish. Selfishness and egoism are the chief motive forces of human conduct. Fear is the one motivating and dominating element in life, which is mightier than love, and the effective motive in him is desire for security because human nature moreover is, aggressive and acquisitive. Men aim to keep what they already have and desire to acquire more and there are no limits to human

desires, and all being the same there being a natural scarcity of things there is everlasting competition and strife. Security is only possible when the ruler is strong. A 'Prince', therefore, ought to personify fear. A Prince who is feared knows how to stand in relation to his subjects and aims at the security of their life and property. Men always commit error of not knowing when to limit their hopes, therefore, the only way to remedy this evil is to hold the opposing interests in maintaining an equilibrium between them in order to remain and maintain a healthy and stable society. These basic elements of human nature which are responsible to make him ungrateful, fickle, deceitful and cowardly along with their evil effects were most prominent in Italy during Machiavelli's time. The corruption in all spheres was the order of the day and all sorts of licence and violence, absence of discipline, great inequalities in wealth and power, the destruction of peace and justice and the growth of disorderly ambitions and dishonesty prevailed. The only way to rectify such a situation was tlie establishmetit of absolute monarchy and despotic powers, according to Machiavelli.

5.6 THE "PRINCE"

The 'Prince' of Macliiavelli is the product of the prevailing conditions of liis time in his country Italy. As such it is not an academic treatise or value oriented political philosophy; it is in real sense real *politik*. It is a memorandum on the art of government, is pragmatic in character and provides technique of the fundamental principles of statecraft for a successful ruler-ship. It deals with the machinery of the government which the successful ruler could make use of, The whole argument of the Prince is based on tlie two premises borrowed mainly from Aristotle. One of these is that the State is the highest form of human association and the most indispensable instrument for the promotion of human welfare, and that by merging himself in the state the individual finds his fullest development, that is, his best self.

Consideration of the welfare of the state, therefore, outweighs any consideration of individual or group welfare. The second premise is that material self is the most potent motive force in individual and public action. Machiavelli almost identifies the state with the ruler. These premises led him to tlie conclusion that the Prince is the perfect embodiment of shrewdness and self-control who makes capital alike of his virtues and vices. This quality of the Prince makes him worthy of successful seizure of power. According to Machiavelli: "Those things were virtuous in a Prince which excelled in bringing success and power and that virtue lay in functional excellence; these were rutlilessness, cunningness, deceitfulness, boldness and shrewdness along with unflinching will." Undoubtedly, this is an idealised picture of an Italian tyrant of the 16th Century who has influenced Machiavelli's imagination.

Chapter XVIII of the 'Prince' gives Macliiavelli's idea of tlie virtues which a successful ruler must possess. Integrity may be theoretically better than collusion, but cunningness and subtlety are often useful. The two basic means of success for a prince are—the judicious use of law and physical force, He must combine in himself rational as well as brutal characteristics, a combination of '*lion*' and '*fox*'. The prince must play the fox and act hypocrite to disguise his real motives and inclinations. He must be free from emotional disturbances and ready and capable of taking advantage of the emotions of others. He should be a cool and, calculating opportunist and should oppose evil by evil. In tlie interest of the state he should be prepared to sin boldly. Severity rather than mildness must characterise his attitude in public affairs and the prince should aim to be feared than loved. But, above all, he must keep his hands off the property and women of his subjects because economic motives being tlie mainspring of human conduct a prince must do all he can to keep his subjects materially contented. A prince might execute a conspirator but should not confiscate his property. To Macliiavelli preservation of

state was *raison* d·etre of monarchy; therefore, a prince must regard his neighbours as likely enemies and keep always on guard. A clever prince will attack the enemy before the latter is ready..He must be of unshakable purpose and dead to every sentiment except love for his state, which must be saved even at the cost of his own soul. He must not allow himself to be weighed down by any consideration of justice or injustice, good or bad, right or wrong, tnercy or cruelty, honour or dishonour in matters of tlie state.

According to Machiavelli state actions were not to be judged by individual ethics. He prescribes double standard of conduct for statesmen and the private citizens. This exaggerated notion of what a ruler and a state can do is perhaps because of Machiavelli's understanding of the problem that confronted a ruler amid the corruption of 16th Century Italy. Thus, according to him a sheer political genius a successful ruler had to create a military power to overcome the disorderly cities and principalities and, therefore, the force behind tlie law must be the only power that holds society together; moral obligations must in the end be derived from law and government.

The ruler is the creator of law as also of morality, for moral obligations must ultimately be sustained by law and the ruler, as tlie creator of the state, is not only outside the law, but if the law enacts morals, lie is outside morality as well. There is no standard to judge liis acts except the success of liis political expedience for enlarging and perpetuating the power of his state. It will be the ruin of the state if the ruler's public actions were to be weighed down by individual ethics, especially those which relate to internal and external security. Therefore, public and private standards were difficult. It was always wrong for an individual to commit crime, even to lie, but sometimes good and necessary for the ruler to do so in the interest of the state. Similarly, it is wrong for a private individual to kill, but not for the state to execute someone by way of punishment. The state hangs a murderer because public safety demands it, Public conduct, in fact, is neither inherently good nor bad. It is good if its results are good. A citizen acts for himself and as such is also responsible for liis action, whereas the state acts for all, and therefore, same principles of conduct could not be applied to both. The state has no ethics. It is a non-ethical entity.

The state being the highest form of human association, has supreme claim over men's obligations. This theory of Machiavelli gives supreme importance to the law given in society. The ruler, in order to prove this claim, must at the same time embrace every opportunity to develop his reputation. He must keep people busy with great enterprises, must surround all his actions with an air of grandeur, and must openly participate in the affairs of neighbouring states. Besides, he must also. pose as the patron of art, commerce and agriculture and should refrain from imposing burdensome taxation. To Machiavelli, the justice of state was in the interest of the sovereign and the safety of state was the supreme law.

One of the most important characteristics of Machiavelli's philosophy in the case of Prince was that he should aim at acquisition and extension of his princely powers and territories. If he fails to do this, he is bound to perish. For this lie should always regard his neighbouring states as enemies and remain always prepared to attack them at some weak moments of theirs. For this he must have a well trained citizeris' soldiery. A good army of soldiers are in reality the essence of princely strength. Mercenary soldiers should be rid of, as they may become the cause of lawlessness. Such bands of hired ruffians would be ready to fight for the largest pay and could not be faithful to anyone. This could shake tlie authority of tlie Prince; therefore, the Prince must possess a nationalised standing army of soldiers at his disposal.

5.7 MACHIAVELLI'S CLASSIFICATION OF FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

Machiavelli's classification of the forms of government is rather unsystematic. The treatment of government in his two major works is significantly different; rather inconsistent and contradictory to each other. The 'Prince' deals with monarchies or absolute governments, while the 'Discourses' showed his admiration for expanded Roman Republic. There was nothing in Machiavelli's account of the absolute monarchy corresponding to his obviously sincere enthusiasm for the liberty and self-government of Roman Republic. In both forms his emphasis is on the cardinal principle of the preservation of the state as distinct from its foundlings, depends upon the excellence of its law, for this is tlie source of all civic virtues of its citizens. Even in a monarchy the prime condition of stable government is that it should be regulated by law. Thus, Machiavelli insisted upon the need for legal remedies against official abuses in order to prevent illegal violence. We pointed out tlie political danger of lawlessness in rulers and folly of vexations and harassing policies.

Both the books show equally the qualities for which Machiavelli has been specially known, such as, indifference to tlie use of immoral means for political purpose and belief that governments depend largely on force and craft. Macliiavelli never erected his belief in the omnipotent law giver into a general theory of absolutism. However, what does not appear in the 'Prince' is his genuine enthusiasm foi popular government of the sort exemplified in tlie Roman Republic, but which he believed to be impractical in Italy when lie wrote. Both the books present aspects of the same subject—the cause of the rise and decline of states and the means by which statesmen could make them permanent. This corresponds to twofold classification of states or form of government. The stability and preservation of the state is the prime objective of the ruler. Machiavelli favoured a gentle rule where ever possible and the use of severity only in moderation. He believed explicitly that government is more stable where it is shared by many. He preferred election to heredity as a mode of choosing rulers. He also spoke for general freedom to propose measures for the public good and for liberty of discussion before reaching a decision. He, in his 'Discourses' expressed that people must be independent and strong, because there is no way to make them suitable without giving them the means of rebellion. He had a high opinion both of the virtue and the judgement of an uncorrupted people as compared to those of the prince. These observations only show the conflicting and contradictory ideas of Machiavelli's philosophy; on one hand he advocates an absolute monarchy and on the other shows his admiration for a republic. As Sabine remarks: "His judgement was swayed by two admirations—for the resourceful despot and for the free, self-governing people—which were not consistent. He patched the two together, rather precariously, as the theories respectively of founding a state and of preserving it after it is founded. In more modern terms it might be said that he had *one theory for revolution and another for government.*" Obviously, he recommended despotism mainly for reforming a corrupt state and preserving its security. However, he believed, that state can bc made permanent only if the people are admitted to some share in the government arid if the prince conducts the ordinary business of the state in accordance with law and with a due regard for the property and rights of his subjects. Despotic violence is a powerful political medicine, needed in corrupt states and for special contingencies, but it is still a poison which must be used with the greatest caution.

5.8 THE DOCTRINE OF AGGRANDISEMENT

In both 'Prince' and 'Discourses' Machiavelli insists on the necessity of extending the territory of the state. According to him *either a state must expand or perish.* His idea of the extension

of the dominion of state did not mean the blending of two or more social or political organisations, but the subjection of a number of stales under the rule of a single prince or commonwealth. Extension of dominion was easier in one's own country, where there was no difficulty of language or of an institution to overcome in the assimilation of conquered people. Roman state and its policy of expansion perhaps set an ideal before Macliiavelli. Force of arms was necessary for both—for political aggrandisement as well as for the preservation of the state, but force must be applied judiciously combined with craft. In a monarchy a prince must pay due respect to the established customs and institutions of tlie land which the people hold something as dearer than liberty or life itself. But, to establish any kind of order a monarchical government is preferable, especially when the people are thoroughly corrupt and the laws become powerless for restraint. It becomes necessary tc establish some superior power which, with a royal hand arid with full and absolute powers could put a curb upon the excessive ambitions and corruption of powerful people.

Despite tlie cynicism and bias of Machiavelli's judgement in favour of tlie prince there is no mistaking the fact of liis esteem for liberal and lawful government. He was inclined favourably for popular government where possible and monarchy where necessary. In both forms a well-trained army of soldiers was needed because a government ultimately was based on force. The ruler must fire tlie imagination of the subjects by grand schemes and enterprises and should patronise art arid literature. An ideal prince thus, is an enlightened despot of a non-moral type while in republic the ruler or the ruling class have to observe the supremacy of law, because the preservation of the state depends upon the excellence of law which is the source of all civic virtues of the citizens and which determines the national character of its people. Macliiavelli holds both monarchy arid republican form of government as ideal, but lie had very low opinion of aristocracy and nobility, whom he perceived as antagonistic to both the monarchy and the middle class, and that an orderly government required their suppression or expatriation. Side by side with Machiavelli's dislike of tlie nobility stands his hatred of mercenary soldiers as they may prove the main cause of lawlessness and disorder and ultimate destruction of the stability of the state, As tlie art of war is tlic primary concern of a ruler and the condition of his success in all liis ventures lie must aim in possessing a strong, well equipped and well disciplined force of his own citizens, attached to his interests by ties of loyalty to the state. Behind Machiavelli's belief and his cynicism of liis political opinion, was national patriotism and a desire for the unification of Italy and her preservation for internal disorder and foreign invaders. He frankly asserted that duty towards one's own country overrides all other duties and scruples.

5.9 EVALUATION

Macliiavelli's political tlicories were not developed in a systematic manner, they were mainly in the form of remarks upon particular situations. In the wards of Sabine: "The character of Macliiavelli and tlie true meaning of liis philosophy have been one of the enigmas of modern history. He has been represented as an utter cynic, and impassioned patriot, an ardent nationalist, a political Jesuit, a convinced democrat, and unscrupulous seeker after the favour of despots. In each of these views, incompatible as they are, there is probably an element of truth. What is emphatically not true is that any one of them gives a complete picture either of Machiavelli or liis thought." This is because behind his philosophy, or implicit in his concepts, tliere often is a consistent point of view which might be developed into a political theory, and was in fact so developed after liis time. Many political thinkers drew their inspiration and further developed solid and most important political concepts such as tlie concept of the 'state' and its true meaning from Machiavelli. In the words of Sabine: "Machiavelli more than any other political thinker created the meaning that lias been attached lo the state in modern political usage,.. The

state as an organised force, supreme in its own territory and pursuing a conscious policy of aggrandisement in its relations with other states, became not only the typical modern political institution but increasingly the most powerful institution in modern society."

Machiavelli is known as a father of modern political theory. Apart from theorising about the state lie has also given meaning to the concept of sovereignty. But he never let his belief in the general theory of an omnipotent law giver turn into a general theory of absolutism or absolute monarchy, which tlie subsequent writer Thomas Hobbes did. This concept of sovereignty—internal as well as external—is implicit in his recommendation of despotic power of the ruler for making the state permanent and safe internally and externally. This idea of his was later developed into systematic theory of state sovereignty by French thinker Jean Bodin, while Hugo Grotius built upon a theory of legal sovereignty, which was further given a proper formulation by the English theorist John Austin. Earlier, I-lobbes while justifying his social contract had also borrowed Machiavelli's conception of human nature on which he built his social contract theory and that of absolute sovereignty.

Machiavelli was the first who gave the idea of secularism. In the words of Allen: "The Macliiavelli state is, to begin with, in a complete sense, an entirely secular state." Although he attributes to religion an important place in the state, lie at the same time separates the two. He placed religion *within* the state *not* ubove it and according to him, "'tie observance of the ordinances of religion is the cause of greatness of the commonwealth; as also in their neglect the cause of their ruin."

Machiavelli's belief in the potency of material interests of people rather than tlie spiritual ones influenced Hegel and subsequently Marx in propounding their theory of Material Origin of tlie State. Macliiavelli was also the first exponent of tlie theory of aggrandisement which is the basis of modern power politics. In day-to-day international politics each state aims at increasing its economic and military power over other states.

Machiavelli was the first pragmatist in the history of political thought. His method and approach to problems of politics were guided by common sense and history. According to Professor Maxey: "His passion for the practical as against the theoretical undoubtedly did much to rescue political thought from the scholastic obscurantism of the Middle Ages." Machiavelli's idea of omnipotence of the state and the business of tlie government was to provide security to person and property and has had a long lasting effect. His ideas were revolutionary in nature and substance and he brought politics in line with political practice. In tlie end, it can be said that a good deal of odium is attached to Machiavelli for his cynical disregard for morality arid religion. Machiavellism has become a by-word for unscrupulousness; but it must be noted that he wrote the 'Prince' and 'Discourses' primarily from tlie point of view of the preservation of state, every other consideration being secondary. Macliiavelli undoubtedly was frank, bold and honest besides being practical in understanding the real politic which made him a favourite of diplomats during his own time to the present. "Once we restore Machiavelli to the world in which his ideas were initially formed, we can begin to appreciate the extraordinary originality of his attack on the prevailing moral assumptions of his age. And once we grasp the implications of his own moral outlook, we can readily see why his name is still so invoked whenever tlie issues of political power and leadership are discussed" (Skinner 1981: 2).

5.10 SUMMARY

Machiavelli was a product of the age of prolific change and of a period that marked a definite reaction against the authority of tlie Pope and his preaching of spiritualism. He is known for

ushering in the Modern Age by ridding politics .of the vassalage of religion. Machiavelli's methods were historical but lie was a political realist, more concerned with the actual working of government than a theory of tlie state. He built his theories on the premise that men are essentially wicked and selfish. According to him, state is the highest form of human association and an indispensable instrument for tlie promotion of human welfare. A successful ruler or 'Prince' should be a perfect embodiment of shrewdness and self-control, making full use of his virtues and vices. Two basic means of success for a 'Prince' are judicious use of law and physical force. Tlie ruler is creator of law and of morality.

Certain contradictions in Macliiavelli's thinking have been pointed out. While he emphasised on the preservation of the state dependent on the excellence of its law arid civic virtues of its citizens, his choice of tlie form of government is unclear. He talks both of monarchies along with showing his admiration for an expanded Roman Republic. His theories were not developed systematically and are mainly in the form of remarks. Each of his works reflects tlie truth but none of them give a complete picture of his thoughts.

5.11 EXERCISES

1) In what way does Macliiavelli's works reflect his times?

2) Enumerate tlie main features of Machiavelli's thoughts on politics and forms of government.

3) Critically analyse Macliiavelli's political theories.

UNIT 6 THOMAS HOBBES

Structure

6.1 Introduction
6.2 Life and Times
6.3 The State of Nature and Natural Rights
6.4 Laws of Nature and the Covenant
6.5 The Covenant and the Creation of the Sovereign
6.6 Rights and Duties of the Sovereign
6.7 The Church and the State
6.8 Civil Law and Natural Law
6.9 Conclusion
6.10 Summary
6.11 Exercises

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Thomas Hobbes is one of the most colourful, controversial and important figures in the history of western political thought. In his life-time he was almost unanimously denounced for his alleged atheism, blasphemy and impiety and was known as the Monster of Malmesbury. He was clespised by the parliamentarians whom he opposed and suspected by the royalists whom he purported to support, because his ideas were quite out of step both with the parliamentarians' theory of popular representation and the Stuart theory of political legitimation based on the Divine Right of Kings. His status as a great philosopher and political thinker was not fully recognised until the 19th Century. The philosophical radicalisin of the English utilitarians and the scientific rationalism of the French Encyclopaedists incorporated in a large measure Hobbes' mechanical materialism, his nominalism, radical individualism and psychological egoism. Emphasising his influence on the utilitarian thought, Sir Frederick Pollock picturesquely remarks that the formula of the greatest good of the greatest number was made as a hook to be put in the nostrils of Leviathan so that it could be tamed and harnessed to the chariot of utility. By the mid-20th Century Hobbes was acclaimed as "probably the greatest writer on political philosophy that the English speaking people have produced (Sabine: 1963, 457). According to Michael Oakeshott: "The *Leviathan* is the greatest, perhaps the sole, masterpiece of political philosophy in the English language" (1960, viii).

Hobbes is now generally regarded as the father of modern political science. It is he who for the first time systematically expounded the absolutist theory of sovereignty and originated the positivist theory of law which was perfected by the analytical jurists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Though he was by no means a liberal, modern commentators (Oakeshott: 1960, vii, Gauthier: 1969, 144) believe that "his political doctrine has greater affinities with the liberalism of the 20th Century than his authoritarian theory would initially suggest" (Gauthier). From the Marxist point of view (Macpherson : 1962) Hobbes' theory is seen to reflect the political ideology of the incipient capitalist market society characterised by the doctrine of "possessive individualism" and the ethic of cut-throat competition and self-aggrandisement. Karl Marx himself is said to have remarked that "Hobbes was the father of us all." And it is the measure

of the richness and suggestiveness of Hobbes' system of ideas that it is supposed to imply, or assume, one of the most sophisticated modern metliodological tools of mathematical analysis for an adequate explanation of social phenomenon. John Rawls thinks that Hobbes' state of nature is the classic example of tlie "prisoner's dilemma" of game-tlieoretic analysis (1971 : 269) and writers like Hampton (1986), Kavka (1986) and Gauthier (1969) have examined Hobbes' theory in the light of tlie above remark, though a full-fledged application of the prisoner's dilemma analysis to Hobbes' theory of the state of nature has hardly been successfully attempted or achieved, because Hobbes' tlieory is perhaps not amenable to that kind of analytical treatment.

From a broad philosophical perspective tlie importance of Hobbes is perhaps in his bold and almost systematic attempt to assimilate tlie science of man and civil society to a thoroughly modern, mathematical physical science corresponding to a completely mechanistic conception of nature. His psychological egoism, his ethical relativism and his political absolutism are all supposed to follow logically from the assumptions or principles underlying the physical world which primarily consists of matter and motion, or rather matter in motion. Whether a straight way progress from geometry to physics and then from physics to politics, psychology and ethics, is possible is another matter. It is, however mainly a deductive system derived from materialistic premises that Hobbes understood his philosophical enterprise and this is how generations of Hobbes scliolars have interpreted him ever since.

Here it is pertinent to make two observations. First, it should not be understood that Hobbes is the precursor of the modern empirical science of politics and sociology which regards the methods of physical science as the proper model for political in the Mill's sense (Oakeshott; 1960, XXIII). Hobbes was strongly opposed to Bacon's empirical and experimental method. His own method was deductive and geometrical through and through. It was the resolutive-cornpositive method as developed in the school of Padua and followed by Galileo and other natural scientists. The second point to note is that in spite of Hobbes' claim about tlie unity of his thought and its foundation in scientific materialism, modern scholars have neither endorsed the supposed unity of his philosophy nor accepted the scientific basis of his ethical and politicnl theory. Leo Strauss, taking a cue from Croom Robertson (1886) and also relying on Hobbes' own observation that a knowledge of natural philosophy is not a necessary precondition for understanding his views on politics, argued that his political tlieory was pre-scientific and was based on 'humanist'premises. According to Michael Oakeshott, the basis of Hobbes' politics was not scientific materialism but philosophic rationalism, not a specific view of the nature of the world, but a particular notion of philosophical knowledge. This line of thought culminated in the famous Taylor-Warrender thesis which completely separated Hobbes' mechanistic psychology from his 'deontological' ethics. While Taylor found in Hobbes a proto-Kantian philosopher of duty for duty's sake (1938), Warrender placed Hobbes squarely in the Natural Law tradition based on theistic metaphysics, deriving the obligatory force of law from Divine Command (1958), F.C. Hood likewise argued for tlie Divine Politics of Hobbes (1964). There is a lot of textual evidence to support the theories of Taylor, Warrender and I-Iood. The point, however, is whether it is reasonable to jettison Hobbes' psychological egoism which is an important element of his theory, in orcler to make Hobbes a consistent deontologist as depicted by these writers. Are we justified in making Hobbes more consistent than he really was and in this process ignoring the historical and contextual basis of his writings? Quentin Skinner has forcefully argued that none of Hobbes' contemporaries understood Hobbes as grounding political obligation on tlie prior obligation to obey the command of God and that this is a conclusive proof that the Taylor-Warrender-Hood interpretation is erroneous and a misleading extrapolation.

A review of existing critical literature and a close textual analysis of Hobbes' writings show that it is not possible to reconcile these conflicting interpretations and neatly fit them into a coherent philosophical system. But logical consistency is not the sole mark of a philosopher's greatness. The profound richness of the intellectual content of a philosophy may be a vibrant source of inspiration opening different avenues of thought and it may far outweigh the lack of logical rigour and formal consistency. It is a true measure of Hobbes' greatness as a thinker that so many important and suggestive ideas and perspectives of thought are adumbrated and found interwoven in his comprehensive, though complex and multi-faceted system of philosophy. It is true that Hobbes' extremely pessimistic and unedifying view of human nature is not only highly distorted and exaggerated but incompatible with the very idea of a civil society. But it is also a fact that, as one perceptive writer puts it, such a lurid and extreme possible picture of the human condition appears to be "a magnificent incarnation of an eternally recurrent form of error . . . that in some time and places looks disconcertingly like the truth" (Anthony Quinton; 1982 : 153).

6.2 LIFE AND TIMES

Hobbes was prematurely born in 1588 in Westport near the small town of Malmesbury in England at a time when the country was threatened by the impending attack of the Spanish Armada. He died in 1679. His long life was full of momentous events and synchronised with great scientific discoveries'and philosophical systematisation characteristic "of the century of genius". Hobbes was a witness to the great political and constitutional turmoil caused by the English Civil War and his life and writings bear clear imprint of it, though the philosophical import of his work went far beyond the controversies of his time. After his education at Oxford where he was rather bored by the teaching of Aristotle and the scholastic philosophy, Hobbes joined as tutor to the son of William Cavendish, first Earl of Devonshire in 1608. He remained closely connected with the Cavendish family for a long period of his life. He accompanied his charge to France and Italy in 1610 and came under the influence of Kepler and Galileo. After his return from the continent he remained with the Cavendish family for the next eighteen years dividing his time between London and Chatsworth, the country home of the Cavendish. Hobbes' next visit to France was in 1929, when lie accepted tutorship to the son of Sir Gervase Clinton after the death of his first patron, the second Earl of Devonshire in 1628. In the year 1628 Hobbes' translation of Thucydides' history of the Grecian War was published. During his second visit to tlte continent Hobbes came under the spell of geometrical method which started from self-evident premises and proceeded to derive complicated theorems by way of logical deduction. During the third journey to France and Italy (1634-37) which he undertook with the third Earl of Devonshire whose service he had rejoined in 1631, Hobbes met Descartes, Gassendi and Galileo. He became convinced that everything including man and society, morals and politics could be explained on the basis of laws of motion. Kepler's laws of planetary motion and Galileo's laws of falling bodies made a deep impact in his mind. He returned to England and completed in 1640 his first important philosophical work called the Element of Law, which was published in 1650 in two parts, Human Nature and De Corpore Politico. In this work Hobbes demonstrated the need for undivided sovereignty, but the arguments for this were not derived from the theory of Divine Right of Kings. In 1640 Hobbes fled to the Continent in fear for his life after the dissolution of Parliament in May 1640 and the impeachment of Earl of Strafford by the Long Parliament. For the next eleven years he remained in Paris in the intellectual circle of Mersenne. During this period lie accepted to act as tutor in mathematics to the future Charles II.

The exile in France was the most fruitful period of Hobbes' intellectual life. In 1642 he published his De Cive in Latin (later to appear as De Corpore Politico) He also planned to write

his ambitious trilogy on body, man arid citizen in which everything in the world of nature and man could be explained on the pattern of the science of mechanics. He made a beginning with De Corpore. Leviathan, Hobbes' magnum opus, was written during this period and was published in 1651. Clarendon thought that the book was written to flatter Cromwell. Hobbes himself is reported to have said: "I have a mind to return home." But the philosophical sweep of Leviathan was much above the immediate political controversies of the day and had far-reaching consequences for tlie future development of European thought.

Hobbes returned to England in 1951 and was soon embroiled in a controversy with John Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, on the question of free will and determinism. Another controversy was with the mathematician John Wallis about Hobbes' attempt to square tlie circle. In 1957 De Homine, the second part of his trilogy, was published. The last year's of Hobbes' life were devoted to the writing of his autobiography in Latin, both in prose and verse, and a verse translation of the Iliad and Odyssey. Mobbes died at Chatsworth in 1679 at the age of ninety-one.

The Leviathan is Hobbes' most famous work. It is, however, not the only important source for a complete understanding of Hobbes' ideas. Many competent scholars believe that although "as literature De Cive does not rival Leviathan which is a masterpiece of English prose style, it is superior to it as philosophy (Gert 1978; 3). A.E. Taylor in his interpretation of Hobbes relies mostly on De Cive (1938). This is not to say that there is any fundamental discrepancy between Leviathan and other works of Hobbes. There is only a difference in emphasis and style of presentation. The argument is substantially tlie same; different books are devoted to illuminating the basic theme in different ways.

6.3 THE STATE OF NATURE AND NATURAL RIGHTS

As we have already indicated, Hobbes' political theory is, in his own perception, derived from his psychology which in turn is based on his mechanistic conception of nature. This standard, text-book reading of Hobbes, as we have observed above, has of late been strongly challenged by competent scholars, and scientific materialism is considered either irrelevant to or inconsistent with Hobbes' political and ethical theory. Hobbes himself says that one can follow his ideas just by observation and introspection without going through the elaborate process of ratiocination and logical deduction from the basic premises. Be that as it may, let us follow Hobbes in his explication of the concept of the state of nature and natural rights which is the starting point of all social contract theories.

The concept of the state of nature, that is, human condition prior to the formation of civil society, is derived from the nature of man, his basic psycho-physical character, his sensations, emotions, appetites and behavior. Like all other things in nature, man is primarily a body governed by law of motion which permeates the entire physical world. There are, Hobbes says, two kinds of motion in animals—vital motion and voluntary motion. Vital motion is the automatic movement of the physiological mechanism which goes on within our organism from birth to death without our being conscious of it. Circulation of blood, breathing, digestion, excretion are examples of this kind of motion.

Voluntary motion is first "fancied in our minds" and is caused by the impact of external stimuli on our sense organs which produces phantasms in the brain and also initiates internal motion that is carried through the nerves to the seat of vital motion that is the heart. This internal motion appears as sensation which either aids or retards the vital motion and thus helps or hinders the continued existence and vitality of the physiological system. If the transmitted

motion helps or heightens the vital motion, we are attracted to, or there is an 'endeavour' toward, its originating cause or object in the external world; if it retards it, we are repelled by it. Thus two original motions or emotions are generated which we call desire and aversion. From these basic motions or endeavour, other emotions like hope, diffidence, glory, courage, anger, benevolence etc. are derived. Pleasure and pain are related to desire and aversion as their necessary complements. Imagination and memory are both sensations, imagination being decaying sensation, memory tlie recollection of past sensation. Deliberation is the succession of desires and aversion in the mind and will is the last stage of deliberation that ensues in action. There is no free will and no conflict between freedom and necessity. Good is what we desire, and evil is that which we shun.

The predominant passions of desire and aversion are the root cause of conflict in the state of nature according to Hobbes. Everybody is moved by the natural impulse of self-preservation to desire and possess the objects or goods that are conducive to his existence. Since the goods or objects of desire are limited and men are roughly equal in strength, when physical power of some is offset by the mental superiority or cunningness of others, there consequently occurs a ruthless competition and conflict of interest among individuals in which no one is eventually victorious.

Competition for goods of life becomes a struggle for power, because without power one cannot retain what one has acquired. But it is in tlie very nature of power that it must be continually augmented to save it from dissipation. One cannot retain power without acquiring more power. Thus it turns out to be a struggle for power after power which ceaseth only in death. Sense of insecurity, fear, vain-glory and pride aggravate this tragic condition. Hobbes says that "in the state of nature, we find three principle causes of quarrel. First, competition; second, diffidence; third, glory. The first, maketh men invade for gain; the second for safety; and the third, for reputation" (Leviathan, ch. 13). The crux of the matters is concisely put in the following words:

> I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in death. And the cause of this, is not always that a man hopes for a more intensive delight, that lie has already attained to ; or that he cannot be content with a more moderate power : but because he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present without the acquisition of more (Lev. ch. 11).

In this passage Hobbes presents with great clarity and incisiveness the inexorable dialectics of power which later thinkers like Acton, Burckhardt and Simone Weil have fully appreciated and expatiated upon.

> Thus there is, in the very essence of power, a fundamental contradiction tlrat prevents it from ever existing in the true sense of the word ; those who are called the masters, ceaselessly compelled to reinforce their power for fear of seeing it snatched away from them, are for ever seeking a dominion impossible to attain ; beautiful illustration of this search are offered by the infernal torments in Greek mythology (Weil 1958 : 67).

It appears that what is central to Hobbes' psychology is not hedonism but search for power and glory, riches and honour. Power is, of course, the central feature of Hobbes' system of ideas. "Man is a complex of power; desire is the desire for power, pride is illusion about power, honour opinion about power, life the unremitting exercise of power and death the absolute loss of power" (Oakeshott ; 1962 : xxi)

One might imagine that in the condition of plenty of resources and amplitude of man's power over natural phenomena and social behaviour there would be no serious conflict and the reign of peace and security would prevail. But conflict is inherent in human psychology according to Hobbes; it is implanted in man's inordinate pride, covetousness, sense of fear and insecurity etc. Hobbes also mentions another cause of conflict which cannot simply be traced to psychological egoism. This relates to the differences among men about what is good and evil, desirable and undesirable. Some scholars have expressed the opinion that Hobbes was principally concerned with the clash of beliefs and ideologies. Shortsightedness may be another factor responsible for the state of strife. Though men are rational creatures prone to strive for their self-preservations, passions frustrate the normal working of reason and blind pursuit of self-interest brings them into conflict with each other. It is to be noted that this is not primarily a historical account but a logical construction from the first premises about human nature.

The combined effect of the factors enumerated above is that the state of nature is a war of every man against every man in which the life of man is "solitary, poor,, nasty, brutish and short". In this state there can be no morality, justice, industry, and civilisation. In this state, however, there is a right of nature, natural right of every man to every thing, even to one another's life. It is clear tliat here we are far away from the Aristotelian conception of the state as natural to man, the state as logically prior to man and, teleologically, his natural destination.

So far we have presented only one part of Hobbes' theory. The other part is concerned with the solution of the problem caused by the miseries of the state of nature.

Before we proceed to consider how Hobbes suggests a method of escape from this predicament of the original, pre-political human condition, we must take note of a few important critical points. It is generally believed that the basis of Hobbes' state of nature lies in his theory of psychological egoism. This view has been vigorously challenged by some writers on the ground that Hobbes does take into account other-regarding or altruistic motives and virtues like sympathy, pity, kindness, charity, benevolence etc. According to John Plamenatz: "Psychological egoism, which so many of Hobbes' critics have fastened upon, is not really necessary to his political theory" (1963; Vol I. 118-119). Bernard Gert has argued that psychological egoism does not necessarily imply that men act only out of selfish motive. "From the fact that whenever anything benefits my vital motion, this causes me to desire it, it does not follow that I desire it because I believe that it will benefit my vital motion. Although Hobbes does maintain that our desiring a thing is caused by its benefitting our vital motion, he never claims that whatever we desire we desire because we believe it will benefit our vital motion" (1965 : 346). According to Kavka, Hobbes is a "rule-egoist". Be that it may, it is not necessary to decide this technical point in the present context.

The other important concept that Hobbes introduces in his account of the state of nature is natural right. "The Right of Nature, "lie says, is "the: liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature; that is to say, of his own life; and consequently, of doing anything, in his own judgement, and reason, he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto" (*Lev.* Ch. XIV).

Tlie concept of natural right is considered to be the most important contribution of Hobbes to modern political theory.

> It is by this conception of right as the principle of morals and politics that the originality of Hobbes' political philosophy (which includes his moral philosophy) is least ambiguously evinced. For by starting from right and thus denying the

primacy of law (or, what amounts fundamentally to the same, of virtue), Hobbes makes a stand against the idealistic tradition. On the other hand, by basing morals and politics on right and not on purely natural inclinations or appetite, Nobbes makes a stand against the naturalistic tradition. That is to say, the principle of right stands midway between strictly moral principles (such as those of traditional natural law) on the one hand, and purely natural principles (such as pleasure, appetite or even utility) on the other, 'Right' we may say, is a specifically juridical conception (Strauss, 1963, VIII-IX).

The essential point in Strauss' exposition of Hobbes is that Hobbes makes a clear-cut distinction between right and might without at the same time identifying right with the traditional doctrine of morality. Strauss does insist that Hobbes' theory is moralistic as against naturalistic or utilitarian, but his is a morality of a special kind. It is not possible here to examine in depth the Straussian view of Hobbes' natural right. But it must be said that on this point Hobbes is neither clear nor consistent. He sometimes equates natural right with power, sometimes with absence of obligations, and still on other occasions, he regards it as liberty to do that which right reason prescribes. The word is also used in a sense in which one man's right implies other men's duty. The paradox of natural right, as Hobbes conceives it, is that in the state of nature it remains highly precarious on account of the very conditions in which it is claimed and, in civil society, it touches the vanishing point, that is, it survives simply as the right to life which even the sovereign cannot touch except in extraordinary conditions.

6.4 LAWS OF NATURE AND THE COVENANT

After presenting a horrible picture of the state of nature, Hobbes proceeds to discuss how men can escape it. In addition to being a slave of passion, man is also endowed with reason, a faculty which tells him about the measures that may, if followed sincerely by all, lead to peace and security. Unbridled pursuit of self-interest leads to war, but rational self-preservation would not only avoid the fatal risk of war, but would be more effective in securing every man what are the necessary means of preservation, At least it would, enable men to avoid the risk of violent death. Hobbes has no philosophy of *summum bonum*. The final concern of man, according to him, is to the avoidance of *summum malum*.

The Laws of nature are called the theorems of peace. Hobbes defines a law of nature as follows: "A law of nature (lex naturalis) 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". *(Lev. Ch, 14)*. Further, "law, and rights, differ as much, as obligation, and liberty, which in one and the same matter are inconsistent."

Hobbes then lists as many as nineteen laws of nature, three of them being of utmost importance. These are:

1) "that every man, ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of war. The first branch of whish rule, containeth the first, and fundamental law of nature; which is to *seek peace, and follow it.* The second, the sum of the right of nature; which is, by all *means we can, to defend ourselves.*

2) "that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far-forth, as for peace, and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented

with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself." "This is the law of the Gospel; *whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them."*

3) *"That men perform their covenants made."*

There are other laws of nature which are not generally emphasised but they are quite important insofar as they show that Hobbes is really not the type of psychological egoist or ethical subjectivist that he is usually made out to be. These are justice, propriety, complaisance, equity, against pride, against arrogance etc.

The Laws of Nature play a crucial role in the transformation of the State of Nature into civil 'society. But they raise highly controversial and difficult questions which have 'been a subject of continuing debate. Here we can mention them only briefly.

First, there is the question of tlie nexus between the state of nature and the Laws of Nature. Are these laws operative in the state of nature? If not, in what sense are they natural? If the description of the state of nature as tlie war of all against all is to be taken seriously, laws of nature obviously do not play any effective role in the conduct of men in that state. How can then purely egoistical and passion-dominated individuals suddenly awake to the life of reason and decide to abide by tlie norms of peaceful and cooperative life by surrendering their natural rights to all things? If, on tlie other hand, reason is an essential element of human nature, how could individuals be absolutely devoid of it in the state of nature? The paradox arises out of the fact that Hobbes analytically separates two parts of human psychology, passion and reason, and delineates their working alternately in order to show, by a sleight of hand as it were, that the only alternative to anarchy is absolute rule.

Hobbes says that the "Laws of nature oblige *in foro interno;* that is *to* say, they bind to a desire they shall take place; but *in foro externo;* that is to say, putting them in act, not always." Even if one intends to abide by the law of nature, fear and distrust of others impel him to take preemptive action as dominant strategy to ward off possible danger. This situation is exemplified in what is now-a-days called Prisoner's Dilemma.

Hobbes' own contemporary, the Earl of Clarendon posed the question very precisely and no satisfactory answer has ever been given to it:

> How should it else come to pass, that Mr. Hobbes, whilst he is demolishing the whole frame of Nature for want of order to support it, and makes it unavoidably necessary for every one to cut his neighbour's throat . . . I say, how comes it to pass, that he would in the same, and the next chapter, set down a Body of Laws prescribed by Nature itself, as are immutable and eternal? that there appears, by his own shewing ; a full remedy against all that confusion, for avoiding whereof he hath devised all that unnatural and impossible contract and covenant? "(Quoted in Hampton, p. 63).

Then we have the problem of obligation. Are Natural Laws merely **maxims** of prudence or objectively valid and immutable principles of morality? There is ample evidence in Hobbes' text to support divergent interpretations.

Adam Smith's estimate of Hobbes' theory has been widely accepted for about two centuries—that "odious" doctrine "offensive to all sound moralists, as it supposed that there was no natural

distinction between right and wrong, that those were mutable and changeable and depended on the mere arbitrary will of the civil magistrate" (1776: 318).

The exactly opposite view, known as the Taylor thesis, was propounded in the mid-20th Century, according to which Hobbes' ethical theory is a 'strict deontology' of the Kantian type. Another version of this view expounded by Warrender and Hood regards it as Divine Command theory in the classical Natural Law tradition, In this interpretation Hobbes' psychological egoism is disengaged from his ethics and the latter is represented or reconstructed as a consistent system of transcendentally valid ethical norms which are obligatory independently of their beneficial consequences. Natural Law is true law of reason, binding upon both the subject and sovereign, but its binding force or obligatory character arises out of the will of God. Yet another interpretation makes of Hobbes a virtue ethicist laying emphasis not on Rights but on Good or Virtue (Boonin-Vail). In between the two extremes come those readings which regard Hobbes' ethics as a kind of prudential reasoning, justifying natural law on conventional, contractual or utilitarian grounds (Gauthier, Peters). According to Kavka, I-Iobbes is a rule egoist, adopting a kind of reconciliatory position between moralism and act-utilitarianism. J.W.N. Watkins refuting the charge that Hobbes committed the "naturalistic fallacy" of deriving moral prescriptions from factual promises about human psychology, argues that his (Hobbes') laws of nature are not moral prescriptions, but they are more like "doctors's orders of a peculiarly coinpelling kind." They are "assertoric hypothetical imperatives." According to Plamenatz, the laws of nature are "dictates of reason, not as imperatives which follow logically from statement of facts, but as rules which only creatures capable of reasoning could think or could want to see observed" (*Leviathan,* Fontana Library, pp. 12-13). In Plamenatz's opinion God is superfluous to Hobbes' theory of morality.

As we have said, Hobbes' own words are not quite unequivocal. He says:

> These dictates of reason, men use to call by the name of laws, but improperly: for they are but conciusions, or theoreins concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence of themselves; whereas law, properly, is the word of him, that by right hath command over others. But yet if we consider the same theorems as delivered in the word of God, that by right commandeth all things; then are they properly called laws, (*Lev.* Ch. 16).

Since according to Hobbes nothing is definitely known about God except his existence, it is argued by the critics that the introduction of God in this exposition is logically redundant and is meant only to assuage the feelings of those who were enraged by Hobbes' atheism. "An obligation to obey God", says Plamenatz "as Hobbes conceives of it, does not differ in kind from what the obligation to obey a human sovereign would be in a world without God" (Fontana, p. 30). David Gauthier observes that "what is important to Hobbes' moral and political theory is natural law *qua* dictate of reason, not qua command of God" (1969: 70).

Howard Warrender takes a firm stand against treating natural law as rational principles of self-preservation devoid of moral implications beyond self-interest. Against Plamenatz he contends: "The Laws of nature (seek peace, keep covenants etc.) are a special kind of rules for self-preservation and are not strictly rules for personal preservation—the individual may save himself by the most dubious means. They are rules for the preservation of man in general. And so, the formula required for the state is not 'preserve yourself (though this is always permissible) but 'act so that ail men can be preserved, except where this is inconsistent with your own preservation'. This is, of course, an entirely different matter; and a preservation principle of this kind could never be derived from the ordinary self-interest of the individual alone. If Plamenatz

dispenses with the-role of God and leaves no substitute, such as a self-evident natural law, how is such a principle to be supported?" (K. C Brown; 1965 ; 97). Warrender here stakes his claim, not so much on God as the basis of moral obligation as on the self-evident character of natural law based on reason.

Another controversial point in Leviathan that admits of different interpretations relates to in *foro interno* and *inforo externo* obligation.

> The laws of nature oblige in *foro interno*; that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place : but in foro *externo* ; that is, to the putting them in act, not always. For he that should be modest and tractable, and perform all he promises, in such time, and place, where no man else should do so, should but make himself a prey to others, and procure his own certain ruin, contrary to the ground of all laws of nature, which tend to nature's-preservation. And again, he that having sufficient security, that others shall observe tlie same laws towards him, observes them not himself, seaketh not peace, but war ; and consequently the destruction of his nature by violence.
>
> And whatsoever laws bind in foro interno, may be broken, not only by a fact contrary to the law, but also by a fact accordirig to it, in case a man think it contrary. For though his actions in this case, be according to the law ; yet his purpose was against the law; which, where the obligation is in foro *interno*, is a breach. (*Lev.* ch. 15)

The laws of nature, according to the above explanation, are clearly hypothetical imperative. They oblige only if certain conditions are fulfilled. But Hobbes also accords them the status of categorical imperatives. He says: "The laws of nature are immutable and eternal; for injustice ingratitude, arrogance, pride, inequity, acception of persons, and the rest can never be made lawful. For it can never-be that war shall preserve life, and peace destroy it."

Warrender interprets the above exposition to mean that the laws of nature oblige in *foro interno*, that is in conscience, even in the state of nature, but since the validating conditions of their obligations do not obtain in that condition, they do not oblige in actual fact, that is 'inforo externo'. Warrender's view is that a single and consistent theory of obligation runs through the whole of Hobbes' doctrine and obligation in the state of nature does not differ from obligation in civil society in principle but only in circumstance. Plamenatz and Oakeshott think that this is to go beyond what the text suggests. Michael Oakeshott finds four kinds of obligation in Hobbes: "There is tlie moral obligation to obey the authorised will of the sovereign; there is the external physical obligation arising from force or power; and there is the internal rational obligation of self-interest arising from fear of punishment and desire of peace. Each of these obligations provide a separate motive for observing the order of the commonwealth, and each is necessary for the preservation of that order." Political obligation is a "mixed obligation consisting of physical, rational and moral obligations, combined to serve one end, but never assimilated to one another" (1960 : Lxl).

There is another problem connected with the hypothetical nature of the Laws of Nature which has been discussed by recent critics. This is the Prisoner's Dilemma matrix of the game theory to which we have already made a reference. Under conditions of uncertainty and in the absence of a sovereign power to control the behaviour of men, the dominant motive and strategy of a rational agent who wants to maximise his pay-off would be to take a preemptive action and attack whatever the other party might do. For if the other party attacks, one who attacks first would be decidedly in a superior position, and if it does not attack, the first invader would

easily be able to steal a march over his rival. But if this analysis is correct there is no possibility of men coming to an agreement to relinquish their natural rights unless there is a common superior to keep them in awe. But the paradox is that this common superior cannot be created except by a covenant.

The situation for Hobbes is, however, not so dismal as this analysis suggests. His individuals are not utility-maximisers, but disaster-avoiders. On sober thought they would trust each other and take initiative in coming to an agreement. Hobbes' famous Reply to the Foole is meant to convince that it is always rational to abide by the Laws of Nature if the other party has-already performed and that justice, "that is to say, keeping covenant, is a rule of reason, by which we are forbidden to do anything destructive to our life ; and consequently a law of nature." (*Lev*, Ch. 15)

6.5 THE COVENANT AND THE CREATION OF THE SOVEREIGN

Having discussed the conditions in the state of nature, Hobbes proceeds to the problem of creation of civil society. The sovereign authority is created out of a covenant among individuals. The sovereign himself stands outside the covenant. He is a beneficiary of the contract, but not a party to it. Each man makes an agreement with every man in the following manner:

> I authorise and give up my right of governing myself, to this man, or to this assembly of men, on the condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorise all his actions in like manner. This is tlie generation of that great Leviathan or rather (to speak more reverenty) of that Mortal God, to which we owe under the immortal God, our peace and defence. (Lev., Ch. 17).

It is clear that no individual can surrender his right to self-preservation. For this is precisely the *raison d'etre* of civil society.

Hobbes makes a distinction between a contract and a covenant. "The mutual transferring of right, is that which men call contract." Then, "one of the contractors, may deliver the thing contracted for on his part, and leave the other to perform his part at some determinate time after, and in the meantime be trusted; and then the contract on his part, is called Pact, or Covenant: or both parties may contract now, to perform hereafter; in which cases, he that is to perform in time to come, being trusted, his performance is called ***keeping*** *of promise*, or faith; and the failing of performance, if it be voluntary, violation of faith" (*Lev.* ch. 14). Covenant is, on this view, a special kind of contract which implies trust and promise for future performance.

Some writers, like Samuel Pufendorf in the 17th Century and commentators like Jean Hampton in our own time, have expressed the view that this distinction is of no great philosophical importance. It only emphasises the idea of trust and faithful keeping of promises which Hobbes' arguments presuppose.

In order to secure their escape from the state of nature, individuals renounce their natural rights to all things, and institute, by common consent, a third person, or body of persons, conferring all rights on him for enforcing the contract by using force and keeping them all in awe, and, authorising all his action as their own. That the sovereign is not a party to the covenant renders him free from having any obligation. This is sovereignty by institution. Apart from this, Hobbes also talks of sovereignty by acquisition or conquest. In this second form of creation of

commonwealth individuals acquiesce in tlie rule of tlie conqueror in exchange for security and the victor, by implication, enters into a contract witli the vanquished to provide security in lieu of obedience. According to Hobbes fear is no less a basis of obligation than free consent. In fact, covenants without tlie sword are mere words and "of no strength to secure a man at all". "The bonds of words are two weak to bridle man's ambition, avarice, anger and other passions, without the fear of some coercive power." But if it is only the fear of punishment that is the ultimate foundation of civil society, what purpose does the idea of contract serve? It is not a contract only in a Pickwickian sense? Some writers have made the concept of 'authorisation', rather than of contract, tlie real basis of sovereign power. According to David Gauthier: "authorisation, rather than covenant, is the dominant metaphor in Hobbes' political thought, and that authorisation is a much more adequate and illuminating metaphor for the formulation and discussion of political relationship" (1969: 171). Jean Hampton, however, thinks that Gauthier's interpretation "would seem to make Hobbes into a king of whig" and bring him nearer to Locke. Without entering into the details of this controversy, it is sufficient to note tliat a commonwealth, according Hobbes, is "one person, of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the author, to the end he may use tlie strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their pence and common defense." This commonwealth is the sovereign, the unity of all in one person.

6.6 RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE SOVEREIGN

Sovereignty, according to Hobbes, is absolute, indivisible, inalienable and perpetual. It is not limited either by the rights of the subjects or by customary and statutory law. Sovereign is of course obliged to act according to Natural Law, but he alone is the interpreter of this law and none of his actions can be challenged on the ground that it is violative of reason and justice. Justice consists in acting in accordance with promises made, and tlie sovereign has made no promise. Hence his actions cannot be called unjust or injurious. In relation to his subjects, the sovereign is always in the state of nature and enjoys all his natural rights. No one can complain tliat sovereign is acting wrongly, because everybody has authorised him lo act on liis behalf; his actions are the actions of his subjects and nobody can rightly complain against his own action. Sovereign has absolute right to declare war and make peace, to levy taxes and impose penalties. He is the ultimate source of all administrative, legislative and judicial authority. Law, properly speaking, is the command of the sovereign, that is, "that person whose precept contains in it the reason of obedience" (De Cive, Ch. 14.1). It is "to every subject, those rules which the commonwealth has commanded him, by word, writing, or other sufficient sign of the will, to make use of, for tlie distinction of right and wrong" (*Lev*, Ch. 26).

Natural law or customs and conventions attain the status of Law only when willed and ordained by the sovereign. Hobbes makes a radical departure from the medieval tradition and the position of Sir Edward Coke who pleaded for the supremacy of common law, as against the authority of both Parliament and the King. He brought to completion tlie process of subordinating the church to the state which was initiated by Marsilio's demarcation between temporal and spiritual powers, and swept aside the limitations of Divine Law, of Constitutional law and property rights tliat Bodin had imposed on his sovereign. Hobbes' theory was further developed by the analytical jurists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Nor only John Austin and his school, but Kelsen, Hart and many otlier positivists were at one with Hobbes in effecting a clean separation between law and morals.

Liberty is the silence of law. In other words, a citizen is free to do or forbear what the sovereign has not commanded or forbidden. However, the command of the sovereign cannot annul the

subjects' right to self-preservation. If a sovereign commands some one to kill himself, he is not bound to abide by it, for the sole purpose of the establishment of civil society is the preservation of life. It is, of course, up to the sovereign to kill or not to kill a person in the interest of peace' and security of tlie commonwealth, but this does not imply that the subject himself is obliged to end his life, or any others' life when ordered to do so by the sovereign. "When therefore our refusal to obey, frustrates the end for which sovereignty was ordained, then there is no liberty to refuse: otherwise there is."

In Hobbes there is no general right to disobedience or rebellion. The authority of the sovereign is absolute and irrevocable. To resist him is to commit what may be called a performative contradiction. For the subjects have authorised all his actions as their own and nobody can go against his own will. Moreover, to resist or disobey the sovereign is to opt for the state of nature, where there is no right or wrong. However, it must be always remembered that the "obligation of the subject to the sovereign, is understood to last as long, and no longer, than the power lasteth, by which he is able to protect them." "For the right men have by nature to protect themselves, when none else can protect them, can by no covenant be relinquished." Hence, if the sovereign fails to put down a rebellion and the rebels succeed in establishing their own regime and in giving the required security to their subjects, he *ipso facto* loses his legitimacy and the new regime becomes the real commonwealth. It was in this way that Hobbes sought to justify the rule of Oliver Cromwell. There can be no legitimate government without effective power to back it. As Sabine puts it: "The aspiration for more justice and right seemed to him (Hobbes) merely an intellectual confusion. Hatred of tyranny seemed tnere dislike of a particular exercise of power, and enthusiasm for liberty seemed either sentimental vaporing or outright hypocrisy" (1963 : 471).

6.7 THE CHURCH AND THE STATE

The question of religious freedom and the relation between the Church and the State figure prominently in the political thought of the 17th Century and Hobbes devotes almost half of the *Leviathan* to it. He does believe in the fseedom of religious belief and knows full well that in matters of conscience man cannot be coerced. But he says that the overt expression and practice of religion in the form of worship and propagation of faith are matters of public concern and come under the jurisdiction of the political sovereign. The belief in the church as the Kingdom of God he regarded as a cardinal error, as irrational and pernicious as the metaphysical notion of non-material substances which was responsible for much of the obscurantism and superstition in public life. His nominalist theory of knowledge made a clean sweep of all abstract notions, of "essences" and "ghosts" which were mere figments of imagination and which misled men into the "Kingdom of Darkness" and divided them into warring factions and groups. A church is nothing more than a corporation governed by commonwealth like any other association that comes under it. No profession of faith is lawful unless it is sanctioned by the sovereign. Hobbes was highly critical of Papacy with its claim to exercise control over the subjects of a sovereign state in ecclesiastical matters and he ridiculed it as "the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof."

6.8 CIVIL LAW AND NATURAL LAW

After the constitution of civil society, natural law is for all practical purposes replaced by civil law which is the creation of the sovereign. For Hobbes the conflict between common law and the statute law, and the constitutional crisis arising out of it, was the real problem to tackle and lie was confident that this could be solved only by making the will of the sovereign supreme

and the ultimate point of reference in all legal and political matters. To him it is reason, not will, that makes law obligatory. In civil society Natural Law does not disappear; it is assimilated to civil law.

> "The law of nature, and the civil law, contain each other, and are of equal extent .... The law of nature therefore is a part of civil law in all commonwealths of the world. Reciprocally also, tlie civil law is a part of the dictates of nature. For justice, that is to say, performance of covenant, and giving to every man his own, is a dictate of law of nature ... Civil, and natural law are not different kinds, but different parts of law ; whereof one part being written, is called civil the other unwritten, natural. But the right of nature, that is, the natural liberty of man, may by tlie civil law be abridged, and restrained : nay, the end of making laws, is no other, but such restraint; without tlie which there cannot possibly be any peace. And law was brought into the world for nothing else, but to limit the natural liberty of particular men, in such manner, as they might not hurt, but assist one another, and join together against a common enemy." (*Lev.* ch. 26).

This passage his been interpreted differently according to the degree of importance given to natural law in Hobbes' system. According to Plamenatz, when I-Iobbes says that natural law and civil law contain one another, "he is not denying that men may have good grounds for believing that civil law is contrary to the law of nature; he is saying that they ought always to do what they promised, which was to accept sovereign's interpretation of natural law as alone valid. They must never use the law of nature as an excuse for not obeying civil law" (Fontana: 44-45). According to Warrender: "With the advent of sovereign authority and the civil law that it provides, the laws of nature are not superseded, though their manner of operation is altered. They persist in civil society together with civil law itself, and play, in Hobbes' theory, a part in determining the patterns of obligation in civil society no less essential than their functions in the State of Nature" (1957 : 146).

Hobbes' argument for the absolute power of the sovereign is by no means a plea for unadulterated despotism. He consistently maintained that tlie object of the state was the safety and well-being of men and for this the sovereign was accountable to God. He also maintained that by "safety is not meant a bare Preservation, but also all other contentments of life, which every man by lawful Industry, without danger, or hurt to the common-wealth, shall acquire to himself'. Admirers of Hobbes have discerned in this a distinct element of liberalism. But it would be more appropriate to view it as a policy of "enlightened despotism."

6.9 CONCLUSION

Two aspects of Hobbes' thought require special attention—his absolutism and his individualism. It is often asserted that tlie two are logically correlated. It is on the basis of his radical individualism that Hobbes builds his theory of political absolutism. And following this line of thought, it is also claimed that Hobbes' political theory is quintessentially a theory of liberalism. Hobbes' emphasis on natural right, it is said, distinguishes him from the classical natural Law theorists.

But here a little caution is necessary, Natural right is the basis of Hobbes' theory; it is not its conclusioa. Hobbes starts with natural rights of the individual but severely restricts them to found a viable civil society. He explicitly says: "The right of nature, that is, the natural liberty of man, may by tlie civil law be abridged, and restrained; nay, the end of making laws, is no other, but such restraint; without which there cannot possibly be any peace. And law was

brought into the world for nothing else, but to limit the natural liberty of particular men, in such manners, as they might not hurt, but assist one another, and join together against a common enemy (*Lev.* ch. 26). Natural rights lead to war and natural law brings peace and security. At the end of *Leviathan* Hobbes makes an observation which leaves no doubt on this part: "For I ground the civil right of sovereigns, and both the duty and liberty of subjects, upon the known natural inclinations of mankind, and upon the articles of the Law of nature; of which no man, that pretends but reason enough to govern his private family, ought to be ignorant."

Unlike liberal thinkers like John Stuart Mill and Herbert Speticer in the 19th Century and Nozick and Dworkin in the 20th Century. Hobbes does not espouse individual's right to limit or resist the authority of the state. According to Dworkin: "Right-based theories treat code of conduct as instrumented, perhaps necessary to protect the rights of others, but having no essential value in themselves. The man at their centre is the man who benefits from others' compliance, not the man who leads the life of virtue by complying himself' (1999: 172). This is the view that Hobbes would most resolutely reject. For Hobbes, a just man has innate disposition to perform just action, and the Laws of Nature always oblige in *foro interno*, though not always in *foro externo.*

Right is nothing but the liberty of each man to use his "natural faculties according to right reason". Hobbes' "Reply to the Foole" that it is not rational to renege on one's promise is a sufficient refutation of the amoralist individualism of Dworkin and Mackie. Hobbes' theory of political obligation, despite its strong non-traditional, utilitarian bias, has a more solid philosophical and ethical foundation than tlie so-called right-based morality of modern liberalism.

Hobbes' philosophy is an elaborate architectonic system comprising different elements of reality; physical, human and social, all assimilated into a close-knit uniform pattern by the application of resolutive-compositive methodology of Galileo and the school of Padua and the geometrical-deductive reasoning of Descartes. It is paradigmatic of all those atomistic theories which conceive society or the state as an artificial creation, or aggregation, of self-subsistent self-enclosed, egoistic individuals who by mutual agreement or covenant incorporate themselves into a collective unit or body politic for their personal benefit. The ontological and moral priority of individual over the state is the basic presupposition of this theory and it has been a pervasive feature of modern European thought. It stands in sharp contrast to the Aristotelian idea that the state is natural and prior to man. Hobbes' political theory marks the breakdown of traditional institutions and values and denotes the decline of metaphysical wisdom, It heralds tlie age of instrumental reason, material pursuits, secular norms, power politics and utilitarian ethics. Under these conditions what holds man's ambition and avarice is the supreme power of the sovereign, not the bond of human sympathy and natural harmony. It is a kind of society which has been described by Ferdinand Tonnies as *Gesellschaft* as contradistinguished from *Gemeinschaft* that existed in earlier days. It goes to the credit of Hobbes that he caught the spirit of the age most clearly and articulated it most brilliantly. But he underestimates the more sublime and nobler aspects of human nature. It is true that he has been more sinned against than sinning. But the fact remains that the main emphasis of his thinking was on the darker side of human psychology. He was so much obsessed by his liypothetico-deductive method that be took little interest in the actual complex motives that guide men in society. This is the reason why his theory, despite its wide scope and rigorous logic, remains philosophically inadequate and morally uninspiring. Some of his most suggestive and fruitful ideas like his theory of political obligation and tlie concept of sovereignty, are more or less independent of his mechanistic philosophy and stand on their own merit.

6.10 SUMMARY

Hobbes is generally regarded as the father of modern political science. His theories reflect political ideology of the incipient capitalist market society characterised by the doctrine of "possessive individualism" and the ethic of cut-throat competition and self-aggrandisement. His method was deductive and geometrical rather than empirical and experimental. According to Hobbes the root cause of conflict in the state of nature are the passions of desire and aversion. Since goods are limited, there is ruthless competition and a struggle for power to retain what is acquired. Conflict is inherent in human nature in blind pursuit of self interest. Another thing that Hobbes points out is that each man has liberty to use his own power as he will for preservation of his own nature and life. This he calls natural right. But at times he equates natural right with power, at times with absence of obligations or with liberty to do that which right reason prescribes.

To escape this state of nature and to avoid war man is endowed with reason and rational self-preservation, These are known as laws of nature which play an important role to transform state of nature into a civil society. In order to escape the state of nature, individuals renounce their natural rights and institute a third person or body of persons conferring all rights on that person or body, authorising all its action as their own. This common superior or sovereign has to be created through a covenant with the sovereign outside this covenant.

Sovereignty is indivisible, inalienable and perpetual. The Sovereign acts according to natural law but he alone is the interpreter of this law and his action cannot be challenged. After the constitution of civil society, natural law is assimilated into civil law.

Hobbes starts with natural rights of individuals but restricts them to found a viable civil society. He restricts the natural liberty of men but does not espouse the individual's right to restrict authority of the state.

6.11 EXERCISES

1) What is man's natural state of nature according to Hobbes?

2) What are the ways in which man may escape the state of nature as explained by Hobbes? What paradoxes arise out of this way of escape?

3) Do you think Hobbes' stress on a sovereign power was an argument in support of absolutist despotism? Why?

UNIT 7 JOHN LOCKE

Structure

7.1 Introduction
7.2 Life and Works
7.3 Some Philosophical Problems
7.4 The State of Nature and Natural Rights
7.5 Social Contract and Civil Society
7.6 Consent, Resistance and Toleration
7 7 The Lockean Legacy
7.8 Summary
7.9 Exercises

7.1 INTRODUCTION

A profound and extensive study of John Locke has been one of the most remarkable achievements of recent philosophical scholarship. Perhaps no other political thinker, excep' his great senior contemporary, Thomas Hobbes, has received greater attention at the hand: of historians of thought within the last fifty years or so than the author of the *Two Treatises* of *Government* and *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* The discovery of a wealth of new material in Lovelace collection and a large number of critical commentaries based on it, have vastly added to our knowledge about Locke's life and thought. And yet, curiously enough, there is today a greater divergence of opinion about the real spirit or the "hidden meaning" of Locke's political theory than ever before. A beginner is almost sure to be lost in a maze of motley interpretations—from Straussian esotericism claiming for Locke a thoroughgoing Hobbism, a consistently egoistic and utilitarian ethics, to a deontological view of Locke's ethic put forth by Raymond Polin, representing him as a classical natural law thinker; from Vaughan's characterisation of Locke as a "prince of individualists" to Kendall's interpretation of him as a collectivist of Rousseau's brand; from "liberal constitutionalism" of Locke in Martin Seliger's analysis to Macpherson's exposition of it as a theory of "capitalist appropriation" and "the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie". Perhaps there is some truth in each of these interpretations, but when Locke's philosophy is subjected to a Procrustean technique of interp etation and is made to conform to a particular philosophical label, it suffers heavy disto tion and loses, not only its richness and catholicity, but also its identity. The paradoxical situation which thus emerges is best illustrated by coinparing Taylor-Warrender's Hobbes, as a deontological proto-Kantian moralist and a philosopher of Natural Law and Divine command theory with Locke as interpreted by Leo Strauss and Richard Cox, as a perfect psychological egoist and ethical relativist, or covert Hobbist. This has been ironically described by J.W.W. Watkins in these wards, "This situation is painful for examination candidates, liable to be asked to 'compare and contrast' Hobbes and Locke. *So* let us all agree to the following compromise: Hobbes was a moralising natural lawyer in Hooker tradition, while Locke preached a mixture of egoism, fear and authority, and Locke wrote The *Second* Treatise, while Hobbes wrote *Leviathan.*

7.2 LIFE AND WORKS

Locke's life (1632-1704) coincided with one of the most significant epochs of British history that saw the transformation of absolute monarchy into parliamentary democracy. It was a period

of the Glorious Resolution of 1689 with which Locke was closely associated along with Lord Ashley, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, Loclte's friend and patron, who was charged with conspiracy to exclude Charles II froni acceding to the throne. Locke, suspecting persecution, went into voluntary exile in Holland and remained there till the final overthrow of the Stuart despotism in 1689. He welcomed William of Orange, as the 'Great Restorer' and lawful ruler. Locke published his ***Two*** *Treatises of Government* in *1690.* The same year saw the publication of his famous philosophical work *The Essay Concerning Human Understanding.* Locke's other important writings were the *Letters Concerning Toleration (1689, 1690* and 1692) and *Some Thoughts Concerning Education (1693).* Locke's early essays on the Law's Nature were published with an English translation by W. von Leyden in 1959 (Oxford University Press).

The *Two Treatises of Government* consists of two parts—the first is the refutation of Filmer and the second, the more important of the two, is an inquiry into the "True original, Extent and End of Civil Government." Tlie work was ostensibly written to justify the Glorious Revolution, "to establish the throne of our Great Restorer, Our present King William, to make good his Title, in the Consent of the People, which being the only one of all lawful Governments, he lias more fully and clearly than any Prince in Christendom: And to justifie to the World, the People of England, whose love of their Just and Natural Riglits, with their Resolution to preserve them, saved the Nation when it was on the very brink of Slavery and Ruine." This historical linkage has been challenged by modern scholars. Peter Laslett has argued that the *Second Treatise* was written at least as early as 1681 and tliat it was written first, and Locke later added the First to it. The First Treatise is not generally considered to be of great philosophical importance. Tlie ideas of Filmer vis-a-vis Locke have been another subject of controversy. All scholars do not agree with Laslett regarding tlie date and tlie order of composition of the Two Treatis. Richard Ashcraft and John Dunn have discussed these questions in detail. We may set aside this historical controversy for our present purpose and pass on to more theoretical issues.

7.3 SOME PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

The first and foremost controversy about the philosophical foundation of Locke's political theory relates to the alleged conflict, or flat contradiction between his empiricist theory of knowledge as expounded in his Essay *Concerning Human Understanding* and the rationalist view of Natural Law adumbrated in tlie Second *Treatise* of *Civil Government* as the corner-stone of his political theory.

Critics like C.E. Vaughan, George H. Sabine and Peter Laslett have argued that the notion of natural law cannot be reconciled with the overall empiricism of Locke which shows itself in his criticism of innate ideas and his theory of origin of knowledge in sense-experience and reflection. But a careful analysis of Locke's epistemology leads to the conclusion tliat the blanket label 'empiricist' is not properly applicable to Locke and his theory contains important rationalist elements. He expressly says that his criticism of innate ideas should not be understood to imply the rejection of natural law. Moreover, only sense experience cannot provide us with certain knowledge, that is knowledge,' in the true sense, without the creative participation of mind. His tlieory of knowledge, at least in its broad perspective and aim, closely resembles, the critical philosophy of Kant, and it lias to be clearly distinguished from the atomistic sensationalism of the British empiricists who followed him.

Another element of Locke's theory which is supposed t oimpair the coherence and integrity of his notion of Natural law and its intuitionist overtone is his psychological hedonism. To be sure, a hedonistic motivation to morality cannot be denied in Locke. But it must be remembered that

though he defines good and evil in terms of pleasure and pain, these are to him only consequences of a morally right action; they do not constitute its essence. A moral law is eternal and universal and it is obligatory independently of its pleasurable consequences. "Utility", says Locke, "is not the basis of the law or the ground of obligation, but the consequence of obedience to it." Locke's moral theory, therefore, is essentially deontological rather than utilitarian and consequentialist. In legal theory similarly he is more of an intellectualist than a voluntarist. There is, therefore, no conflict between natural law postulated in the *Second* Treatise and the ethical and epistemological theory of the Essay. Locke is a consistent Natural Law theorist.

7.4 THE STATE OF NATURE AND NATURAL RIGHTS

We thus see that Natural Law constitutes an integral part of Locke's moral and political theory. It is central to his conception of the state of nature as well as of civil society. The state of nature, as we know, is the stock-in-trade of all contract theories of the state. It is conceived as a state prior to the establishment of political society. In Locke's version it is pre-political, though not pre-social, for men are essentially social by nature. The state of nature, far from being a war of all is a state of "peace, goodwill, mutual assistance and self-preservation." It has law of nature to govern it. This Law "obliges everyone: and reason, which is that law, teaches ail mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm one another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions, for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent, and infinitely wise maker; all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the world by his order, and about his business; they are his property, whose workmanship they are, made to last during his, not one another's pleasure : and being furnished with like faculties, sharing all in one community of nature, there cannot be supposed any such subordination among us, that may authorise us to destroy one another, as if we were made for one another's uses, as the inferior ranks of creatures are for ours." In the state of nature men have natural right to life, liberty and property. These rights are inalienable and inviolable for they are derived from the Law of Nature which is God's reason. Every one is bound by reason not only to preserve oneself but to preserve all mankind, insofar as his own preservation does not come in conflict with it. Again, men are free and equal and there is no commonly acknowledged superior whose orders they are obliged to obey. Every body is the judge of his own actions. But though the natural condition is a state of liberty, it is not a state of licence. Nobody has a right to destroy himself and destroy the life of any other men, "but where some nobler use than its bare preservation calls for it." Because there is no common judge to punish the violation of natural law in the state of nature, every individual is his own judge and has the executive power of punishing the violators of the law of nature. This violation may be against him or against mankind in general. But when men are judges in their own case, they cannot be impartial. There are also other inconveniences in the state of nature—there is no established, settled, known law, to be the standard of right and wrong; there is no impartial judge to decide cases of dispute; and finally, "in the state of nature there often wants power to back and support the sentence when right, and to give it due execution." In other words, there are three lacunas or 'inconveniences' in the state of nature—want of a legislature authority to declare law, of an impartial judge lo decide cases of violation of law and lack of an impersonal executioner of the law. Thus we find that the state of nature, while it is not a state of war, is also not an idyllic condition and, therefore, it has to be superseded sooner or later. Conflicts and uncertainties are bound to arise on account of the selfish tendencies in human nature. The state of nature is always in danger of being transformed into a state of war. Where every one is the judge in his own case and has the sole authority to punish, peace is bound to be threatened.

Though Locke sometimes draws upon historical evidence to support his concept of the state of nature, the idea is essentially a rational construct, a hypothesis to explain the nature and

foundation of political society. A more controversial point that emerges from Locke's account of the state of nature is its dual character. Writers like Leo Strauss and Richard Cox have argued that basically Locke's theory is a restatement of the Hobbist view of human nature disguised and couched in a more palatable language (Leo Strauss, 1960). These writers believe that the state of nature in Locke which is described as a state of "peace, good will, mutual assistance and preservation" turns out on analysis to be a state of war on account of the operation of passions, a situation for which the only remedy is the creation of civil society. They charge Locke not only of inconsistency, but also of hypocrisy and of having "hidden meaning". Professor Macpherson has found two conflicting notions of Locke's state of nature, one before and the other after the invention of nioney, accusing Locke of bourgeois mentality. These interpretations, however, are highly selective and too restrictive. They ignore the real spirit of Locke and go against his clearly expressed opinions. They have rightly been rejected by Aarsleff, Ashcraft and Seliger, scholars who have written on Locke without any ideological bias or philosophical presupposition and self-professed esoteric methodology.

Another important concept in Locke's political philosophy is that of natural right to life, liberty and property. These natural rights are derived from natural law and are limited by it. "The freedom of man and liberty of acting according to his will is grounded on his having reason, which is able to instruct him in that law he is to govern himself by, and make him know how far he is left to the freedom of his own will". "The end of law is not to abolish or to restrain, but to preserve or enlarge freedom, for in all the states of created beings, where there is no law, there is no freedom."

Right to property is intimately connected with right to life and liberty as its necessary consequence. Sometimes Locke sums up all natural rights in the right to property. But property is not his exclusive concern. Life and liberty are more important. Man creates property by mixing his labour with the objects of nature. In the beginning, all things were held in common. But common ownership is not sufficient to provide men with means of life and satisfy their needs. Man must mix his labour with the resources provided by nature to enable him to make use of them in a more efficacious and profitable way. Since man owns his own person, his body and limbs, the object with which he mixes his labour becomes his own property by right. This is the origin of the famous labour theory of value common to both the classical and the Marxian economics. Locke does not believe that man has an unlimited right of appropriatioii. There are three important limitations on ownership of property. The first, called "labour-limitation", is that one can appropriate only that much of common resources with which he has mixed his labour. The second limitation, the "sufficiency limitation" enjoins man to appropriate only as much as is required by him and leave "enough and as good for others." The third limitation; known as a 'spoilage limitation', requires that man should acquire a thing only if he can make good use of it, since nothing was made by God for man to spoil or destroy. If one takes more, he "invades his neighbour's share" which is prohibited by the law of nature.

Many critics have found these limitations mostly verbal which are rendered quite otiose in the later stage of the state of nature, especially after the invention of money. About the supposed 'labour limitation', Macpherson's critique is that it was in fact never seriously entertained by Locke but has been read into his theory by those who have approached it in the modern tradition of humanist liberalism. The introduction of wage labour, that is the right to purchase the labour of others on payment of wages, makes it possible and rightful for a man to appropriate the product of other men's labour. Then Locke also gives a man the right to bequeath his property. This is, according to Macpherson, "an indication of his (Locke's) departure from the medieval view and acceptance of the bourgeois view expressed so tersely by Hobbes." Introduction of money which allows men to exchange goods for money, removes the limitation

imposed by the non-spoilage principle. Macpherson concludes that Locke not only justifies the right to unequal property but approves of unlimited individual appropriation. Locke is thus presented as an ideologue of "possessive individualism", of market economy and the "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." He is seen as a typical representative of the "spirit of capitalism."

Plamenatz's criticism is based more on logical than ideological grounds. He points out three major defects in Locke's theory of property:

"In the first place, the limits he sets on appropriation, the injunction to let nothing spoil or go to waste, is either irrelevant or inadequate, for it makes sense only under conditions which are in fact rare; secondly, the right to bequest, which Locke tactly includes in the right of property, does not derive either from the right to preserve life and liberty, or from the right to set aside for your own, exclusive use what you have mixed your labour with; and thirdly, it does not follow, even if your mixing your labour with something gives you a right to use it to the exclusion of people who have not mixed their labour with it, that your being the first to mix labour with something gives you tlie right not to share it with anyone who subsequently mixes his labour with it"(George Plamenatz, 1963, p.242).

The ideological interpretation of Locke in terms of capitalist economy and the dictatorsliip of the bourgeoisie have been challenged by Isaiah Berlin, Alan Ryan, Martin Seliger, Richard Ashcraft, I-Ians Aarsleff, John Dunn and others. They argue that Macpherson's view overlooks the overriding role of Natural Law and the idea of common good that it implies. Locke is too much of a medievalist and believer in God to ignore the dictates of Divine Reason and to espouse unabashedly tlie cause of the rising capitalist class whose ethos is cut-tliroat competition for wealth accumulation resulting in class conflict and misery for the have-nots. George H. Sabine is perhaps more to the point when he says: "He left standing tlie old theory of natural law with all its emotional connotation and almost religious compulsions, but he completely changed, without knowing it, the meaning which the term had in writers like Hooker. Instead of law enjoining the common good of society, Locke set up a body of innate, indefeasible, individual rights which limit tlie competence of the community, and stand as bars to prevent interference with the liberty and property of private persons" (G.H. Sabine, 1963, p.529). "Macpherson paid as little attention as Strauss did to the fact that no one among Locke's contemporaries read or understood his argument from their postulated standpoints, or to the fact that Locke personally subscribed to and identified his own position with those religious beliefs he was presumably advancing as a sop to lesser minds, or thaf he was writing in defence of revolutionasy political action and religious dissent-positions adhered to by a very small minority of his contemporaries—which did not appeal to the established property-owners whose interest he was supposed to be looking after (Ashcraft). Equally damaging to Macpherson's case was his failure to provide the liistorical and sociological evidence necessary to establish his claims regarding tlie kind of society 17th Century England was, since the more inappropriate the 'model' or society formulated by Macpherson is as a descriptive characterisation of Locke's environment, the more difficult it becomes to associate that model with Locke's intentional purposes in writing the *Two* Treatises" (Richard Ashcraft, 1987, pp.301-302). In a similar vein Martin Seliger argues that limitations on private property mentioned by Locke are never rendered illusory either by the invention of money or by the admission of landed property in the interest of more efficient production. "We cannot ascribe to Locke the view that due to a contrivance for the more effective exercise of rights of property, positive law could not contain property accumulation in accordance with natural law. The right of property is the prototype of all natural rights. They are freedoms sanctioned by natural law, and freedom is protected and bounded by positive law in all spheres of action"(Martin Seliger, 1968, pp.166-167).

Professor John Dunn in his remarkable work *The Political Thought of John* Locke has offered an interpretation of Locke which is diametrically opposed to Macpherson's account. According to Dunn: "tlie Lockean social and political theory is to be seen as the elaboration of Calvinist social values, in tlie absence of a terrestrial focus of theological authority and in response to a series of popular challenges"(John Dunn, p.259). "Locke saw the rationality of human existence, a rationality which he spent so much of his life in attempting to vindicate, as dependent upon the truths of religion"(John Dunn, p.263). Elaborating further, Dunn (1980, 1983a) observes: "In contrast with tlie alienated modern conception of tlie context of political agency and the predominantly instrumental view of its character which dominate modern political thinking, Locke combines a radically individualist conception of both the human significance and the rationality of political agency with a wholly unalienated conception of its social context. Because this conception of political agency depends for its structure and stability on a personal relation between the indiviclual human agent and the deity, it can scarcely be adopted as a basis for grounding modern political identities".

In a carefully argued and exhaustive study, A. John Simmons comes to the conclusion that Locke "certainly condemns covetousness (contrary to the claims of Strauss, *Natural* Rights, 247), and there is no indication that he intends to defend a right of *unlimited* accumulation. But neither does lie take the use of money and its creation of substantial inequality to be contrary to God's will, or to end all legitimate appropriation under tlie rules of natural propel-ty" (A. John Simmons, 1994, p.305). Locke, says Simmons, occupies "the middle ground, calling neither for unfettered accumulation of property nor for radical redistribution of holdings".

Locke's theory of property seems to oscillate between large accumulation consistent with sufficient amount of regulation and determination of land ownership by political authority in the interest of equitable distribution. Though one cannot attribute to him a doctrine of differential rationality socially and politically favoring the propertied classes, it can hardly be denied that tlie whole tenor of his argument goes in favour of those who own large property as compared with ordinary citizens. A neat summary of Locke's theory can be given as follows in tlie words of Peter Laslett:

"Even tlie minutest control of property by political authority can be reconciled with the doctrine of Two Treatises, and as Professor Viner has pointed out, Locke no where complains against the complicated regulations of his 'mercantilist' age in terms of property rights. If not complete communism, certainly redistributive taxation, perhaps nationalisation could be justified on the principles we have discussed: all that would be necessary is tlie consent of the majority of the society, regularly and constitutionally expressed, and such a law would hold even if all the property owners were in the minority." Laslett further says that "it is gratuitous to turn Locke's doctrine of property into the classic doctrine of the 'spirit of capitalism', whatever that may be" (Peter Laslett, p.104-105).

"In fact, of course, Locke was neither a 'socialist' nor a 'capitalist' though it is fascinating to find elements of both attitudes of ours in his property doctrine, more, perhaps, in what he left out or just failed to say than in the statement themselves. He was not even an advocate of land and land ownership as the basis of political power to be 'represented' in a nation's counsels. For all liis enormous intellectual and political influence in the 18th Century he was in this respect a barren field for anyone who wished to justify what once was called Whig obligatory. But lie did use his property doctrine to give continuity to a political society, to join generation to generation"(Peter Laslett, p.105).

7.5 SOCIAL CONTRACT AND CIVIL SOCIETY

What drives men into society, according to Locke, is tliat God put them "under strong Obligations of Necessity, Convenience, and Inclination." Political power is a "Right of making Laws with Penalties of Death, and consequently all less Penalties, for the Regulating and Preserving of Property, and of employing the force of the Community, in the Execution of such Laws, and in the defence of the Common-wealth from Foreign Injury, and all this only for the Public Good". And "men being, as has been said, by Nature, all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this Estate (i.e. state of nature), and subjected to political power of another without his own consent." Therefore, the problem is to form civil society by common consent of all men and transfer their right of punishing the violators of Natural Law to an independent and impartial authority. For all practical purposes, after the formation of civil society this common consent becomes the consent of the majority; all parties must submit to the determination of the majority which carries tlie force of the community, for that is tlie only way of political action. So all men unanimously agree to incorporate themselves in one body and conduct their affairs by the opinion of the majority. After they have set up a political or civil society, the next step 'is to appoint a government or 'legislative' to declare and execute tlie natural law. This Locke calls tlie 'supreme' authority established by the commonwealth or civil society. Here we have two separate acts—one by which the civil society is established and the other which creates the government. While the first is the product of a contract, the second is "only a fiduciary power to act for certain ends", and there remains "still in the people a supreme power to remove or alter the legislative, when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them." 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. Professor Ernest Barker and J.W. Gough have placed great emphasis on the technical implications of tlie trust theory, which makes the community both tlie trusted and tlie beneficiary, having no duties as regards the trustee, that is the government. Laslett (p.115), on the other liand, interprets it in a non-legal sense "intended to make it clear tliat all actions of governors are limited to the end of government, which is the good of the governed, and to demonstrate by contrast that there is no contract in it, that is all".

Besides the 'legislative' which is the supreme authority, Locke mentions two other powers of the commonwealth, the executive and the federative. The federative power of the government is concerned with what we now call foreign affairs. What Montesquieu later on called the judicial power is included in tlie executive. The executive power is subordinate to the legislative and is responsible to it.

Though the legislative is the supreme power, it is not arbitrary. It exists for common good which is the preservation of freedom and protection of property. "The Law of Nature stands as an Eternal Rule to all Men, Legislators as well as others. The Rules that they make for other Men's Action, must . . . be conformable to the Law of Nature, that is to the will of God, of which that is a Declaration, and the 'fundamental law of Nature being the preservation of Mankind, no Human Sanction can be good, or valid against it." Secondly, the Legislative or the Supreme Authority cannot rule by extemporary, arbitrary decrees, but only by duly promulgated and established laws. Thirdly, the supreme power cannot take from any man any part of his property without his consent. And lastly, "the legislative cannot transfer the power of making laws to any otlier hands, for it being but a delegated power from the people, they who have it cannot pass it over to others" (Second Treatise, sec. 141).

The above restriction on the 'supreme' authority of the legislative body has tended to obscure Loclte's view of sovereignty. C.E. Vaughan has categorically declared that "Locke had no

theory of sovereignty at all, the true sovereign of Civil *Government* is tlie individual" (Vaughan, p.185). And according to Ernest Barker: "Loclce had no clear view of tlie nature and residence of sovereignty" (Barker, 1958, Introduction). This is unfair to Locke. It is to identify the notion of sovereignty with only one of its variants, tlie Hobbesean-Austinian version which conceives sovereignty in terms of the will of an absolute power. The other view which regards sovereignty not as power, but authority and an expression of a transcendent reason, natural law or Divine Order, adniits tlie limitations of a Higher Law on the power of the state without denying its competence and authority in relation to positive law. This is the tradition on which Locke was fed and it is the bed-rock of all constitutional government. It harks back to St. Thomas Aquinas through Hooker and Bodin and is represented by writers like Eliot, Phillip Hunton and Sir Mathew Hale in Locke's own time. Loclte admits that behind the authority of the legislature there is an ultimate sovereignty of people wliicli later writers termed as popular sovereignty. "...And thus the community perpetually retains a supreme power of saving themselves from tha attempt and designs of anybody, even of their legislators, whenever they shall be so foolish or so wicked as to lay or carry on designs against the liberties and properties of the subject" (Second Treatise, sec. 149). But the community exercises this power "not as considered under any form of government, because this power of the people can never take place till the government be dissolved" (sec. 49), and "in all cases, while the government subsists, the legislative is the supreme power" (sec. 150). The doctrine of popular or national sovereignty cannot be properly ascribed to Loclce. Tlie ultimate source of all authority in his theory is the Law of Nature. But sovereignty in the technical sense resides only in tlic law-making body. "This legislative is not only the supreme power of tlie commonwealth, but sacred arid unalterable in tlie hand where tlie community have once placed it; nor can tlie edict of any one else, in whatsoever form conceived, or by what power soever backed, have the force and obligation of a law which has not its sanction from the legislative wliicli the public has chosen and appointed; ....and tlierefore all the obedience, wliicli by tlie most solemn lies any one can be obliged to pay, ultimately termines in tlie supreme power..." (Second *Treatises*, see 134).

In a penetrating criticism of Locke, George H. Sabine points out four levels of authority in *Two* Treatises, the last three being represented as successively derivative from tlie first. But Loclte seems to attribute "a kind of absoluteness to each of tlie four." First, there is the individual and his rights, the foundation of the whole system. Secondly, there is the community; the custodian of individual right and the authority standing behind tlie government, Thirdly, there is the government or the 'legislative' wliicli is constitutionally tlie 'supreme power', And finally, we have the executive, or the King, wliicli also enjoys some kind of independent status and discretionary power while remaining subservient to the 'legislative', or parliament. Tliis, however, far from being a criticism, may be taken as a commendation. Locke was fully conscious of tlie complexity of political system and he was attempting to present a phenomenology of political' institutions without adopting a reductionist methodology which seeks to explain all things in terms of a single ultimate entity, irreducible social atoms or abstract entity like the community or people. He was neitlier a pure nominalist nor a perfect realist. Being a conceptualist, he is nearer to Aristotle than either to Plato or to the Protagoras or the Sophists. His state is not a 'fictitious corporation' like that of Hobbes, but it is also not Hegel's 'concrete universal'. Locke wants to maintain balance and harmony among different organs of government under the supreme majesty of Natural Law.

7.6 CONSENT, RESISTANCE AND TOLERATION

Government based on consent is tlie fundamental principle of Locke's theory of political obligation. The idea of consent, however, is not properly explained and it remains one of the

most vulnerable features of Locke's theory. John Plamenatz subjects it to a searching critique and comes to the conclusion that it serves no useful purpose. The notion ,of Tacit Consent introduced to make the concept applicable to cases wliere express consent is wanting makes it all the more questionable and dispensable. As Plamenatz pithily puts it: "If you begin by assuming that only a consent creates a duty of obedience, you are only too ready to conclude that whatever creates that duty must be consent"(John Plamenatz, p.22). "We consent to obey by obeying. Obedience creates the obligation to obey. But this is absurd." (p.230). John Dunn also finds fault with the notions of consent as the basis of freedom in the state.

"The ***Two*** *Treatises* is an attempt to argue for limitations on the possible scope of political obligation. The notion of consent is a key term in the expository structure of this argument, but it is not a term which exerts any very precise control over the application of the argument to particular cases in the world. Its role is as a formal component of the logical structure of the argument, not as a practical criterion of its applicabitity in particular cases. Consent is a necessary condition for tlie legitimacy of a political society, but the consent which creates such legitimacy is not a sufficient condition for the obligatory force of any particular act of authority in such a society"(John Dunn, p.143).

It is generally believed that Locke is above all an apologist of the Glorious Revolution, perhaps the most conservative of all revolutions. As such, resistance or a right to rebellion—Locke seldom uses tlie word 'revolution'—is an essential part of his political philosophy. A ruler who usurps power or forfeits the trust of the people and acts according to his own arbitrary will in contravention of the law of nature and against tlie good of the people has no legitimate authority to govern and can be removed, if necessary, by force. Government is dissolved also in case of conquest by a foreign power, in tlie event of assembly being prevented from meeting and deliberating by the prince or on a dislocation of legislative authority. The dissolution of government, however, does not involve dissolution of society. As to who has a right of rebellion or resistance, Locke does not give a clear answer. Generally, it is only the majority which has a right to revolt. Though Locke was the champion of revolutionary action, he was essentially a conservative by temperament. He was of the view that revolution was to be resorted to only in extreme cases. According to Sabine, in spite of his insistence on right to revolutions, Locke was not a revolutionary. Many critics have held the view that Locke gives the right of revolution only to the aristocratic class, that is, the owners of property. "It seemed natural to him, as it seemed nearly to all his contemporaries, that the right to resist rulers who have abused their authority should in practice be confined to the educated and propertied classes, to the section of the community alone capable of an intelligent and responsible judgement in such a matter"(John Plamenatz, p.250).

Aslicraft does not agree with this view and finds in Locke a more radical revolutionary spirit. In this connection he notes tlie difference between Locke and the Whig oligarchy which was behind the Revolution of 1688. "Resistance to tyranny is everyone's business", says Ascliraft summing up Locke's views on tlie subject (Ashcraft, p.228)

Religious toleration was a topic of great importance in Locke's time, and in consonance with his general philosophy and political theory he placed great emphasis on it. Conscience, he held, cannot be a subject of external control. A man is free to profess any religion he likes. The state should not in any case resort to religious persecution. It should not enforce practices relating to faith. However, Locke imposes certain limitations on religious tolerance. "No opinion, contrary to human society, or to those moral rules which are necessary for the preservation of civil society are to be tolerated by tlie magistrate." Again, atheists should riot be tolerated because "promises, covenants, and oaths, which are tlie bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all."

7.7 THE LOCKEAN LEGACY

John Locke is one of the central figures in modern European political thought. The most characteristic term for this thought is liberalism, though this term has both conservative and radical implications. The concept liberalism has undergone several changes during the coarse of time. There is a classical form of liberalism and also one which we call neo-liberalism. Locke's liberalism contains both conservative and radical elements. Its original inspiration is tlie metaphysical idea of Natural Law and Divine Reason rooted in tlie classical tradition of philosophy represented by Roman lawyer—St.Thomas Aquinas and Richard Hooker. Its modem version as emphasised by Locke himself in the form of individual natural rights to life, liberty and property and resistance to arbitrary political power became part of general political discourse and practice during the 18th Century and inspired thinkers like Tom Paine, Jefferson and Rousseau. On the more empirical and pragmatic side it influenced tlie English Utilitarians and also in some way thinkers like Hume and Adam Smith. With the growth of positivist sciences and empiricist methodology the rationalistic aspect of Locke's theory, belief in a transcendent deity and Natural Law, was relegated to the limbo of metaphysics, but his views about natural rights, especially tlie right of property, were incorporated in the libertarian liberalism of tlie 19th and 20th centuries. Writers like Rawls, Dworkin and Nozick, especially the last one, bear clear imprint of Locke's thinking and profess affinity to him. But this affinity of Locke to modern liberal thinkers is established only at the cost of ignoring the religious and metaphysical aspect of his thought. Here it would be pertinent to refer to tlie sober reflections of Professor Raymond Polin :

> We have tried to show, on the contrary, that freedom for him is nothing but the means given by God to human creatures capable of intelligence, reason and society to incorporate themselves into the order of this world, when they grow mature enough to discover and understand its meaning. Freedom as such is always to bc understood as correlative with order. The human being, Locke discovers, as a being capable of freedom and reason, is bound to tlie divine order of the world through an obligation, the obligation to make himself actually free and reasonable, either in the order of the relations he establishes with other men, or in liis relations with tlie reasonable order of the world. For Locke, freedom exists and is meaningful only if it is bound to the obligation to achieve a reasonable order and a moral one. This principle lies at the bottom of any true and efficient liberalism. (Raymond Polin in JW Yolton, pp.17-18).

7.8 SUMMARY

John Locke has been interpreted differently by different people. One controversy relates to the alleged conflict between his empiricist theory of knowledge in his 'An Essay Concerning Human Understanding' and the rationalist view of Natural law in the Second Treatise of Civil Government. It has been argued that the notion of natural law cannot be reconciled with the overall empiricism of Locke which shows in his theory of origin of knowledge in experience and reflection.

The Natural Law constitutes an integral part of Locke's political theory. For him, it is pre-political and not pre-social as men are social by nature. The state of nature is a state of peace, good will, mutual assistance and self-preservation. It has the law of nature, which is God's reason, to govern it. Another important concept of Locke's is the natural right to life, liberty

and property, derived from natural law and limited by it. Man does not have unlimited right of appropriation. They are limited by labour limitation, sufficiency limitation and spoilage limitation.

Since men are by nature, free, equal and independent, no one can be subjected to political power of another without his own consent. Thus common consent is required lo form civil society after which a government or legislative has to be established to execute natural law. This authority or the legislative is the supreme authority. Besides this, there are two other powers of the commonwealth, the executive (includes judicial power) and the federative (concerned with foreign affairs). The executive is answerable to the legislative. The legislative cannot rule by arbitrary decrees but only through promulgated and established laws. On sovereignty, Locke states that behind the authority of the legislature, there is an ultimate sovereignty of the people which was later termed as popular sovereignty.

Locke has been criticised for not explaining the concept of consent even though the fundamental principle of his theory is based on consent. He has also been described as an apologist of the Glorious Revolution. Rebellion or resistance is an essential part of his philosophy but he does not clearly state who has the right to rebel. And critics even say that he gave that right only to the landed aristocracy, but this has been debated.

7.9 EXERCISES

1) Critically examine the limitations on the ownership of property as defined by Locke.

2) Write a short note on John Locke's ideas on Consent, Resistance and Toleration.

3) What were Locke's views on Sovereignty?

UNIT 8 JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

Structure

8.1 Introduction
8.2 Life and Times
8.3 Revolt against Reason
8.4 Critique of Civil Society
8.5 Social Contract
8.6 Theory of General Will
8.7 General Will as the Sovereign
8.8 Critical Appreciation
8.9 Summary
8.10 Exercises

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this unit is to understand and critically appreciate the political thought of Jean Jacques Rousseau, as well as the influence he had in the historiography of western political thought. Rousseau was a ,brilliant philosopher, provocative, equally controversial and highly critical of his times. A modem Promethean, he inspired the French revolution. He lived in the age of reason, French Enlightenment, and while he attacked the ancien regime, he was also critical of the Enlightenment. He is best remembered for his concept of popular sovereignty, and the theory of General Will, which provides a philosophical justification for democratic governance.

Rousseau seems to be straddling two traditions of political theorising at the same time. While his language belongs to the will and artifice tradition, tlie import of his writings clearly favours organic theory of state. As a result lie has been interpreted in diverse and often contradictory ways; for he is at once an individualist and a collectivist; an incomparable democrat and an apotheosis of modern totalitarianism.

Rousseau wrote lucidly and prolifically. I-Iis writings can be classified in two periods. The first period saw Discourse on the Sciences and Arts, and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, wherein Rousseau attacks the morally decadent ancien regime but lends only a qualified support to modernity, lamenting the unnaturalness of reason, the eclipse of sentiments and the corruption of humanity brought about by advancements in arts and sciences; and appears as a romantic rebel, castigating civil society for its injustices. In the second phase, that saw the Social Contract, Rousseau is more sober, in tune with tlie age of reason, no longer tearing down society but building it up, tlie rationalist way.

There thus seems to be a logical discrepancy between the two periods. This is understandable as the moods are different, but there is no contradiction as his purpose is clear—to provide a philosophical justification for democratic governance. The first phase is a prelude to second that saw the theory of General Will. To understand his purpose and theory we need to begin with Rousseau, the tnan, and his times.

8.2 LIFE AND TIMES

Rousseau was born of a poor family in Geneva. Rousseau's mother died a few days after giving birth to him, and his father was unable to raise Rousseau in any coherent fashion. From the age of twelve he was apprenticed to various masters, but lie failed to establish himself in any trade or art. For most of his life he remained in poverty, surviving by dint of his ingenuity and benevolence of women. For temporary material advantages he even changed his religion and accepted charity from people he detested. In 1744 he went to Paris; tried his hand at various schemes—the theatre, opera, music, poetry, without making much success of anything. Yet his personality opened for him tlie doors of the best salons in Paris, where he met leading encyclopedists as well as influential, charming women, with several of whom he maintained close liaison. But he shunned the exalted society, never shedding his plebian, puritanical background of a low-middle class family.

Rousseau lived at a time when the absolutist feudal order presided over by Louis XV reigned France. Political power, privilege and social prestige was the monopoly of the king, clergy and the nobility, who lived extravagantly at the expense of the masses engaged in a grim battle of survival. Having been denied even the minimum required of decent living by the corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy of the King, discontent was rampant and the desire for change had created a climate of defiance. Sharing the discontent and the desire for change was a new emergent class of the French bourgeoisie, which found the extant order too restrictive for its owl1 development and had joined hands with the peasantry.

In shaping the climate of opinion and the spirit of dissent against the ancien regime the French Enlightenment played a major role. Enlightenment judged everything based on reason and experience alone. Inevitably it brought under attack many things that had hitherto been taken for granted, including the church and tlie traditional political institutions of France. Rousseau shared some of the enlightenment ideas, but not wholly. In so far as the *philosophes* desired change, pinned their faith in man as a fsee agent, Rousseau was with them, but he did not share their idea of progress implied in their modernity and had greater regard for feeling than respect for rationality. Rousseau believed that the part of what was wrong with modern man is that he had lost touch with his feelings. *Philosophes*' insensitivity towards feelings and emption led him to revolt against 'reason'.

8.3 REVOLT AGAINST REASON

Rousseau attacked Enlightenment, in a prize-winning essay written in 1749 on tlie question: "Has the progress of science and arts contributed to corrupt or purify morality?" Rousseau argued that science was not saving but bringing moral ruin upon us. Progress was an illusion. Wliat appeared to be advancement was in reality regression. The arts of civilised society served only to 'cast garlands of flowers over the chains men bore'.The development of modern civilisation had not made men either happier or more virtuous. Virtue was possible in a simple society, where men lived austere and frugal lives. In the modern sophisticated society man was corrupted, and greater the sophistication the greater the corruption.

As for the grand Baconian hope of creating abundance on earth, Rousseau saw more evil than good in it. Abundance to him spelt luxury, and luxury was notoriously the breeder of corruption. Luxury, undermined nations as it undermined men. Athens, the centre of vices, was doomed to perish because of its elegance, luxury, wealth, art and sciences. He also found support in

Roman history—so long as Rome was poor and simple she was able to command respect and conquer an empire; after having developed luxury and engulfed the riches of the Universe Rome 'fell prey to peoples who knew not even what riches were,'

Rousseau argued that 'our minds have been corrupted in proportion as the arts and sciences have improved'. The much-vaunted politeness, the glory of civilised refinement, was for Rousseau, a 'uniform and perfidious veil' under which he saw 'jealousy, suspicion, fear, wildness, reverse, hate and fraud.'

Against intelligence, the growth of knowledge and the progress of sciences, which the Enlightenment believed to be the only hope of civilisation, Rousseau set amiable and benevolent sentiments, the goodwill and reverence. He privileged sentiments and conscience over reason, and proposed that all moral valuations he had done on the basis of sentiments. Intelligence was dangerous because it undermined reverence; science was destructive because it takes away faith; reason was bad because it sets prudence against moral intuition. Without reverence, faith and moral intuition there is neither character nor society.

8.4 CRITIQUE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The themes introduced in his prize winning essay were developed further in his second essay written in 1754 on "what is the origin of inequality among men, and is it authorised by natural law?" The second Discourse, as this essay is called, is a narrative of the fall of man—how his nature got twisted, warped and corrupted with the emergence of civil society, which in turn was necessitated by the rise of the institution of private property and the need to defend it by institutionalising social inequality through 'law'. Here, Rousseau is extolling the 'natural man' and pouring scorn over the so-called 'civilised men'. The problem evidently was not with man, but the nature of society in which he was living.

Tracing the fall, Rousseau says that in the state of nature, which is a condition prior to tlie emergence of society, man was a 'noble savage'; lived in isolation and had a few elementary, easily appeased needs. It was neither a condition of plenty nor scarcity; neither there was conflict nor cooperative living. There was no language or knowledge of any science or art. In such a situation man was neither happy nor unhappy, had no conception of just and unjust, virtue and vice. The noble savage was guided not by reason but by two instincts—self love or the instinct of self-preservation, and sympathy or the gregarious instinct.

The state of nature, which was one of innocence, did not last forever. In course of time, tlie noble savage who lived in isolation discovered the utility and usefulness of labor. Without yet having given up their primitive dispersal, men began to collaborate occasionally and created a degree of provisional order. Later men began to build shelters for themselves and families stayed ,together—a stage Rousseau calls the patriarchal stage. But as lie consolidated his first social relations, he gave himself to labor and to tliought, i.e, to the use of reason and language. This brought in the first fall for man, wrenching him from tlie happiness of the 'patriarchal stage' even as the discovery of division of labor, enabled men to pass from a subsistence economy to an economy of productive development. The emergence of metallurgy and agriculture was indeed a great revolution, But iron and corn, which civilised men, ruined humanity.

The cultivation of earth led to the enclosure of land, and this necessarily gave rise to the idea of property, As Rousseau puts it in a famous statement: "The first man who after fencing off 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 the civil society".

Once men began to claim possessions, the inequality of men's talents and skills led to an inequality of fortunes. Wealth enabled sotne men to enslave other's; the very idea of possession excited men's passions, and provoked competition and conflict.

Conflict led in turn to a demand for a system of law for sake of order and tranquility. The rich especially voiced this demand, for while the state of violence threatened everyone's life it was 'worse for the rich because it threatened their possessions also. Hence the expedient of a 'social contract' was thought of by a rich man to tlie detriment of the poor.

The result, says Rousseau, was the origin of civil society and laws, which gave new fetters to the poor, and new powers to the rich; which destroyed natural liberty for ever, fixed for all the law of property and inequality, transformed shrewd usurpation into settled right, and to benefit a few ambitious persons, subjected the whole of human race thenceforth to labor, servitude and wretchedness.

Rousseau suggests however, that things need not have turned out as badly as they had. If, with the establishment of the government, men, 'ran headlong into chains', that was because men had the sense to see the advantages of political institutions, but not the experience to foresee tlie dangers. To this theme Rousseau was to return some years later in the *Social Contract.*

It may however be noted here that Rousseau was not depicting the transition frorn state of nature to 'civil society' as a historical fact. Rather the above account has to be understood as hypothetical reasoning calculated to explain the nature of things, than to ascertain their actual origin.

8.5 SOCIAL CONTRACT

Though Rousseau critiqued 'civil society', he did not suggest man to choose the savage existence, as some of liis contemporaries mistook him. In fact Voltaire even ridiculed Rousseau for wanting us to walk on all four. In tlie *Discourse* itself, Rousseau exclaims: "What then is to be done? Must societies be totally abolished? Must meum and tuum be annihilated, and must we return again to the forests to live among bears? This is a deduction in the manner of my adversaries, which I would as soon anticipate and let them have the shame of drawing."

There was thus no going back to the state of nature. For Rousseau society was inevitable, without which man could not fulfill him or realise liis native potentials. If lie was critiquing civil society it was because it was not founded on just principles and had corrupting influence. The task therefore was to create a new social order that would help man realise his true nature.

To such a task Rousseau devoted himself in Social Contract. The key to tlie construction of the ideal social-political order was to handle the problem of political obligation, namely, why should man obey the state through a proper reconciliation of authority with freedom, as it ought to be—a task which, according to Rousseau, was unsatisfactorily and inadequately done by his predecessor philosophers.

Social Contract opens dramatically: "Man is born free, and he is everywhere in chains". His purpose is how to make tlie chains legitimate in place of the illegitimate chains of the contemporary society. With such a purpose, Rousseau's theoretical problem is: "To find a form of association capable of defending and protecting with the total common forae, the person and tlie property of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before", through a social contract.

The social contract involves: "the total alienation of each associate, together with all his rights, to the whole community." Each man gives himself to all, he gives himself to nobody in particular: "As there is no associate over whom he does not acquire the same right as he yields over himself, he gains an equivalent for everything he loses, and an increase of force for the preservation of what he has." Reduced to its essence, the participants of the social contract agree amongst themselves that: "each of us puts his person and all his power to the common use under the supreme direction of the General Will; and as a body we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole".

As a result of the contract, the private person ceases to exist for the contract produces a moral and collective Body, which receives from the same act its unity, its common identity, its life and its will. This public person formed from the union of all particular individuals is the State when it is passive; the Sovereign when it is active; a Power, when compared with similar institutions.

After the institution of a state, Rousseau visualises a great transformation in the human being. It substitutes in his conduct a rule of justice for the rule of instinct and gives to his action a moral character which theretofore lie had lacked. Rousseau goes to tlie extent of saying that he is transformed from a stupid and limited animal into an intelligent creature and man.

But such a transformation would be fantastic, quite improbable, if the contract is conceived as a single, specific occurrence. But for Rousseau, the contract is not a single event, but a way of thinking. Thus conceived, contract becomes a process and we can think of alteration of human nature as also being gradual and not instantaneous. Here we have a conception of man whose moral sensibilities and intellectual prowess gradually evolves and develops *pari pasu* with the widening and deepening of man's social relations brought about by a continuous participation in the General Will.

8.6 THEORY 'OF GENERAL WILL

By making the General Will sovereign and individuals as participants in the General Will, Rousseau reconciled authority with freedom as none before him liad done. In order to understand how Rousseau achieved this end, we need to appreciate the nature of the General Will.

In the *Discourse* on *Political Economy*, where lie had first stated the concept of General Will, Rousseau says that "General will tends always to the preservation and welfare of the whole and of every part, and is tlie source of the laws, constitutes for all the members of the state, in relation to one another and to it, the rule of what is just and unjust." It aims always at the public good and is different from the will of all, for while the former aims at the common interest, the latter aims only at the private interests and is a sum of particular wills.

The generality of tlie will is not so much a matter of numbers as of intrinsic quality and goodness, It is not an empirical fact so much as a moral fact. It is an outcome of the moral attitude in the hearts of citizens to act justly. It is produced whenever all individual members of group, sacrificing their private interests, unite in aiming at some object believed to be good for tlie whole group. The general will comes from all and apply to all and embodies the free rational will of all.

Rousseau however recognises that unanimity amongst members on general will may not be possible at times, because while people may be willing the good; they might not always be understanding or knowing it correctly, This happens, particularly when factions make it difficult

for independent citizens to pursue the common good. In such situation Rousseau suggests that if we "...take away from the wills the various particular interests which conflict with one another, what remains as tlie sum of tlie differences is the general will." But there is one important condition here—the result will be general will, only if and so far as, all the individuals of a group are moved (even in the pursuit of their private interest) by the thought of themselves as members of a group, all of whose members have interests deserving respect and consideration,

Such being the nature of general will, there is no problem in obeying the general will but if some one refuses to obey it, Rousseau says that he will be compelled to do so: "This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free", otherwise the social contract will become an empty formula. Moreover, such compulsion is justified because the individual has given his prior consent for being restrained by the state, knowing well that socially cohesive conduct in the long run best promotes his own interests, and knowing also that lie will occasionally find the attractions of some more immediate selfish good too strong to resist and therefore lie should be restrained whenever lie yields to such temptation.

In other words, when a man is being compelled to obey the general will, by the whole body of citizens, it only means that lie is being aslted to follow his own best interest, which he at a particular instance is unfortunately unaware of. Obeying the General Will is then, an expression of the moral freedom of the individuals. Thus, when general will rules over the people, the latter should have no grumble about the corrosion of their liberty. Because obedience to the sovereign is no longer an obedience to any external authority or arbitrary rule by one or few; it is actually an obedience to the rational part of their own selves or to a self-government—a government that would do what one's rational self would, indeed, want to do.

8.7 GENERAL WILL AS THE SOVEREIGN

From the above, it is also clear that Rousseau's conception of sovereignty is different from both Hobbes and Locke. In Hobbes, the people set up a sovereign and transfer all powers to him. In Locke's social contract the people set up a limited government for limited purposes, but Locke shuns the conception of sovereignty—popular or monarchical—as a symbol of political absolutism. Rousseau's sovereign, on the otlier hand, is the people, constituted as a political community through social contract.

Unlike nearly all other major political thinkers, Rousseau considers sovereignty of the people inalienable and indivisible. The people cannot give away, or transfer, to any person or body their ultimate right of self-government, of deciding tlieir own destiny. Whereas Hobbes sets up a ruler as sovereign, Rousseau draws a sharp distinction between sovereignty, which always and wholly resides in the people, and government, which is but a temporary agent (as in Locke's conception) of the sovereign people. Whereas, in Locke, the people transfer the exercise of their sovereign authority, legislative, executive and judicial, to organs of government, Rousseau's concept of inalienable and indivisible sovereignty does not permit the people to transfer their legislative function, tlie supreme authority in tlie state. As to the executive and judicial functions, Rousseau realises that they have to be exercised by special organs of government, but they are completely subordinate to tlie sovereign people, and that there is no hint or suggestion of separation or balance of powers.

As Sovereignty of the General Will is inalienable and indivisible, it cannot be represented. Second, representative assemblies tend to develop particular interest of their own, forgetting those of the community. Not surprising, Rousseau 's preference was always for direct democracies

of Swiss city-republic though such a preference was anachronistic, when modern nation-states were emerging. Nor can tlie General Will be delegated in any way whatever. Any attempt to, delegate will means its end. As he said; "The moment there is a master, there is no longer a sovereign." It is only tlie "voice of people" that is "the voice of God."

8.8 CRITICAL APPRECIATION

There seems to be an obvious divide and fundamental logical discrepancy between his earlier writings in Discourse on *Inequality* and the later work *Social Contract.* As Vaughan says, the first phase of his work is marked witli defiant individualism, while in tlie latter there is an equally defiant collectivism.

Rousseau himself however never felt such an opposition. In the *Confessions* he says that every strong idea in the *Social Contract* liad been before published in the *Discourse on Inequality.* Sabine opines that Rousseau is correct in his opinion, though it is also true that incompatible ideas abound in his writings. Much that seems defiant individualism persists in *Social Contract:* As for instance, tlie use of the concept of social contract for generation of General will.

The difference between the earlier works and the *Social Contract* is merely that in the former lie is writing himself free from the uncongenial social philosophy and in the latter he was expressing a counter-philosophy of his own. The social philosophy from which he disengaged himself was that of systematic individualism, which believed that man was moral and rational; liad sense of ownership and inherent rights; that man cooperated out of enlightened self-interest; that community or social group was created out of universal selfishness and was utilitarian in nature meant for the protection of rights and promotion of happiness or self-satisfaction; and that in itself it had no value tliougli it protects values.

Rousseau was critical of this systematic individualism in Locke because, it did not concur with human nature, the way lie understood it. For Rousseau, the attributes of rationality, the power to calculate, tlie desire for happiness, the idea of ownersliip, the power to communicate with others and enter into agreement for creating a government are all attributes acquired by man through living in society and not attributes of a natural man. Besides, Rousseau thought that it was absolutely false to think that reason by itself would ever bring men together, if they were concerned only witli their individual happiness, because even the idea of self-interest arises from the communities in which men live. Secondly self-interest is not more natural or innate than tlie social needs that draw men together in communities. Rousseau considered that over and above self-interest, men have an innate revulsion against sufferings in others. The common basis of sociability is not reason but feeling. The calculating egoist of tlie theories exists not in nature but only in perverted society. Consequently, their theories were wrong and had shades of tlie 'evil contract' in the *Discourses on Inequality.* Human nature could best be understood by going beyond the stage of socialisation. This neither Hobbes nor Locke do; for them the state of nature, is a stage prior to political order. Though Hobbes says state of nature is pre-social, it is in fact not because the attributes of the Hobbessian man are those of a public person. Natural egoist is a fiction for Rousseau.

In developing his counter-philosophy, Rousseau got immense help from the classical Greek thought: (I) that it is in tlie nature of man to associate with others in organic ways, which means that the development of each is dependent upon the development of all. Without such organic relations man cannot realise his true nature or attain his full stature as a man; solitude and separatism is contrary to his nature—Robinson Crusoe is thus a false model. (2) that it is only

in society that man acquires right, freedom and morality—outside the society there might be independence, and right as mere force only but no morality; (3) that man is what the community makes him; if the socialisation is bad, his nature will be twisted and warped; (4) that community is the chief moralising agent and therefore represents the highest moral value; and (5) that political subjection is essentially ethical and only secondarily a matter of law and power.

With insights gleaned from Classical Greek philosophy, Rousseau worked out his own political theory. It rejected systematic individualism, compelling one to think that society was more than a heap of individual atoms; that good of all—the 'public good' cannot be produced through each individual's pursuit of private interests or universal selfishness. Unless men thought beyond their private interests, in terms of public interest or the good of the whole of which they are integral part, they could not attain their own good.

Moreover, only when individuals are disposed towards thinking in terms of public good, that authority, which is required for order and, freedom, which is needed for felicity or self-development can be reconciled. Locke and Hobbes both failed in this reconciliation because they had a false theory of man. Locke becomes fearful of authority while securing liberty; Hobbes for the sake of order and tranquility sacrifices individual at the altar of the sovereign.

There is much value in the philosophical insight of theory of General Will and it led to an alternative conceptualisation of state, not as a machine but as an organism; but Rousseau did not care to work out the practical implications of his theory. One consequence of this has been that whereas Rousseau had set out to provide a philosophical justification for democratic governance and resolve the tension between authority and freedom found in the mechanistic theory of state, quite contrary to his intentions, Rousseau became for many an apotheosis of modern totalitarianism.

His theory of General Will unfortunately provided a pretext for any arbitrary ruler to coerce recalcitrant subjects, pleading that they, much as they are enslaved to their particular wills, do not know what the general will is. In this context 'the paradox of freedom' in Rousseau, acquired dangerous propensities. Liberty became an 'honorific' word, the name for a sentiment with which even attacks on liberty could be baptised.

But even more dangerous was the implied view that a man whose moral convictions are against those commonly held in his community is merely capricious and ought to be suppressed. As Sabine comments this was perhaps not a legitimate inference from the abstract theory of General Will, because freedom of conscience really is a social and not merely an individual good. But in every concrete situation the general will has to be identified with some body of actual opinion, and moral intuitionism usually means that morality is identified with standards, which are generally accepted. Forcing a man to be free thus becomes a euphemism for making him blindly obedient to the mass or the strongest party.

In a way such abuse happened because the theory of general will was too abstract and there was difficulty with regard to its location or identification. That general will is always right is merely a truism because it stands for social good, which is itself the standard of right. But how does this absolute right stand in relation to many possibly conflicting judgments about it? Who is entitled to decide what is right? Sabine writes that Rousseau's attempt to answer these questions produced a variety of contradictions and evasions. Similarly Wayper comments that unfortunately Rousseau cannot help us here. "He can never tell how we can be sure of finding the General Will. ...So much vagueness about something as important as the finding of the General will is to be regretted."

Notwithstanding such criticisms, the significance of Rousseau cannot be ever diminished. In defence of Rousseau it may be said, as Ebenstein has observed, that he was the first modern writer to have attempted, though not always successfully, to synthesise good government with self-government in tlie key concept of the general will. The classical doctrine of Plato and Aristotle had emphasised good government at the expense of self-government. And the more modern ideas of Locke and the liberal'school were concerned principally with self-government; it relegated the problem of good government into background.

Secondly, Rousseau also was clearer than the conventional liberal doctrines that the end of government is not confined to the protection of individual liberty but also includes equality because 'liberty cannot exist without it.' In the ***Social*** *Contract* one may not notice the hostility tliat he showed to the institution of private property in the ***Discourse on*** *Inequality* but he does not abandon the ideal of economic equality. No citizen "shall be ever wealthy enough to buy another, and none poor enough to be forced to sell himself." Rousseau realises that in practice it is very difficult to maintain the ideal of equitable distribution of property, but it is precisely because the force of circumstances tends continually to destroy equality that the force of legislation should always tend to its maintenance. Whereas Locke failed to see property as a relation of domination of man over man, Rousseau clearly recognised property as a form of private domination that had to be kept under control by the general will.

Third, Rousseau was not socialist in the modern sense of the term, yet indirectly this part of Rousseau—the stress on equality—has aided the development of the socialist sentiment by sharpening the awareness that political 'liberty and crass economic inequality are ultimately incompatible if democracy is to survive and expand. And secondly that all rights, including those of property, are rights within the community and not against it.

Fourth, Rousseau himself was in no sense a nationalist, though his philosophy contributed to nationalism. By reviving the intimacy of feeling and the reverence connoted by citizenship in the city-state, he made it available, at least as an emotional coloring, to citizenship in the national state. The cosmopolitanism implied by natural law, he chose to regard as merely a pretext for evading the duties of a citizen.

To our present times, Rousseau's ideas are still very relevant, for, how often we have lamented the unrepresentative character of the representative, party-democracy and feared the state turning against tlie people. And as bulwark against such depredation, have wished to strengthen the civil society for the sake of protecting and retrieving our freedom. No less frequent has been the lament that the problems of our society caused by the spawning of several primordial tie's have arisen because of the failure to take the value of citizenship seriously. His theory of popular sovereignty is a constant reminder to citizens to guard against the usurpation of power by the executive, The record of free government everywhere has proved that there can be no reliance on contrivances and institutions alone in the eternal struggle for liberty, and that its survival depends, in the last analysis, on those moral qualities that Rousseau calls General will, justice, virtue. In addition, we an also find presence of Rousseau in Rawlsian theory of distributive justice, in the conception of developtnent as-expansion of human capabilities. And perhaps it would not be wrong to suggest that Rousseau, as critic of civil society is a precursor of Marx and much of the radical thought ever since.

8.9 SUMMARY

Although many classify him as an enlightenment thinker, because in many ways he did advocate Enlightenment ideas, Rousseau is also highly critical of the enlightenment and modernity in

general. Rousseau thinks that civilisation corrupts human beings. He equated civilisation with vanity and arrogance. Rousseau believed that what was wrong with the modern man was that he had lost touch with his feelings. Rousseau's regard for rationality is mixed with an equal or greater regard for feeling.

Critiquing the civil society of his contemporary times he pointed out that the social order was founded for the protection of private interest and property; that private property was at the root of social inequality, injustices and exploitation and that such a civil order was contrary to man's nature.

Since society was inevitable; man couldn't unlearn himself to return to the woods; and the realisation of man's nature depended on the nature of socialisation, the task for him was to suggest the just principles upon which to found a social-political order that would be conducive to the realisation of human freedom. Rousseau accomplishes this task in his *Social Contract*, wherein Rousseau lays dowr the blue print of the required political society. This ideal political-society is set up through a social contract, in the image of a community, possessing a general-will , which is sovereign and which while always aiming at the general good, comes from all and applies to all equally. In Rousseau's theory of General Will, freedom and authority automatically gets reconciled, as there is no tension between the two. The earlier theories, which were premised on individual separatism, and the need to preserve and protect private interests through setting up an authority, failed to properly reconcile authority with freedom because it had a faulty theory of man and society.

8.10 EXERCISES

1) "Man is born free, and every where he is in chains." Explain and examine Rousseau's attempt to bring about reconciliation between liberty and authority.

2) How far is it correct to say that Rousseau's Sovereign is Hobbes' Leviathan with its head chopped off?

3) Evaluate Rousseau as a critic of civil society.

4) Examine the nature and characteristic of Rousseau's General 'Will.

UNIT 9 EDMUND BURKE

Structure

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 Restraining Royal Authority

9.1.2 Ireland

9.1.3 East India Company

9.1.4 American Colonies

9.2 Criticism of the French Revolution

9.3 Critique of Natural Rights and Social Contract

9.4 Limits of Reason

9.5 Citizens11ip and Democracy

9.6 Religion and Toleration

9.7 Criticisms of Burke

9.8 Conclusion

9.9 Summary

9.10 Exercises

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Edmund Burke (1729-1797) is considered as the most important conservative political thinker that England has produced, Conservatism as an important political ideology began with him in the same way as liberalism began with John Locke (1632-1704). Though there is near unanimity about his brilliance there is no consensus about him in terms of political categorisation. Berlin (1969) described him as an ultra conservative while O' Brien (1968) viewed him as a liberal and pluralist opponent of the French Revolution. Laski (I 920) called him a liberal because of his sympathetic attitude to the American Revolution and the Irish Question and his criticisms of the British colonial rule in India. Some saw him as a progressive conservative, for "he supported political and economic progress within the framework of England's established institutions" (Miller 1997: 562). Kramnick (1977) described him as "the gravedigger of the Enlightenment" for his virulent anti-clericalism and disembodied rationalism.

Burke's thought is difficult to categorise. First, he showed no clear preference for he had both liberal as well as conservative tendencies which became evident in his support to the American Revolution and his opposition to the French Revolution. Second, Burke was a prolific writer in his long career as a parliamentarian and therefore most of his writings were situational and could not be considered as well formulated political theory texts. His most important political tract emerged as a reaction to the French Revolution of I789 proving that there exists a clear relationship between crisis and significant developments in political theorising. Though his fame rests mostly for his critique of the French Revolution there were other concerns in him as well.

9.1.1 Restraining Royal Authority

In the tradition of Whiggism, Burke was a vocal opponent of arbitrary monarchical power and

patronage. However, he was also conscious of the importance of the institution of monarchy as a natural attraction for obedience and reverence and that it also strengthened the principle of continuity. But these positive aspects were minor, compared to its important role in developing a mixed and balanced government, for which it had to be streamlined. In developing this theme the influence of Richard Hooker (1554-1600), Locke and Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu (1689-1755) were apparent. Burke was an admirer and defender of the British constitution, as he believed that it adequately ensured good government, order and liberty of its people.

9.1.2 Ireland

Burke stood with the Irish cause, though expediency and the interests of a successful political career compelled him to sacrifice theoretical consistency. Furthermore, his open and public stand was cautious, compared to his private correspondence. But in spite of this limitation, which was understandable because of the prevailing mood and consideration for his political survival, he always emphasised tlie desirability of the emancipation of the Roman Catholics of Ireland. He also spoke of the inevitability of the Irish emancipation.

9.1.3 East India Company

For about a decade, Burke spoke extensively against the oppression, exploitation and misrule in India by the East India Company. "There is nothing more noble in Burke's career than his long attempt to mitigate the evils of company rule in India" (Laski 1920: 35). He criticised British rule in India. Being an old civilisation, much older than Britain, its traditions and customs were to be respected. Interestingly, Henry Suinner Maine (1 822-88) used these arguments to challenge John Austin's (1790-1859) theory of sovereignty. Burke's interest in Indian affairs continued with his primary initiative in launching impeachment proceedings against Warren Hastings in 1787. He challenged Hastings' assertion that it was impossible to apply Western criteria of authority and legality to oriental societies. The proceedings continued for eight long years, though in the end, Hastings was acquitted.

9.1.4 American Colonies

Burke championed the cause of American colonies. In the midst of emotional and angry debates like the right of Parliament to tax colonies and the right of resistance to American settlers, he lifted the entire controversy to a different and a higher level altogether. He refused to analyse the problem from the point of view of abstract rights, and raised some very serious and fundamental questions, which were reiterated in the course of his critique of the French Revolution. Furthermore, he charged that the British policy was inconsistent, and emphasised the need for legislative reason.

9.2 CRITICISM OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The French Revolution, at least in the initial period had lot of support in England. One popular defense was from Richard Price (1723-91). Burke's masterpiece emerged as a critique of Price. His scathing criticism surprised many, destroying many of his close friendships. Equally .shocking for many was the clear difference between the young and the old Burke. Burke's earlier criticism of tlie king's control over the parliament, his efforts of more than a decade to expose oppression, exploitation and misrule in India by the East India Company, and

his championing the cause of tlie American colonies was at variance with his total denunciation of the French Revolution. Unlike many other contemporaries, he refused to draw any parallels between the French events and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Burke's *Reflections* was written during the revolutionary years. Macpherson (1980) pointed out that one should not overlook tlie second part of the title of the book, because it was very significant, i.e. his immediate concern was the perceived danger of tlie French revolution's impact on England and in other parts of Europe.

In *Reflections*, Burke made a detailed criticism of both the theoretical and practical aspects of the Revolution. He pointed out the dangers of abstract theorising, but was realistic enough to provide for an alternative mode of social progression. Unlike Josepli de Maistre (1753-1821) and Louis Gabriel de Bonald (1754-1840), who outrightly defended orthodoxy and absolutism, Burke provided a framework for change with continuity. "A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation. Without such means it might even risk tlie loss of that part of the constitution which it wished the most religiously to preserve" (Burke cited in Curtis 1961: 49). As Burke pointed out, these two principles of conservation and correction operated in England during the critical periods of the Restoration and tlie Revolution, when England did not have a king. But in both these critical times, a totally new one did not replace the entire edifice of the old order. Instead, a corrective mechanism was achieved to rectify the deficiencies within the existing constitutional framework. As such, it balanced the old and the new.

Burke criticised Jacobinism for its wholesale attack on established religion, traditional constitutional arrangements and the institution of property, which he saw as the source of political wisdom in a country. He often used the term "prejudice", by which he meant attachment to established practices and institutions. These provided a bulwark against sweeping changes, particularly those that followed from a rational critique. He did not support everything that was ancient, only those that held society together by providing order and stability. His main audience in the *Reflections* was the aristocracy and the upper middle class of English society, which he perceived to be tlie upholders of stability and order. He challenged the English ruling class to respond appropriately to the plight of the French Queen, otherwise it would reflect the lack of chivalry and demonstrate that the British political order was not superior to that of the Continent.

Burke further argued that the period of the *Magna Carta* to the *Bill* of Rights was one of slow but steady consolidation, reflecting continuity and change. This enabled the British constitution to preserve and provide unity within the context of diversity. Inheritance was cherished as a political necessity, for without it both conservation and transmission were not possible. While there was a process of gradual change in Britain the French made an attempt to achieve a complete break with the past and create afresh with emphasis on equality and participation. With this inherent belief in natural aristocracy, he debunked the very attempt to create a society of equals. Burke emphasised the necessity of well-ordered state, to be ruled by a combination of ability and property. Such an order would be inherently based on inequality. He linked the perpetuation of family property with stability of a society. There was no place for either proportionate equality or democratic equality in his preference for aristocratic rule. Like Adam Smith (1723-90), he stressed the importance of preserving and protecting property. He favoured accumulation of wealth, rights of inheritance and the need. to enfranchise property owners. While Burke was socially conservative, he was a liberal in economics, the two being fused together uneasily.

9.3 CRITIQUE OF NATURAL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL CONTRACT

Burke pointed out the intricacies of human nature and the complexities of society, and because of such considerations no simple analysis of human nature or power was possible. Rejecting any claim of either economic or political equality, he provided a theory of rights within this large framework of his political philosophy. He emphasised partnership, but denied any corresponding equal rights in the enjoyment of economic and political privileges. In understanding and perpetuating this philosophy, the British constitution had stood the test of time. Emphasising tlie utmost need for continuity, Burke pointed out that in the areas of morality, principles of government and ideas of liberty, there was no need to make a fresh beginning every time. Giving the example of the English achievement, he pointed out the inevitability of a continuous process of adaptability and change within the larger structure. Rejecting atheism and pointing out the enormous importance of religion for a proper functioning of civil society, he characterised the individual as a religious animal. He saw no conflict between the existence of an established church, an established monarchy, an established aristocracy and an established limited democracy. The point that Burke made was that in the modern age the coexistence of institutions was of utmost importance for effective functioning and efficiency. He stressed the fact that all authority was to be exercised as a trust, arid in this his philosophy was akin to that of Locke, but he emphasised that the continuity of society had to be preserved at any cost. The overall structure of society could not be just reduced to a mere contract between two or more parties. It was not a trade agreement involving paper, coffee, calico or tobacco. Such agreements reflected only transient interests, which could be dissolved by the parties involved. The intricacies of social relationships had to be understood on a very different plane.

> ...It is a partnership in all science, a partnership in all art, a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead and those who are to be born. Each contract of a particular state is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal natures, connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place (Burke cited in Curtis: 59).

Along with the rejection of the contract, Burke rejected the other Lockeian fundamentals—natural law, the rights of the individual and the separation of Church and the state. The only laws that he recognised were the laws of God and the laws of a civilised society. Burke did not reject the argument of human rights, except that he sought to rescue the real rights from the imagined ones. He shared with Locke the view that political philosophy was based on theological foundations but rejected the derivative of political and juridical equality from tlie argument that God created all human beings as equal. He also rejected the idea of creating order with the help of human reason. He charged the doctrine of natural rights with 'metaphysical abstraction', It failed to take into account the differences that existed between societies. Following Montesquieu, he insisted tliat different countries merited different legal and political systems, keeping in view the differences pertaining to climate, geography and history. The universality of natural rights doctrine overlooked national, geographical and cultural distinctions.

Though his criticism of natural rights seemed similar to that of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), there were significant differences. Burke's conception of human well being was not hedonistic as in tlie case of Bentham. In fact, it was more like Aristotle's (384-22 BC) idea of '*eudaimonia*',

linking moral virtue and duty with that of political morality and duty. Furthermore, Burke suggested maximisation, but by stressing the moral to the mathematical he was closer to Aristotle's 'phi-onesis'. He also rejected the utilitarian idea of trade-offs. Unlike Bentham, Burke was also cautious about endless new schemes. Besides emphasising political virtue, Burke also stressed the need for an elite, which enjoyed a privileged position because of its contribution to the common good. He placed aristocracy under this category. In parliament, this elite could be distinguished from others with reference to ownership of property, for inheritance was a sure reason for conservation. In this context, the French National Assembly did not consist of property owners. Instead they were lawyers who were "artful men, talented, aggressive, ideologically inclined, impractical and dangerous, if not alienated". The basic problem was that' the talent that made a good lawyer was not enough to make a good ruler and be a part of the natural aristocracy. The basic shortcoming of a lawyer was that his experience had a very narrow base, which meant that both the diversity of humankind and complexities of public affairs were beyond his grasp.

9.4 LIMITS SF REASON

Burke questioned the very basic argument that a stable political structure could be established only on the basis of reason. He pointed to the limits of reason and its role in understanding society. In fact, Burke questioned the whole style of rationalistic thought, an argument reiterated by Michael Oakeshott (1901-90). Quoting Aristotle, he cautioned against *à priori* deductive reasoning in moral arguments. The philosophy of the French Revolutionaries was a 'false philosophy', because of its insistence that all authority derived its sustenance from reason. As opposed to reason, Burke emphasised wisdom as something more than prejudice. The philosophy of natural rights based on the new principles of liberty and equality was not conducive to the establishment of order. Veneration of authority developed over a period of time, and the denunciation of one authority by a different group led to its denunciation as well. The abstract revolutionary ideology inevitably led. from subversion to anarchy, because it brought a consciousness of rights but not of duties of order, discipline and obedience to authority. Burke repeatedly stressed that societies needed awe, superstition, ritual and honour for their stability, and to be able to secure the loyalty and support of those on whom it depended. He warned that a state, which dismissed this entire edifice aside in the name of rational enlightenment, would ultimately be a state based merely on a lust for power.

Burke emphasised that the dignity of the human being came through socialisation. One rendered obedience to society not because it benefitted us, or because we had promised *to* obey it, but because we saw ourselves as an integral part of it. Though he rejected the divine right of kings, he affirmed, like Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC), that nothing was more pleasing to God than the existence of human 'civitates'. He accused the natural rights theorists of not merely "imprudence and intellectual arrogance but of blasphemy and impiety as well" (Waldron 1987: 95).

9.5 CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRACY

Burke was also perturbed by the democratic aspirations of the French revolution, in particular by the doctrines of popular sovereignty and general will. He regarded democracy as the "most shameless thing in the world" (Burke 1969: 190). Me was skeptical of the political ability of the ordinary people, He was an elitist, totally unconcerned about the plight of the masses. For him, the best form of political practice was one that was played by a few of the enlightened and aristocratic elite. Burke believed that elections gave an opportunity for the enfranchised

citizens to choose a wise elite to govern them. In a modified form, Schumpeter provided a similar model of elitist theory of democracy in the 1940s. Like Aristotle, Burke favoured citizenship limited to a segment of adults who had the leisure for discussion and information, and were not mentally dependent. The Whigs in England and America favoured ownership of property as a necessary condition for citizenship. In view of the fact that average individuals were guided by their baser instincts, government had to keep them apathetic so as to prevent their selfishness from undermining communal life.

Burke accepted inequalities as natural and unavoidable in any society, and that some would enjoy an enhanced status. In the well-ordered society, this ruling elite was a genuine one, a 'natural aristocracy', for the mass of people were incapable of governing themselves. They could not think or act without guidance and direction. For Burke, government was not based on general will, but wisdom. For Burke, political representation "is the representation of interests and interest has an objective, impersonal and unattached reality" (Pitkin 1967: 10). For Burke, aristocracy of virtue and wisdom should govern for the good of a nation. As in other areas, even in representation, there was no clear and well laid out theory of representation. But out of Burke's speeches and writings emerged some key ideas. He regarded the members of parliament as an elite group, a group of natural aristocracy. The mass of ordinary people needed the guidance and direction from this elite since they could not govern by themselves. Representatives were genuinely superior to the electorate. The representatives had to possess the capacity for rational decision making. They were to be men of practical wisdom. This was a negation of Jean Jacques Rousseau's (1712-78) theory of direct democracy. The representatives need not consult or be bound by the views of the voters. Furthermore, obligation and ethical considerations, and questions of right and wrong guided governmental action. Burke championed rational parliamentary discussion, which provided the right answers to political questions. And as a participant, the representative need not consult the voters. They would enjoy complete freedom, for they have no interest other than the national interest. With contempt for the average voter, Burke advocated restricted suffrage so that the selection process of the natural aristocratic group of parliament would become fool proof. He also distinguished between *actual representation* and ***virtual*** *representation*. Since an area would have one dominant interest, he saw the merit of virtual representation against actual representation. Virtual representation was based on common interest. By this logic, even people who did not vote were represented. The localities, which did not have actual representation by this criterion, would have virtual representation. Burke was careful in noting that this logic of virtual representation did not hold for the disenfranchised Catholics of Ireland and the people of the American colonies. Pitlcin (1967: 169-70) rightly pointed out that Burke's position was highly inconsistent. His view of representation endorsed the 17th Century notion of representation, and had very little relevance in contemporary times. However, it helps us to understand the anti-democratic bias prevalent during Burke's period. The Burkean theory centred on the parliament. Conniff (1977: 331-332) tried to refute Pitkin's analysis by questioning the theory of objective interest and a commonly held agreement of the parliamentary elite on what constituted the common good. However, Burke's insistence that every recognisable constituency had one dominant interest and that a consensus could always emerge out of parliamentary discussion vindicated Pitkin.

9.6 RELIGION AND TOLERATION

Burke's views on religion exhibited both liberal and conservative perceptions. He defended traditional practices of the established church, unless there was an 'intolerable abuse'. He equated attack on the established Church of England as tantamount to an attack on England's constitutional order. He was convinced that the established church would foster peace and

dissuade civil discord. His liberal temperament made him advocate and defend toleration for most religious sects, including non-Christians. He was perturbed that the Protestants did not support toleration for the Catholics. He did not believe in the truth of any particular religion but was concerned about the effect of changes in traditional religious practice on political stability. Toleration and religious freedom could be refused if it threatened civil peace and considered atheism as complementary to political radicalism. He was condescending towards Rational Dissenters as being better than atheists, for at least they believed in God, though not in the divinity of Christ. However, he castigated all those who corrupted and attacked religion as being destructive of all authority, thereby undermining equity, justice, and order—the foundations of human society.

Burke did not quarrel with the atheists as long as they did nothing to publicly attack or subvert religion. While he began to dislike Hume for his open contempt of religion, he remained friendly with the irreligious Smith, even though the latter blamed Roman Catholicism for impeding economic and political progress, but there was no denunciation or revolt against religion. Burke's critique of the French Revolution was also due to the latter's anti-clericalism. The famous cry "hang the bishops from the lampposts" during the early days of the Revolution was an indication of the "insolent irreligious in opinions and practices". The nationalisation of the Church's property by the National Assembly in 1790 was a move against traditional religion, and represented the larger goal of subverting establishing authority and civil society. The revolutionary fervour only fostered hatred, animosity and suspicion, rather than affection and trust. It undermined the traditional civilising ties of the French citizens. Burke placed a great deal of emphasis on manners and etiquette that controlled passions and will.

9.7 CRITICISMS OF BURKE

Thomas Paine (1737-1809) criticised Burke's position in his Rights *of Man* (1791). In his reply, he defended Enlightenment liberalism and tried to correct "the flagrant misrepresentations which Mr. Burke's pamphlet contains" (Paine 1973: 270). Both agreed that in contemporary European society there existed a very large proportion of illiterate and unenlightened people. Burke, following Aristotle, argued that individuals differed in their capacities, which is why any attempt to level would never succeed. Paine, on the contrary, attributed the very large numbers of illiterate people in the 'old' world to bad governments. In total contrast to Burke, he championed the cause of universal suffrage, representative government, the rule of law, and a sympathetic attitude to the poor. He denounced the hereditary system, whether in the name of monarchy or aristocracy, for a "hereditary governor is as ridiculous as an hereditary author" (cited in Jackson 1969: 111). Unlike Burke, Paine, following Locke, justified government as an outcome of a social contract between the people themselves. He was critical of the British constitution for being unwritten, making it unhelpful as a reference point. Its precedents were all arbitrary contrary to reason and common sense.

Burke and Paine were representative symbols of the conservative and radical responses to the French Revolution. It was noteworthy that both of them championed the American cause, but were on opposite sides with regard to the French experiment. Their basic disagreements could be understood in light of their support to the American cause. For Burke, "Taxation without representation" violated traditional English rights and liberties and that the English were on the wrong side of history, because they violated their own well-established practices. For demanding redressal, tlie Americans did not base their arguments, like the French did, on a notion of natural rights. Paine, on the other hand, found that the Britisli action in America was a violation of universal reason and natural rights. He rejected hierarchical authority, and asserted that "setting up and putting down kings and governments is the natural right of citizens" (Paine

1973: 42). He regarded aristocrats as a class of unproductive idlers and parasites, who lived off the surplus and the exploitation of the industrious classes. As such, in a rational, reconstructed society they would not be missed at all. The striking similarity between a radical Paine, a liberal John Stuart Mill (1806-73) and a socialist Claude Henri Comte de Rouvroy Saint Simon (1760-1825) is too clear to be missed.

Early Liberal Feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97) and Catherine Macaulay Sawbridge Graham (1731-91) criticised Burke and regarded the French Revolution as something new and unique, spreading the message of an enlightened spirit. Wollstonecraft echoing many contemporaries of her time, in her reply to Burke, pointed out the apparent contradictions of a liberal Burke supporting the American cause, and the conservative Burke opposing Jacobinism. His praise of hereditary rights and tradition and his emphatic stress on the conservation of existing political relations indicated a lack of reason and a predominance of :sentiment, leading to social stagnation, hindering the progressive and dynamic nature of socio-political life. She accused him of championing the maintenance of unequal property, and if necessary, of despotism and tyranny, for property not only restricted liberty by creating inequalities, but also undermined sociability. Among unequals according to Wollstonecraft there could be no friendship and mutual respect.

Wollstonecraft, unlike Burke saw the Church as fundamentally corrupt, having, secured vast property from the poor and the ignorant. With the help of David Hume's (171 1-76) *History* of *England* (1754-62), she tried to show that English laws were product of contingencies rather than the wisdom of the ages. She insisted that only those institutions, which could withstand the scrutiny of reason and were in accordance with natural rights and God's justice, deserved respect and obedience. Furthermore, she assailed Burke for defending a 'gothic affability' more appropriate for a feudal age, than the burgeoning commercial age marked for its 'liberal civility'. Rejecting Burke's theory of prescriptive rights, Wollstonecraft contended that human beings by birth were rational creatures with certain inherited rights, especially equal rights to liberty compatible with that of others. She criticised Burke's views on women as a "symbol of man's need for a feminine ideal, not woman for herself'. Wollstonecraft, like Paine, portrayed Burke as a brilliant but misguided voice of the past. Though Paine's criticism of Burke was more effective and well-known, as evident from his famous phrase that Burke "pitted the plumage but forgot the dying bird", it was Wollstonecraft who advocated a more radical stance than Paine for ameliorating the plight of the poor. Paine did not have any plan for social levelling other than taxing the rich and insisting that the appalling conditions of the poor must be improved, but he failed to offer any economic solution to the problem (Dickinson 1977: 267). On the other hand, Wollstonecraft suggested the adoption of economic means for innproving the condition of the poor by dividing estates into small farms and endorsed plans for the working class, which could lead to their betterment. Wollstonecraft was the first to lay stress on the equal rights and status for women by pointing to the incompleteness of the natural rights doctrine, which understood the individual.to be a male and left out the female.

Another refutation came from James Mackintosh's *Vindiciae Gallicae* in 1791. In it he insisted that Burke had trampled upon the ideals of Whiggism and aligned himself' instead with Tory superstition and chivalry. In opposition to Paine, Mackintosh invoked the ideals of 1688 in explaining the events in France. He supported the Revolution, for it attempted to make France a commercial society.

9.8 CONCLUSION

Burke used the historical perspective to understand politics. His conservatism rested on a philosophically backed skepticism about the possibilities of discerning the historical processes

by which societies developed. It was not concerned, as in other forms of conservatism, to discover an ideal in tlie past to which one must go back. His reputation was that of a reformer, for he held that one must reform in order to preserve, and that a society without the means of reformation could not have the means of preservation. However, lie emphasised on limiting the ambit of reforms to eradicate tlie present evil, and not aim at realising a blueprint that would conform to rational standards. For Burke, revolutionary change was undesirable not only for the uncontrollable violence it unleashed, but also because it invariably led to seizure of power by those who were unable to use it harmoniously. Reforms, on the other hand, could also be dangerous if taken to extremes, making them obtuse and unacceptable to their participants. Change could be enduring and feasible only if it attempted to conserve. Burke impressed upon the importance of acting prudently, improve by preserving and reform by changing, and not by embarking upon a complete break with the past and traditions. He respected institutions that had worked reasonably well over a period of time, but did not favour the status quo. His respect for prescription was applied to tested schemes and not to untried ones. Hannah Arendt (1906-75), endorsing Burke demonstrated that for a revolution to succeed in protecting liberty and avoiding terror had lo be limited in its ambit and political in nature like the American one and not social like the French and Russian revolutions (1973). Burke also favoured penal reforms, abolition of slavery, and reduction in the number nf governmental sinecures.

Burke did not, like Locke, believe that conveniences were created when human beings mixed their labour with the earth and its raw materials. He did not see any contradiction in the expansion of commerce and the importance of prescription, though he admitted that it was not easy to strike a balance between the roles of the market and the state. The state was necessary to ensure political stability. He defended a society not based on coercion and thus was a precursor to the liberal J.S. Mill and not the conservative, de Maistre (Bromwich 1998: 4). Burke made politics dignified and efficient. He deliberated judiciously on important issues, and "has endured as the permanent manual of political wisdom without which statesmen are as sailors on an uncharted sea" (Laski cited in Kirk 1960: 23). However he was not free from the prejudices of his time and tried to create a natural aristocracy in politics, which is a negation of equal opportunity on which the mass democracies of our time are based. Today we believe in just the opposite that Burke believed in, namely that politics is too serious a business to be left to politicians alone.

9.9 SUMMARY

It was with Edmund Burke that Conservatism as a political ideology came into being. He is known best for his critique of tlie French Revolution which was in complete contrast to his earlier criticisms of the misrule by tlie East India Company and his support for the cause of the American colonies. He criticised Jacobinism for its wholesale attack on established religion, traditional constitutional arrangements and the institution of property, which he saw as the source of political wisdom in a country. He favoured accumulation of wealth, rights of inheritance and the need to enfranchise property owners. While Burke was socially conservative, he was a liberal in economics. He criticised tlie theory of Natural Rights and Social Contract, He emphasised partnership, but denied any corresponding equal rights in the enjoyment of economic and political privileges. He questioned whether a political structure could be established only with rationalistic thought and cautioned against deductive reasoning in moral arguments. He was elitist and regarded democracy as the "most shameless thing in the world". The best form of political practice was one that was played by a few of tlie enlightened and aristocratic elite and accepted inequalities as natural. He advocated restricted suffrage. On religious grounds, Burke supported the established Church. He was not against atheists, as they did nothing to publicly attack or subvert religion.

9.10 EXERCISES

1) Explain Burke's criticisms of natural rights and social contract.

2) Write a short note on Burke's views on citizenship and democracy.

3) How are Burke's ideals different from our beliefs of today?

UNIT 10 IMMANUEL KANT

Structure

10.1 Introduction
10.2 Representative of tlie Enlightenment
10.3 Kant's "Copernican Revolution in Metaphysics"
10.4 Transcendental-Idealist View of Human Reason
10.5 Formulations of tlie Categorical Imperative
10.6 The Universal Law of Right (Recht) or Justice
10.7 Property, Social Contract, and the State
10.8 Perpetual Peace
10.9 Concluding Comments
10.10 Summary
10.11 Exercises

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Immanuel Kant was a German philosopher of the late 18th Century (1724 - 1804). He was a professor of philosophy at the University of Konigsberg in Prussia. He was a contemporary of Rousseau, Hume and Adam Smith. He was 65 years old at the time of the French Revolution of 1789, which he praised for its republican goals, while criticising it for its use of immoral means.

Kant believed that a political-legal order could be just, only if it pays homage to morality. He wrote:

> A true system of politics cannot ... take a single step witliout first paying tribute to morality.... For all politics must bend the knee before right, although politics may hope in return to arrive, however slowly, at a stage of lasting brilliance.

Accordingly, in his moral and political philosopliy, Kant's main concern was with tlie necessary, universal and critical-rational principles of morality and justice/rightness (*recht*) in German, (which is not to be confused with tlie notion of individualistic rights). These are to serve as normative standards for justifying or criticising and reconstructing the political organisation of societies at tlie national and international levels.

Kant's major contribution was his critique of pure reason and epistemology but his political philosophy is also substantially rich and novel. His political theory emphasised the necessity of treating every single person as an end in itself. His famous saying "treat humanity in your person, and in tlie person of everyone else, always as an end as well as a means, never merely as a mean" enabled him to emphasise the rights of man, rule of law, a good legal procedure and educational opportunities which would enhance human reason and enlightenment.

10.2 REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

We may begin by locating Kant in the long history of moral and political ideas by noting that while his "critical philosophy" was a culmination of the intellectual movement of tlie European

Enlightenment, it, at the same time, marked a clear departure from its separation of politics from morality. That is, while espousing the Enlightenment's enthronement of human reason (over Divine Will or Law of Nature), Kant took the supreme principle of that very reason to be tlie Moral Law (to be tested through what he termed as reason's Categorical Imperative) of the freedom, autonomy and equality of every human being as a moral person. By taking the Moral Law or the Categorical Imperative of moral-practical reason as the supreme principle of human reason, lie distanced himself from his empiricist and rationalist predecessors and contemporaries.

Kant acknowledged that he was an Enlightenment thinker. He viewed his mature works to be contributions to the ongoing process of Enlightenment. In an article entitled "What is Enlightenment?" (1784), he defined it as the bold and cotirageous passage of humanity from a condition of intellectual immaturity and mental laziness to the age of reason. He wrote:

> Enlightenment is man's leaving liis self-caused immaturity. Such immaturity is not caused by the lack of intelligence, but by lack of determination or courage to use one's intelligence without being guided by another [say, by a holy book, a priest or a despotic ruler]. *Sapere Aude!* Have tlie courage to use your own intelligence! [This] is therefore the motto of the Enlightenment.

Kant hoped to contribute to making the ordinary people become self-aware of the universal, necessary, formal and a *priori* conditions or structures of reason, which are implicitly present as normative ideas in their everyday ***thinking*** and acting as finite rational bei gs living in this world. For this new self-awareness, Kant felt that a "Copernican Revolution in Metaphysics" is required. Me viewed his own mature works to be exercises in such a philosophical revolution

10.3 KANT'S "COPERNICAN REVOLUTION IN METAPHYSICS"

To liis readers, Kant proposed his Copernican-like revolution in philosophy in the following words:

> Hitherto it has been assumed that our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them a *priori*, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in tlie tasks of metaphysics if we suppose that objects must conform to knowledge.
>
> The understanding does not derive its laws from, but prescribes them to, nature.

While the earlier Copernican Revolution in astronomy or, rather, cosmology replaced the earth-centric view of tlie cosmos with the heliocentric or sun-centric view, Kant's Copernican-like revolution in philosophy placed the human being at the centre of the world of knowledge and action. For Kant, the human being is neither a mere passive recipient of the "impressions" of the natural world nor a mere passive subject in the moral world but an active or creative agent in them.

Kant did agree with the rationalist and empiricist thinkers of the Enlightenment in placing "human nature" or "human reason" rather than the authority of the Church, despotic rulers, custom or tradition at the centre or source of human knowledge and morality. He however felt that the empiricists (e.g. Locke and Hume) reduced human nature to the level of the senses,

instincts, feelings and preferences, whereas the rationalists (e.g. Descartes and Leibniz) narrowed or restricted human reason to an egoistic, monadic or intuitive substance. Kant's transcendental-idealist view of human reason and its universal, formal principles ofjustice and morality would overcome these limitations.

10.4 TRANSCENDENTAL-IDEALIST VIEW OF HUMAN REASON

Kant's "transcendental idealism" is "idealistic" in that it is ideas-constituted, ideal-oriented (rather than "realist") and critical-reconstructive (rather than traditionalist). These features of his thought are reflected in tlie titles of many of his books, e.g., *Ideas towards a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View (1784).* By "transcendental" ideas or principles, he means the necessary, universal, formal, *apriori* conditions or structures of the possibility of any knowledge or moral action by rational beings. As finite rational agents, human persons, he says, have not only the faculties or capacities of *sense* and *understanding* but also the faculty of theoretical and moral-practical *reason.* He writes:

> Man now finds in himself a faculty by means of which he differentiates himself from all other things, indeed even from himself in so far as he is affected by objects; and that faculty is reason. This, as pure self-activity, is elevated even above the understanding ... with respect to ideas, reason shows itself to be such a pure spontaneity that it far transcends anything which sensibility can provide it,..

Tlie faculty of *understanding* has its *a priori* formal categories or concepts (e.g., space, time and causality), which it imposes on our perceptual experiences to make them understandable. Similarly, tlie faculty of "practical reason" or "rational will" has its "synthetic a *priori"* principles or laws of tlie morality and justice/right of our thought and action. He writes:

> In the theory of duties, man can and should be represented from the point of view of the property of his capacity for freedom, which is completely supersensible, and so simply from the point of view of his humanity considered as a personality, independently of physical determinations (*homo noumenon*).

As suggested in this passage, the "transcendental idea" or norm of the freedom or autonomy (and equality) of the human person as a moral agent is central to Kant's theory of moral duties or obligations. These ideas, Kant notes, are contained in the Moral Law, which has traditionally been known as the Golden Rule. According to that Rule, what we do to others should be what we would have them do to us,

Kant also felt that the fundamental idea of the Moral Law is contained in Rousseau's concept of the General Will as a will representing the true will of *each* member of the community, In fact, Rousseau's idea of the self-governing capacities of human beings had a great influence on Kant's key idea of the autonomy of the human being as a moral agent.

According to Kant, the basic idea of the Moral Law is this: what makes a maxim of action moral is its universalisability—a universalisability, which implies tlie normative idea of the freedom/autonomy and equality of *all* human beings *as* moral agents. By autonomy of the moral agent, Kant means her or his freedom from both external coercion and from being determined internally by passions, appetites, desires, etc. Tlie idea of the autonomy of the moral agent implies the idea of her or his a *priori* moral obligation towards the autonomy of other moral agents. This is a distinctive aspect of Kant's moral and political philosophy.

10.5 FORMULATIONS OF THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

The *a priori*, ***formal***, *normative* idea of the freedom/autonomy and equality of all moral agents, Kant argues, is the "Categorical Imperative" of pure practical reason, which, he maintains, can and should be used to assess or test the morality of our maxims of action. He gives several formulations of the Categorical Imperative, which, in any of its formulations, is, in his view, the supreme principle of pure practical reason or rational will. His three major formulations are presented below.

The first formulation (Universal-Law Formulation) is made from the standpoint of the moral agent. It states:

Act only on that maxim, which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.

A variant of the first formulation (which *can* be referred to as the Universal-Law-of-Nature Formulation) reads as follows:

Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature.

The second formulation (End-in-Itself Formulation) is made from the standpoint of those who are affected by (or, in other words, those who are the recipients of) our actions. It reads:

So act that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means.

The third formulation (Kingdom-of-Ends Formulation) views the *agents* and their *recipients* as forming a moral community of self-legislating moral actors. It states:

All maxims as proceeding from our own making of law ought to harmonise with a possible kingdom of ends as a kingdom of nature.

The Categorical Imperative of practical reason, says Kant, is "categorical" in that it is not hypothetical or conditional to the particular wishes or inclinations of this or that moral agent or cultural community. For Kant, morality is not what produces good for ourselves or for others, but what has to be done as an absolute or categorical duty—a duty arising from the presuppositions or *a priori* (inherent or pre-given) structure of our practical reason or rational will. To act morally, in other words, is to act out of a sense of duty, i.e., out of respect for the Moral Law or the Categorical Imperative, and not out of considerations of self-interest, instrumental rationality (as taught by Hobbes) or the protection of any natural right to private property (as taught by Locke), In this respect, Kant's moral and political philosophy marks a major departure from that of Hobbes and Locke.

10.6 THE UNIVERSAL LAW OF RIGHT (RECHT) OR JUSTICE

As the supreme principle of moral-practical reason, the Categorical Imperative is, according to Kant, valid not only for our "inner world" of thoughts, convictions, motivations, etc. but also

for our "outer or external world" of inter-relationships with other human beings. The world of our external relations with other human beings is, however, a world of unavoidable space-and-time-constraints on our freedom of action. For instance, we cannot all be at the same place or occupy the same piece of land at the same time! Accordingly, the Categorical Imperative of moral-practical reason as applicable to our ***external*** realm of action contains a law or principle of right (recht) or justice for making my freedom of external action compatible with everyone else's freedom of external action. Kant writes:

> Right is ... the totality of conditions, under which the will of one person can be unified with the will of another under a universal law of freedom.

He formulates the Universal Principle of Right ***(Recht)*** or Justice as follows:

> Every action is just that in itself or. in its maxim is such that the freedom of the will of each can coexist with the freedom of everyone in accordance with universal law.

He also gave a variant of the same law as:

> [A]ct externally in such a way that the free use of your will is compatible with everyone according to a universal law.

This universal law of right ***(recht)*** or justice is a "juridical law," which, unlike an "ethical law" (which regulates our "inner world" of thoughts, motivations, etc.), legitimises, in accordance with the Categorical Imperative, the use of coercion for its implementation. He writes:

> [M]y external and rightful *freedom* should be defined as a warrant to obey no external laws except those to which I have been able to give my own consent. Similarly, external and rightful equality within a'state is that relationship among citizens whereby no one can put anyone else under a legal obligation without submitting simultaneously to a law which requires that he can himself be put under the same kind of obligation by the other person.

Kant goes to the extent of saying that his universal principle of justice or right (*recht*) has a conjoint principle, which regards as just the resort to "universal reciprocal coercion with the freedom of others."

10.7 PROPERTY, SOCIAL CONTRACT AND THE STATE

As the universal law or principle of external freedom, right/justice morally enables and regulates (even through just or rightful coercive means) the freedom of human beings in'their external, ***spatial relations*** with one another. According to Kant, this principle or law yields, or is conjoint with, a "permissive law" or "juridical postulate" of practical reason, which gives to everyone the right of property in any of the things of the world (in accordance with the universal law of right/justice).

In Kant's view, all the non-human things of the world are at the disposal of humanity as a whole, Our freedom to own/use them can be restricted in the light of practical reason's *a priori* formal, universal law of right/justice, to which all positive, juridical laws must conform. Anyone who first occupies or possesses a piece of land, for instance, must be assumed to be doing so *as part* of humanity's "external freedoin" in accordance with practical reason's a *priori* formal

law of right. Since the first acquisition of land or things of the world affects the freedom of action of everyone else, its full moral justification cannot rest on a mere unilateral action. According to Kant, therefore, the moral legitimacy of any original appropriation of property remains provisional until it is ratified by a universal agreement of all who are affected by it. Only such a universal agreement of all who are affected by the original appropriations of property can fulfil the requirement of the Universal Principle of Right/Justice! It is towards the realisation of this ideal requirement of universal Right or Justice that Kant offers his "social contract conceptualisation" of the state and of a "pacific union" of states on a global level.

He speaks of the state as "a union of a multitude of men under laws of Right." Describing the social contract as an idea of reason (rather than as an event), i.e. as an analogue of reason's Categorical Imperative, Kant writes:

> The act by which people forms itself into a state is the original contract. Properly speaking, the original contract is only the idea of this act, in terms of which alone we can think of the legitimacy of a state. In accordance with the original contract, everyone within people gives up his external freedom in order to take it up again immediately as a member of a commonwealth, that is, of a people considered as a state.
>
> It [The social contact] is in fact merely an idea of reason, which nonetheless has undoubted practical reality; for it can oblige every legislator to frame his laws in such a way that they could have been produced by the united will of a whole nation, and to regard each subject, in so far as he can claim citizenship, as if he had consented with the general will.

The reason or motivation, which Kant gives for the social contract, is different from the reasons given by Hobbes and Locke. The motivations they give is rational self-interest and the fear of violent death (Hobbes) or the natural right to self-preservation and the protection of property rights (Locke). For Kant, the motivation for the contract is to secure a rational right to property, whereby the contractors could, *with* moral *justification*, exclude others from access to it, to which they (i.e. the contractors) only had a provisional right in the state of nature. He writes:

> From private right in the natural condition there now arises the postulate of public right: In relation to an unavoidable coexistence with others, you should make the transition from the state of nature to a juridical state, i.e., one of distributive justice,

Kant, unlike Hobbes or Locke, thinks of the institution of property as inseparable from the civil state. He writes:

> But the state of a legislative, universal and truly united will is the civil state. Therefore, something external can be originally acquired only in conformity with the idea of a civil state, that is, in reference to it and its realisation, though before its reality (since other wise the acquisition occurs only in the civil state).

According to Hobbes, property rights are created by the sovereign state, which is assumed to be independent from property. For Locke, property rights in the state of nature are absolute. They are, so to say, independent from the state, which only has to guarantee and protect those "natural rights." For Kant, there can be no absolute natural rights to property, just as there is no state that is independent from property. Our right to property, says Kant, can only be legitimate or just if it is in accordance with the Universal Principle of Right/Justice. Our

property rights can therefore be only provisional until they are ratified *both* by a civil state *and* by a peaceful confederation of nations/states of the world.

10.8 PERPETUAL PEACE

A distinctive feature of Kant's political philosophy is its cosmopolitanism, globalism or internationalism. He does not separate domestic politics from international politics. Paying tribute to the cosmopolitan character of Kant's political philosophy, Wolfgang Kersting writes:

> While Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau were satisfied with overcoming the interpersonal natural condition and allowed the authority of political philosophy to end at the border of the state, Kant took political philosophy beyond the borders of states and saw its foremost object in the "highest political good" ... of a just order of world peace.

Kant believed that for achieving this "highest political good,' namely, perpetual peace among the nations/states of the world, we have to overcome not only the "natural condition" (or "state of nature") among individuals within nations or states but also the "natural condition" of anarchy or was-proneness among the states. In fact, he saw these two levels of natural condition to be interrelated.

He maintained that the universal principle of right/justice has to govern not only domestic politics but also international politics. Me writes:

> Moral-practical reason within us pronounces the following irresistible veto: There shall be no war, either between individual human beings in the state of nature, or between separate states, which, although internally law-governed, still live in a lawless condition in their external relationships with one another. For war is not the way in which anyone should pursue his rights... Tt can indeed be said that this task of establishing a universal and lasting peace is not just a part of the theory of right within the limits of pure reason, but its entire ultimate purpose.
>
> Kant disapproved of the reduction of global politics to international diplomatic relations of governments. He called for re-conceptualising international society as the global society of mankind.

Kant did admit that there is a distinction between domestic laws and the Law of Nations in that the latter, unlike the former, is concerned both with the relationship of one state to another and with "relationships of individuals in one state to individuals in another and of an individual to another whole state."

According to Kant, as we saw above, what raises the human being above the animal world is one's capacity for action in accordance with the principles of moral-practical reason. This means that man "is not to be valued merely as a means to the ends of other people, or even to his own ends, but is to be prized as an end in himself'. Hence, when principles of political justice are grounded in tnoral-practical reason, they will help prevent wars, in which there is the most blatant use of human beings as means to the ends of others. The autonomy principle of tnoral-practical reason, says Kant, also calls for a "republican" form of government, under which the citizens will not be treated as the mere tools of the sovereigns.

Kant argues that the enlightened or rational individuals know that the hardships of war fall on them, rather than on their rulers, who, in fact, tend to gain from conflicts and wars. He assumes

that all the citizens of all the countries have a common interest in international peace, while the ruling cliques or regimes tend to have an interest in international conflicts and wars. In his view, therefore, the dernocratisation or republicanisation of governments can contribute to international peace. Since wars bring more dangers and hardships to the ordinary citizens than to their rulers, republican/democratic governments would find it difficult to decide to go to war.

In his essay, *Perpetual* Peace (1795), he wrote that in the interest of perpetual peace, all the nation-states should agree to be guided by three "definitive articles" of peace, namely: i) the states should adopt republican constitutions; ii) republican states should form a "pacific union" or confederation for the prevention of wars; iii) the "pacific union" should make and put into practice a cosmopolitan law to ensure "universal hospitality" towards foreigners and to prevent foreign conquests and plunder.

10.9 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Kant's moral and political philosophy has served as a source of inspiration or point of departure for many later thinkers, notably Hegel and such present-day political philosophers as Jurgen Habermas and John Rawls. They feel inspired or provoked by his teachings 'about human reason and moral personality, the principles of morality and justice, and the type of political institutions (at both national and international levels), which sustain and ate sustained by those principles. Kant's ideas on morality and social contract have influenced Rawls' theory of justice. Habermas' "discourse ethics" is indebted to Kant's idea of the universalisability of the norms of morality.

Hegel (who was 34 years old at the time of Kant's death) accepted Kant's transcendental-idealist phi losophy and radicalised it by correcting its so-called abstract universalism and empty formalism. Hegel objects to Kant's construction of moral principles in disregard of human feelings, desires, motivations, etc. The Kantian moral agent, Hegel felt, would be unhappy and incapable as agents or actors in this world. Hegel also saw the possible dangers of the abstractly universal norms of morality, e.g. the revolutionary terror of the French revolution. In fact, Hegel wrote in 1795: " From the Kantian system and its highest completion I expect a'revolution in Germany." Hegel's criticism, fails to appreciate the ***normative-critical*** nature of Kant's moral and political philosophy. His emphasis on the end-in-itself nature of the human being as a moral agent cannot be taken to be providing any justification of revolutionary terror.

Kant's political philosophy stands for a distinctive form of liberalism, which stresses a peace-oriented, cosmopolitan political morality tliat is centred on the notions of the ***moral*** autonomy and (universal) ***moral obligations*** of all human beings towards one another both within and across the boundaries of nation-states. This is in contrast to the rights-based, individualistic and utilitarian types of liberalism. This stress on moral obligations or duties in Kant's moral and political philosophy should not be interpreted as any justification of authoritarianism or conservatism. Kant was well aware that the well-off sections of a society would generally be "happier" with. doctrines of charity and kindness than with any theory that puts them under the obligations of morality and justice/right ***(recht)*** towards the poor.

10.10 SUMMARY

Immanuel Kant was a German philosopher of the time of Rousseau, Hume and Adam Smith. His main concern was with the necessary, universal and critical-rational principles of morality and justice/rightness. He agreed with the rationalist and empiricist thinkers of the Enlightenment

in placing "human nature" or "human reason" rather than the authority of the Church, despotic rulers, custom or tradition at the centre or source of human knowledge and morality. He sought to overcome the limitations of both the empiricists and the rationalists by his transcendental-idealist view of human reason and its principles of justice and morality. According to Kant, the basic idea of the Moral Law is its universalisability which implies the normative idea of the freedom/autonomy and equality of all human beings as moral agents and obligation towards the autonomy of other moral agents. To test the morality of our maxims of action, Kant gives several formulatioris of what he calls 'Categorical Imperatives' of pure practical reason which is not conditional to any particular moral agent or community. The Categorical Imperative of moral-practical reason as applicable to our ***external*** realm of action contains a law or principle of right or justice ***(recht)*** for making my freedom of external action compatible with everyone else's freedom of external action. This law applies even to property. The moral legititnacy of any original appropriation of property remains provisional until it is ratified by a universal agreement of all who are affected by it. It is towards the realisation of this ideal requirement of universal Right or Justice that Kant offers his "social contract conceptualisation" of the State and of a "pacific unibn" of states on a global level. The cosmopolitanism and internationalism in Kant's philosophy is very distinctive. He took political philosophy beyond the borders of a state and did not separate domestic politics from international politics though he admitted that there is a distinction. In his view democratisation and republicanism contributes to international peace.

10.11 EXERCISES

1) "A true system of politics cannot...take a single step without first paying tribute to morality". Discuss Immanuel Kant's political ideas on morality.

2) Giving examples explain Kant's idea of 'Categorical Imperative'. .

3) In what way is Immanuel Kant's political philosophy international in character?

UNIT 11 JEREMY BENTHAM

Structure

11.1 Introduction
11.2 Life and Times
11.3 Utilitarian Principles
11.4 Bentham's Political Philosophy
11.5 The Panopticon
11.6 Summary
11.7 Exercises

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Utilitarianism is essentially a British school of political theory. It consisted of a group of writers, politicians, administrators and social reformers. The most famous members of the group are Jeremy Bentham, James Mill and John Stuart Mill. Their primary theoretical interest lay in conceiving a framework of political rules leading to a science of politics. In practice they emphasised on the utmost necessity of legal and social reform and evolving efficient political institutions. Their impact in general and that of Bentham's own efforts at substantial reforms in particular drew substantial popular support. John Stuart Mill's tribute to Bentham as the father of British innovation and as a great critical thinker was justified.

Bentham not only wanted to reform the social and legal institutions of his day, but was also a strong supporter of democratic reform—of universal suffrage, shorter annual Parliaments and the secret ballot. He was the founder of a group called the Philosophical Radicals, who, influenced by the French revolution, and rejecting Burke's condemnation of it, advocated that social institutions should be judged by the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Any social practice, which did not advance this happiness should be reformed.

11. 2 LIFE AND TIMES

Bentham was born in 1748 in England in the family of a wealthy and successful attorney. After an Oxford education at Queen's College (1760-63), Bentham began attending the London law courts in 1763. In those days, the only way for would-be lawyers to learn about law was by attending court proceedings; it was Bentham's luck that from some years ago, the University of Oxford had begun organising a series of lectures on law by William Blackstone. Bentham attended these lectures in 1763, and when Blackstone published his lectures as the famous *Commentaries* in 1765, Bentham caused quite a stir by writing an extremely critical commentary on a few paragraphs of this work. Once he began, Bentham never seemed to stop writing, although most of his writings were fragmentary. It was his friend, Etienne Dumont, a Genevan, who organised his early writings into a book form, and published them in translation in French as *A Theory of Legislation* in *1802*. This work became available to Bentham's countrymen only when it had been translated back in to English in the 1820s. Among the writings of Bentham published originally in English are *A Fragment* on *Government* (1776), *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789) and the *Constitutional Code* (1830). The *Code* was supposed to be his magnum opus, and he had planned it as a three volume work, but he was able to publish only the first volume in his lifetime.

Bentham was not so much a practising lawyer as a legal reformer. Most of his work was written with tlie purpose of bringing about legal and political reform in Britain. He even went to Russia as an adviser to Catherine the Great in 1785 and spent three years there. Back home, in the 1790s, he entered into a contract with the British government to undertake prison reform—to design and build a structure called the Panopticon—an ideal prison. Extremely disappointed when this project fell through, he turned to the reform of political institutions. In 1809 he first met James Mill, who was to become his lifelong associate and together they set up, in 1824, the *Westminster* ***Review,*** a journal devoted to the philosophy of Utilitarianism. Bentham died in 1832 while the struggle for parliamentary reforms was on in England.

11.3 UTILITARIAN PRINCIPLES

Bentham began the first chapter of *An Introduction to* ***the*** *Principles of Morals and Legislation* thus: "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On tlie one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: a man may pretend to abjure their empire: but in reality he will remain subject to it all the while. The principle of utility recognises this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation of that system, the object of which is to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and of law." (p.11)

For Bentham, utilitarianism was both a descriptive and normative theory—it not only described how human beings act so as to maximise pleasure and minimise pain, but it also prescribed or advocated such action. According to the principle of utility (or the greatest happiness principle, or the felicity principle) the cause of all human action, that which motivates human beings to act, is a desire for pleasure. Utility or happiness is defined in terms of pleasure: a thing/action is useful if it brings about happiness, that is, pleasure: "By utility is meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good or happiness." A person's interest also has the same content—Ithat of pleasure—"something is in the interest of a person when it tends to add to the sum total of his pleasures or diminish the sum total of his pains." (p.12)

In The Principles, Bentham listed fourteen kinds of simple pleasures that move human beings—including the pleasures of sense, wealtli, skill, power, benevolence and malevolence. Diminishing pain also means more pleasure—there are twelve kinds of pain which individuals seek to avoid—for instance, tlie pains of tlie senses, or of an ill name.

Not only do individuals behave in this manner, but they use the evaluative terms of good and bad to name those activities which bring them pleasure or pain. Now this is a position as old as I-lobbes. What is new with Bentham and his claim of utilitarianism being a moral theory is the advocacy of such action. What brings about pleasure is morally good, that which leads to pain *is* evil and should be avoided. (emphasis added) Human welfare can only be furthered if individuals maximise pleasure and minimise pain. As early as 1776, in tlie Preface to the *Fragment,* Bentham had written: "It is tlie greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong."

What is so moral about an individual seeking his pleasure? Bentham's answer to tlie charge of utilitarianism being, instead of a tlieory of morality, a theory actually of selfish psychological liedonism is that utilitarianism does not propose that one seek only one's own pleasure. In

deciding whether to act in a particular manner, one has to be impartial between one's own pleasure and that of all those affected by that act. "...if all happiness is either the happiness of the agent himself or the happiness of others", (quoted in Parekh, p. 91), then we can clearly show that utilitarianism is concerned with tlie happiness of others. Let us take the example of punishment—if punishment is to have some utility, and to have utility is to generate happiness, then punishmerit is obviously not going to malce the person who is being punished happy. It will instead make others happy by making it less probable that the crime is committed again. It is true that for Bentham the community is a 'fictitious' entity—nothing more than individual members constituting it. "The interest of the community then is...the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it." (The ***Principles,*** p.12) It remains true, however, that the interests (happiness) of others are to count as much as the interest of oneself.

The context of one's action determines the circle of individuals affected by it. For government officials, all the members of their state are affected by their action, so the government has to calculate the balance of pleasure and pain on a country wide scale. A private individual has to consider only the pleasures and pains of those few directly affected by his action. Thus the government is concerned about the happiness or welfare of all its citizens, and the individual is to think of the happiness of other persons apart from himself—that is then, what makes utilitarianism a moral theory.

Bentham identified four general motives for human action. The purely social motive of benevolence moves only a few individuals. Such benevoleht individuals pursue the happiness of others even at the cost of their own happiness, An individual acting out of the semi-social motive of love of reputation or praise, pursues others' happiness only when it promotes his own as well. The majority of humankind act out of the asocial motive of self interest, when one's own happiness is pursued, taking care not to cause others pain but not pursuing their happiness either. Finally, there are some individuals moved by dissocial motives, who actually experience pleasure by harming others.

Bentham also provided a calculus for determining the balance between pleasure and pain from any action. According to this felicific calculus, one must give a numerical value to the intensity, duration, certainty or uncertainty, and propinquity or remoteness, (The *Principles*, p.38) of the pleasures and pains of tlie persons affected by one's actions, and one must undertake tlie action only if the value of the pleasure is higher than the value of the pain. One should also factor *in* the fecundity of the pleasure producing act, as well as the purity and extent of the pleasure being produced. In calculating pleasure and pain, one must be careful to abstract both from the object which is the source of the pleasure/pain, as well as from the person whose pleasure/pain is being calculated. This means that tlie pleasures every one is to count as one, and the pleasure from a worthwhile activity like writing a history of Egypt is not by definition of higher value than that from gambling with a deck of cards.

Human beings seek happiness, their own and that of others. They ought to seek happiness, their own and of others. To seek, however, is one thing; the: question is, how can they attain what they seek. What is required, in general, for human beings to reach the happiness they are searching for? Human happiness, for Bentham, depended on the services men rendered to each other. Government can ensure these services by creating a system of rights and obligations. Political society exists because government is necessary to compel individuals to render services to each other to increase their happiness—this then is how Bentham made the transition from his utilitarianism to his political philosopliy.

11.4 BENTHAM'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

"Government cannot be exercised without coercion; nor coercion without producing unhappiness," Bentham said. (Leading Principles *of a* Constitutional Code, *for any* State, 1823, in Parekh, p.195) Now, unhappiness is to be avoided, so tlie only justification for government is that without it more unhappiness would be produced in society. The *raison d' etre* of government is to attach sanctions to certain unhappiness producing actions so that individual citizens will not be motivated to perform them. Or, as we said at the end of the previous section, the coercion which is, by definition, part of the nature of government, is essential to create a system of rights and obligations to further the welfare of society.

Did Bentham visualise or construct a pre-political state for mankind? Bentham did contrast political society with natural society, defining political society as follows: "When a number of persons (whom we may style subjects) are supposed to be in the habit of paying obedience to a person, or an assemblage of persons, of a known and certain description (whom we may call *governor* or governors) such persons altogether (subjects and governors) are said to be in a state of *political* SOCIETY." (Fragment, p. 40) "When a number of persons are supposed to be in the habit of conversing with each other, at the same time that they are not in any such habit as mentioned above, they are said to be in a state of natural SOCIETY," (ibid, p. 40) was what Bentham had to say about the state of nature. The state of nature is not an asocial or anti-social state. It is an ongoing society, with men in conversation, that is, in interaction with each other. For Bentham there was no pure state or nature or political society, but there was a continuum between tlie two: "Governments accordingly, in proportion as the habit of obedience is more perfect, recede from, in proportion as it is less perfect, approach to a state of nature..." (ibid, p. 40)

Tlie general end of government is the greatest happiness of the greatest number. In specific terms, tlie ends of government are "subsistence, abundance, security, and equality; each maximised, in so far as it is compatible with the maximisation of the rest." (Leading *Principles*, p.196) Bentham defined subsistence as the absence of everything leading to positive physical suffering. He advised the government to encourage industrialisation to generate employment so that eacli individual could look after his own subsistence, But if an individual was unable to do so, the government was to set up a common fund from contributions from the rich, for the well being of the poor.

If subsistence keeps the citizens from being unhappy, abundance is necessary to maximise their happiness. By ensuring prosperity, that is, surplus wealth in the hands of individuals after their basic needs are met, the government encourages the citizens to fulfil all their desires. Bentham thought that affluence could best be increased by guaranteeing to each man the due reward of his work and security of his possessions. The state should also encourage the invention of new tools and gadgets, and offer rewards, for socially useful inventions; it should develop technical manpower, and encourage thrift and hard work. "Above all it should fight those aspects of religious thought that encourage men to despise comforts and luxuries." (Parekh, p. 41)

For Bentham, security had several components—the security of person, of property, of power, of reputation, and of condition of life. By the latter, Bentham meant something like social status. Every citizen's security, in each of these aspects, was to be provided for by the government; security of property, for instance, is provided by seeing to it that valid contracts are kept by everyone.

Bentham was concerned about four kinds of inequality—moral, intellectual, economic and political. He did not propose any measures to reduce moral and intellectual inequalities, but inequalities of wealth and power were to be mitigated. Differences between the rich and the poor were to be evened out—"the more remote from equality are the shares possessed by the individuals in question, in the mass of the instruments of felicity, the less is the sum of felicity, produced by the sum of those same shares" (Leading *Principles*, p. 200)—but not at the cost of the security of property. Inequalities of power could be "minimised by reducing the amount of power attached to public offices to the barest minimum, by declaring every sane adult eligible for them, and by making their incumbents accountable to those subject to their power." (Parekh, p. 41)

The last service to be provided by the government was that of encouraging benevolence in the citizen body so that every member of the body politic voluntarily, and with enjoyment performed the 'countless small services' of which the fabric of the felicity of society was built. The government could, for example, "fight the religious and sectarian prejudices which limit men's sympathies and incline them to treat outsiders as less than fully human." (Parekh, p. 42)

So far, we looked at how the government fulfils its goals in specific ways. What is more important, is Bentham's theory of how the government reaches its goals in general. Bentham believed man to be a creature so dependent on others for his well being that human life would be miserable and even impossible if men did not render various types of services to one another...society is ultimately only a system of services men render one another. Government makes sure of these services by creating a system of obligations and rights. It does this by putting in place a system of offences with their corresponding punishments: it is a punishable offence, for example, not to pay one's taxes; it is a punishable offence to steal someone else's money. These punishable offences ground the services men render each other—the positive service, or obligation, of contributing to the fund of common resources, or the negative service, or obligation of not interfering with someone's right to property. These services, or obligations, in turn, then ground everybody's rights—my right to property, or my right to subsistence. Each right only exists because of a corresponding obligation, and the government is to be very careful in specifying these obligations. "My rights may or may not be a source of pleasure to me, but the corresponding obligations they impose on others are certain sources of pain to them. The government therefore should never create rights, 'instruments of felicity' though they are, unless it can be absolutely certain that their probable advantages would more than compensate for their certain disadvantages." (Parekh, p. 35)

In a political society the sovereign can get the citizens to act as he wants through two ways, by influencing their will, which Bentham calls imperation, and by the threat of corporeal punishment, which Bentham calls contrectation. Although the former power is based on the latter, making the latter the basis of the sovereign's sovereignty, Bentham points out that a political society based on imperation is stabler and longer lasting than a society based on contrectation.

I-Iow is one to ensure that the government will create that system of rights and obligations, which will best fulfil the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Bentham's utilitarianism led him to believe that the government that would best serve the people's interests would be the democratic form of government. Only in such a government could a harmony between the interests of the governed and those in government be engineered. In a democracy, what would maximise the happiness of the rulers is to be returned to office, and they know that the best chance of this happening is if they maximise the happiness, or in other words, look after the welfare and interests of the ruled. They know that if they go against the interests of the ruled,

they will be voted out of office. From this argument, Bentham logically derived tlie following: the right of every adult to'vote, frequent national elections, as frequent as one every year, transparency of government business which meant a free press, unlimited access to government offices, and the right to attend legislative sessions. "'Once annual election, universal franchise, and fullest publicity are established, no government, Bentham thinks, would eves 'dream' of pursuing its interest at the cost of that of the community." (Parekh, p.31)

11.5 THE PANOPTICON

Tlie Panopticon is the name tliat Bentham gave to a model prison that lie designed for the British government in the 1790s. A piece of land was bought by the government, on which Bentham was to supervise tlie construction of the new prison. However, much to Bentham's disappointment, around the year 1802, the project fell through.

The design of the Panopticon was to serve as a model for any disciplinary institution—not just a jail house, but any school, hospital, factory and military barracks could have the same structure as well. The idea of the Panopticon has become important again today with Foucault crediting Bentham with creating a new technology of power. The Panopticon represents "one central moment in the history of repression—the transition from the inflicting of penalties to the imposition of surveillance."(M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 1980, p. 38). This is how Foucault describes the architecture of the prison building: "A perimeter building in the form of a ring. At the centre of this, a tower pierced by large windows opening on to tlic inner face of the ring. Tlie outer building is divided into cells each of which traverses the whole thickness of the building. These cells have twc windows, one opening on to the inside, facing the windows of the central tower, the other, outer one allowing daylight to pass through the whole cell. All that is then needed is to put an overseer in tlie tower and place 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, tlie principle of the dungeon is reversed; daylight and the overseer's gaze capture the inmate more effectively..."(ibid, p. 147). 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. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that lie is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself."(ibid, p.155)

To have overthrown the feudal or monarchical form of power ancl replaced it with a new model of modern forms of power, is to have brought about a revolution in political theory, even if one is infamous for doing so. Critics of liberalism liave often claimed that the relationship between tlie government and the citizens, for liberal theorists, almost mirrors the Panopticon. Liberalism devalues horizontal links between citizens—what unites a citizen body is each individual's separate political obligation to obey the government. Although liberalism claims to ground tlie government in tlie consent of the governed, tliis consent is, according to critics, (as the Panopticon model shows) only a mythical or manufactured consent.

Fellow liberals, wlio are from the rights based tradition of liberalism, have also criticised some of the basic tenets of utilitarianism. Kymlicka, for example, has pointed out that Bentham was wrong in thinking that human beings only look for, or should only look for, pleasure. If an individual could hook himself to a machine which constantly generated sensations of pleasure, without having to do anything else, that would not satisfy that person. Human beings seek to undertake certain activities for the sake of those activities, not only for the pleasurable sensations they get from doing them.

Bentham like all the other important political thinkers was a child of his times. It is true that the essential basis of his utilitarian ethics was self-interest, egoism and individualism. However though the community for him was a fictitious body, yet one important purpose of legislation was to enhance the pleasure of others, just not of one self which means convergence of private with public interest. Bentham was opposed to any kind of oppression and brutality and he understood that the most important is to begin with reform of the legal system to make it efficient, clear, transparent and simple. His humanism is writ large in all his works and the first major reform that brought in democracy in Britain was the Reform Act of 1832 which was made possible largely due to his untiring efforts.

41.6 SUMMARY

Bentham believed in equality. Each adult was the best judge of his or her interests, and one person's preferences were to be given an equal weight as another's. The happiness of tlie citizens' was to be the goal of any government—the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The government could determine the universal interest by beginning with given preferences, arriving at the result by computing the pleasures and pains of different individuals on the same scale. For Bentham's critics, unfortunately, the problem is that a largely laissez faire economy, coupled with new forms of disciplining and power in the social sphere seem to lead, in the Benthamite scheme of things, to the greatest happiness of tlie greatest number.

11.7 EXERCISES

1) Is there any difference between Bentham's idea of happiness and the Greek notion of eudaemonia?

2) Almost every political philosopher—take Plato, Locke or Rousseau has said that the goal of government should be the 'universal interest' or 'universal good' of society. How is Bentham different when he asks tlie government to look after the 'happiness of the community as a whole'?

3) Why did Bentham call the theory of natural rights nonsense upon stilts?

4) Why did Bentham believe that a democratic government would best ensure the welfare of the citizens? Which kind of democratic checks did he propose?

5) What do some commentators mean when they claim that Bentham's Panopticon represents a radically new form of power?

6) For Bentham, the design of the Panopticon was appropriate not only for a prison, but also for a school or a factory. Do you think we are myth making when we assert that modern schools or factories are not primarily disciplinary institutions?

UNIT 12 ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE

Structure

12.1 Introduction

12.2 On Democracy, Revolution and the Modern State

12.3 Religion

12.4 Women and Family

12.5 Conclusion

12.6 Summary

12.7 Exercises

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Sheldon Wolin has pointed out that The Federalist Papers (1787-88) and *Democracy* in America (1835) are the two classics in American political theory. While the former represents the thinking of the founding fathers of the American Republic, the latter "is invoked more often in support of some interpretation of present day American politics" (Wolin 2001: 3). The author of *Democracy* in *America*, Charles-Alexis Henri Clerel de Tocqueville (1805-59) was one of the most imaginative French political theorists, sociologist and a historian of the 19th Century. His writings reflected the concerns of a historian, a political scientist and a sociologist making it difficult to categorise .these. Tocqueville was concerned with the future of the democratic society and was conscious of the tumultuous social changes that his times produced and the impact it had. He understood democracy as an unstoppable march towards equality in all its dimensions—legal, political, social and economic.

Tocqueville along with his friend Gustave de Beaumont (1802-65) visited America in 1831 to study its democratic institutions and draw lessons for France and penned them down in two volumes entitled *Democracy* in *America*. He analysed the federal constitution, the question of people's sovereignty, the role of the constitution and warned about tlie tyranny of the majority, a theme, that John Stuart Mill (1806-73) subsequently developed. He could grasp the new and universal trend, namely tlie desire for equality and its intricate relationship with individual libel-ty and democracy. He stressed on the importance of local self-government, decentralised administration, widespread ownership of property and voluntary associations for maintenance of political liberties, stability of government and protection against the tyranny of the majority. Like Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu (1689-1755) lie admired English political institutions and the English aristocracy. Unlike France, the English aristocracy constantly renewed itself and was in a position'to wield its authority through proper exercise of political experience and wisdom. He could perceive the momentous changes sweeping his time, which was why he described it as the end of an era and a beginning of a new one. Both Montesquieu and Tocqueville dissected the merits and demerits of the different forms of governments not in an abstract timeless sense but in its historical, political and social contexts.

Tocqueville, according to J.S. Mill was the first to write about democracy and its actual functioning in the belief that it could become a viable political system. An aristocrat, Tocqueville became a liberal while studying and writing about American democracy. He considered freedom or liberty as the core political value, which stood threatened by the lethal combination of political democracy and social equality (Wolin 200.1:8). *Democracy* in *America* is considered

as the "best ever written work on democracy and the best book ever written on America" (Mansfied and Winthrop 2000: xvii). Tocqueville considered America to be at the forefront of a 'great democratic revolution' and that it would bring to Europe 'an almost complete equality of condition' like the one that existed in the New World. His aim was to describe the impact of democratic social conditions not only on politics but also 'on civil society, on habits, ideas, and mores'. He did not think it was necessary for Europe to imitate American political institutions but stressed that the study of America would yield instruction from which Europe could gain.

An analysis of the writings of Tocqueville does not allow us to simply conclude that he was an aristocratic reactionary. Curtis (1961) labelled him as an aristocratic conservative, while Kirk (1960) regarded him as a liberal conservative in the same tradition as Edmund Burke (1729-97). In Tocqueville's writings one finds both liberal and conservative dimensions. His passion for freedom and its protection and the desire to protect property rights represent the liberal tendencies. As a conservative he was the first to caution against the dangers about too much of democracy.

12.2 ON DEMOCRACY, REVOLUTION AND THE MODERN STATE

Tocqueville accepted tliat there have been healthy aristocracies. But the French landed nobility was undermined by the policies of the absolutist monarchs who had centralis d the government apparatus and excluded the old aristocracy from provincial administration. The aristocracy had its privileges but without any link between duty and privileges. Tocqueville regarded the link of interdependence and obligation between social groups as of crucial significance. He often compared the French nobility with their counterpart in England and praised the latter's modest and low key profile which allowed their continued participation in local administration and politics throughout the 19th Century. Tocqueville was equally critical of the Irish aristocracy, generally absentee landlords who remained unconcerned about the plight of their tenants. He concluded that an aristocracy once dislodged could never be restored.

Though Tocqueville disliked revolutions yet he offered a balanced view. He conceded that "while one great revolution may establish liberty in a country, several revolutions in succession make orderly liberty impossible there for a long time" (Tocqueville 1955: 72). He disliked the reign of terror and despotism of the French Revolution. Our Economists had a vast contempt for the past. "The nation has been governed" Letronne declared, "on wrong lines altogether; one has the impression that everything was left to chance". Starting out from this premise, they set to work and there was no French institution, however venerable and well founded, for whose immediate suppression they did not clamour if it hampered them to even the slightest extent or did not fit in with their neatly ordered scheme of government.

When we closely study the French Revolution we find that it was conducted in precisely the same spirit as that which gave rise to so many books expounding theories of government in the abstract. Our revolutionaries had the same fondness for broad generalisations, cut-and-dried legislative systems, and a pedantic symmetry; the same contempt for hard facts; the same taste for reshaping institutions on novel, ingenious, original lines; the same desire to reconstruct the entire system instead of trying to rectify its faulty parts (Tocqueville 1955: 159, 147). He did not, like Burke criticise the French Revolution in its totality for he approved of its commitment to freedom and equality. But what he disapproved was the subsequent stress on extreme equality that undermined liberty and human greatness.

Though lie proclaimed himself to be an aristocrat by instinct, one which despised and feared the masses he was prepared to accept the defeat of his class as inevitable. He described his age as a new one characterised by a desire for equality, a movement that was ardent, insatiable, incessant and invincible. America for him symbolised this new universal trend. He was worried that this passion for equality would lead to uniformity, which would eventually destroy liberty. The power of public opinion led to conformity rather than individuality, mediocrity rather than excellence, materialism rather than spiritualism.

Tocqueville took note of the widespread respect for the rule of law in America whereas in France arbitrary rule had only encouraged contempt for the law. In America and England local self-governing institutions were strong whereas in France the sale of municipal offices by the Crown had weakened the tradition. In America people naturally formed associations and groups whereas in Francs, individualism and reliance on omniscience of central government were much stronger. In America there was no fear from an elected chief executive since the constitution not only limited the powers of the government but also had an elaborate mechanism of checks and balance to counter any excess. In France, by contrast, the long established tradition of centralised administrative power and a weak legislature made the elected president at the head of the executive a threat to liberty.

As a sociologist Tocqueville took interest in the ethos of society and pointed to the contractual nature of modern relationships without any moral obligations or human affections. He understood the role of the state as one that would unify all special interests of the various social classes into a whole body politic. He could see the need for an adequate and equitable system of taxation if the state had to last for long. His insights into the economic foundations of the modern state enabled him to brilliantly analyse the character of the absolutist state. In *L' ancien regime et la Revolution (1856)* lie discussed in detail the unfair distribution of taxes and services among the classes with the peasantry bearing the brunt. The absolutist state was made possible when the king liberated himself from coustitutional institutions such as estates or parliaments in order to become free and independent to raise taxes for his own military or domestic projects.

Tocqueville was also cautious about the spread of democracy. He understood democracy to mean not only increased political participation but also civic and social equality. The abrogation of privileges was a means to an inevitable trend to the creation of an egalitarian society. The consequences of this change were momentous. Removal of social barrier led to new innovations. It also meant constant change within the social structure, as in a democratic society, unlike its predecessors, there would be absence of natural leaders. Individuals would have to fight for political position on the basis of interests rather than privileges. The passion for equality would lead to social levelling eroding any differences among human beings. Equality conferred power over public opinion and that meant the rule of the average person in the street. He argued that equal social conditions could lead to either 'sovereignty of all' or 'the absolute power of one man'. It is, in fostering free and participatory political institutions that lie saw the key to resisting the despotic tendencies inherent in the principle of equality. Tocqueville's notion of the inevitable progress of equality is similar to the contemporary notion of modernisation. It is a historic process that would undermine all traditional or aristocratic political order that did not result in democratic self-government (Fukuyama 2000: 11-17).

Tocqueville defined liberty as absence of external political restrictions. He remained sceptical and fearful of the excessive emphasis on equality. We took note of thethreat af 'the tyranny of the majority' which would manifest itself in the form of intolerance of individual deviation from the social norm. But he was realistic enough to accept the inevitable progress toward's

equality and attempted to reconcile equality with liberty. His political ideal was freedom under the rule of law. He was insistent that people ought to have as far as possible direct control over their own affairs, through vibrant local government and free associations, something that was different from decentralisation under feudalism. He, like Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) considered strong local institutions as a preventive to arbitrary intervention by central authority and the revolutionary subversion of the state, an aspect that the neo-conservatives in the United States revived in the last quarter of the 20th Century.

By tyranny of the majority in America, Tocqueville did not believe like James Madison (1751-1836) in a permanent and deep division in the community between majority and minority but a widespread consensus among citizens who rarely felt that laws enacted by the majority were arbitrary or unjustly coercive. Equal political rights and active participation in tlie political process gave individuals "an equal love and respect for the laws of which tliey consider themselves the author" (Tocqueville 1966a: 9). Besides political equality there was social equality, which was so widespread that it underpinned the idea of majority rule. He also pointed to the issue of uniformity considering it among the undesirable aspects of American life, He observed that unlike Europe there was just one society in America. "It may be either rich or poor, humble or brilliant, trading or agriculture; but it is composed everywhere of the same elements. The plane of uniform civilisation has passed over it. The man you left in New York you find again in almost impenetrable solitude: same clothes, same attitude, same language, same habits, same pleasures" (Tocqueville ibid 151). Tocqueville attributed this striking uniformity to the spirit of equality that made possible stable community life. The problem of uniformity was not a political one. Government and laws were seldom used for oppression and coercion as there was no distinct and separate group of citizens to coerce and oppress. Neither was majority rule a source of domination and despotism. Instead what it ensured was that fundamental differences did not arise within the community. What Tocqueville feared was the 'moral power' of the public opinion in America, which not only regulated people's actions but also moulded their very nature as well. He also noted with appreciation tlie extent of uniformity as it seemed to suggest that the majority of spirits were joined together in the expression of certain general opinions. However, this uniformity and harmony indicated a voluntary tyranny. Besides uniformity, there existed profound isolation and dependence that made possible for psychic coercion and thereby reinforced the uniformity inherent in an egalitarian community. He also observed that the old categories of political thought were inadequate to deal with this new state of affairs. Unlike traditional forms of despotism that oppressed through political coercion the new form is neither political nor overtly oppressive. It is social in nature. J. S. Mill took note of this observation and incorporated it in his arguments for freedom of individuality, his critique of majority domination and egalitarianism in his treatise On *Liberty* (1859). Mill believed that if people had the right idea about democracy then the tyranny of the majority that Tocqueville warned about could be abated. Unlike Tocqueville, Mill was sanguine that if the best minds could ensure their ascendancy by calling for democracy, for democracy accompanied by representation, would not threaten to induce debasement of intelligence or cultural deprivation, Representative democracy would ensure a free society without a dominant power. Unlike Tocqueville who eulogised the aristocracy Mill regarded it as a menace to the progress of civilisation.

Tocqueville, like Montesquieu considered commerce as the inevitable and appropriate development of growing social equality and individual freedom. However, he could also perceive the destructive side of unrestrained materialism and the hazards of excessive economic inequality. He pointed to the twin dangers of the relationship between democracy and equality that would result in 'tyranny of the majority' and also whether democracy was sufficient to overcome the powerful inegalitarian tendency latent in the development of capitalism.

Tocqueville regarded slavery as not only inhuman but also contrary to the enlightened self-interest of the slave owners themselves. He rejected Joseph-Arthur Gobineau's (1816-82) idea of racial hierarchy and warned against tlie selective misuse of the thesis, like the anti-abolitionist leaders in America who argued that the blacks were different and inferior but suppressed the proposition that the Anglo-Saxon race was also on the decline. He considered racial hierarchy as another form of aristocracy that was destined to crumble by the onslaught of democracy and social equality.

12.3 RELIGION

The 16th Century as exemplified in the writings of Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) is acknowledged to be the beginning of secular politics in Europe. Machiavelli though anti-Church and ailti-clergy considered religion as necessary for individual's social life and for the health and prosperity of the state. Religion along with good laws and a well-disciplined citizen militia would produce order, which in turn brings forth peace, fortune and success. As a social force, religion played a pivotal rote for through its doctrine of rewards and punishment it induced proper behaviour and good conduct that was necessary for the wellbeing of society. While Machiavelli understood that religion was socially useful he could not comprehend its intrinsic link with liberty, a theme that Tocqueville succinctly developed in opposition to the mainstream Enlightenment credo to uphold reason and liberty by being anti religion.,

The striking originality of Tocqueville lies in recognising the extraordinary importance religion played in strengthening democracy in America. Me considered religion as a 'political institution' and vital to the preservation of freedom in a democratic society particularly froni the despotic tendencies that equality of conditions unleashed. He observed: "despotism may govern without religion... liberty cannot". Democracy, because of equality of conditions needed moral lies and hence needed religion. He pointed to the utility of religion rather than the truth of any one religion. This extraordinary emphasis on religion was because lie regarded it to be crucial to establishing democracy in France and other Christian states of Europe. He concluded that due to the variance between "the spirit of religion" and "the spirit of freedotn" democracy failed in Europe. The alliance between the Catholic Church and the French monarchy, although injurious to religion in itself, was characteristic of a more calamitous alliance between Christianity and the moribund aristocracy. The Church considered democracy to be antithetical to religion and consequently an enemy. In America the two were closely linked which explained the success of democracy there.

America, the nascent Puritan commonwealth rejected Europe's aristocratic heritage and accepted the principles of democracy. The Puritans brought to the New World a Christianity that was democratic, constitutional and republican. Tlzey introduced such principles as the participation by the people to rule, the free voting in matters of taxation, fixing tlie responsibility of political representatives, guarding personal liberty and trial by jury. They instilled a love of freedom anchored in religious conviction by teaching Americans tliat their freedom is a gift from God and therefore had to be taken seriously and used wisely. Christianity associated itself with the principles of liberal democracy that it initiated to create, and hence could hope for an autonomous space that was both enduring and timeless.

Historically, for Tocqueville democracy began when Jesus unequivocally proclaimed universal human equality thereby making the realisation of democracy possible. Furthermore the Christian teaching that was important for a democratic society was tlie doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Religion taught human beings to strive for eternal happiness by resisting "the selfish

passions of the hour" and thus democratic individuals would learn that only through persistence and hard work something permanent could be attained in both private and public spheres. They acquired the art of managing their life. By believing in "supersensual and immortal principles" they learnt to focus on tlie spiritual rather than tlie base and thus develop an instinctive love for liberty. At a first glance it appeared that religion was divorced from American politics. The clergy restricted their sovereignty to religious matters and did not criticise tlie fundamental principles of the republic. However, in reality they actively promoted them. Tocqueville felt that if Cliristianity did not exercise such self-restraint then it ran the risk of not getting marginalised. American clergy not only accepted the supreme authority of self-interest but also enlisted the selfish passion for the service of religion. They showed in their congregations that Christian virtues were compatible with freedom and prosperity as well as salvation thus bringing both the head and heart to the altar. Furthermore, the dictum "the things that are Caesar's" and "the things tliat are not Caesar's" made it mandatory that no political or military authority could enjoy complete authority over human beings. This was the primary reason for the end of European feudalism.

Tocqueville, though himself a practicing Catholic, acknowledged, like Max Weber (1864-1920) later, that the Protestant Ethic encouraged individualism and freedom but with proper respect for political authority. With greater social equality and the support of the middle class, this spirit extended to democracy. The combination of all these factors led to tlie American success with a harmonious evolution of both Christianity and de~nocracyin America. Interestingly, this unique achievement of America has been made possible by realising the principle of separation of the Church and the state. This has prevented tlie consolidation of vested religious interests' in particular political parties and groups as has happened in Europe. In America there was a harmonious coexistence of religion and democracy. In fact, democracy facilitates the spread of religion by guaranteeing the right of religious beliefs. All religious faiths gained by political liberty and consequently religion also supports the separation of state and Church.

Besides religion tlie second important factor conducive for democracy in America was equality of conditions. Interestingly, this attribute by itself did not lead to freedom and was compatible with a new kind of despotism made possible by the forces of individualism and materialism that democracy unleashed. While old aristocracies with its hierarchical class structures allowed people to forge firm and lasting political ties democracies with its doctrine of equality loosened those bonds. Large number of human beings became economically independent and as a result wrongly assumed that they had complete control of their destinies. This false sense of independence changed the sentiments of obligation that aristocracy fostered into radical self-interest.

Religion emerged as the savior of democracy by checking this degeneration. Tocqueville conceded that religion might not be able to contain the entire urge of individualism and the pursuit of well being, but was tlie only mechanism of moderation and education. He saw religion sustaining moderate individualism with drive for material prosperity, both of which were essential For the success of democracy. Instead of seeing religion as an antithesis of human liberation as Karl Heinrich Mars (1818-83) did, Tocqueville felt a happy blending of democracy and religion was possible and desirable.

Tocqueville was categorical that democracy did not rest on either constitutional arrangements or laws but on mores of society, which embraced both habits and opinions made possible by religion for it inculcated moral habits, with respect for all human beings. This was necessary in a free society in the absence of political control. This was tlie essence of tlie success of American religion. In contrast in Europe the champions of human freedom attaclced religious

opinions not realising that without religious faith despotism was inevitable and liberty unrealizable. The lack of self-restraint due lo destruction of faith led to the reign of terror after the French Revolution. In the absence of religion, atheism and tyranny would be the fate of all modern democracies.

A successful political democracy has to be grounded on moral institutions, which means religious faith. The dynamics of the democratic process and its interaction with society at large minimises theological considerations and the otherworldly attitude that religion fosters. The adaptation to democratic life means religion would have to accept the philosophies of well being and prosperity. In return religion purifies and regulates by emphasising honest means to reach these ends. The greatest advantage of religion is moderation and self-control. The fine balance of democracy and religion and its uninterrupted success in America contrasted with the stark failure of irreligious communism gives credence to Tocqueville's analysis.

12.4 WOMEN AND FAMILY

Like Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97), Tocqueville attacked the institution of arranged marriages for it encouraged loose sexual morals thereby undermining personal freedom. He is critical of the French Revolution which might have democratised the country's political life but failed to create a culture of freedom. He was impressed with the high level of sexual morality in America which was seen as a private affair buttressed by religion particularly Christianity rather than political traditions. The sexual code as outlined by the Christian ethics included virginity outside of marriage, continence and fidelity within marriage, and strict avoidance of all forms of licence. Besides religion other factors like racial makeup, climate, social condition and role of statesmanship also played a significant role. Marriages in America were not arranged and that enabled women to enjoy personal happiness and sexual relationship based on mutual respect and love. Marital freedom guaranteed a high level of chastity.

For Tocqueville Americans educated their women by giving them freedom rather than exerting parental authority. Americans valued chastity because it promoted healthy commercial habits, kept families productive and helped in maintaining political stability, the key to prosperity proving that chastity was not due to religion alone but also had its secular origins. This was not the case with European women. Nevertheless they enjoyed unprecedented equality with their spouses for marriage was a contract between two mature, morally responsible and free adults. Tocqueville observed that American women despite their lack of formal political power were able to contribute to America's freedom and prosperity because of the dignity and freedom in their personal lives.

In America there was no adultery or crimes against women. In the 1830s women could fearlessly undertake long journeys alone. Men also adhered to the sexual morals partly due to marital freedom and restraints imposed by an articulate public opinion, and partly due to their ambition to pursue wealth making them practical, non-erotic and busy, Tocqueville regarded prostitution as a regrettable but wise concession keeping in mind the lust of the male.

12.5 CONCLUSION

Tocqueville's central concerns were to understand the forces that created the democratic order in America and find ways and means to prevent revolution in France. His analysis of politics was within a sociological framework. He focussed on culture, manners and habits of people. He also wrote on social stratification, race relations, slavery, 'colonialism, communities, voluntary

associations, bureaucracy, armies, language, literature, art, religion, prisons and crimes. Using the comparative method extensively in his arguments he explained the root causes for the success of democratic institutions in America, the importance of laws over geographical circumstances and eventually the importance of manners over laws. Initially he compared between America and the geographically similar but socially and politically different societies of Latin America and French-Canada. Subsequently lie extended the same to the eastern states of the Union and the frontier states of the West, where the laws were the same but the manners of democracy less entrenched.

Tocqueville wrote keeping France in mind for the French had already shown a penchant for sacrificing their liberty to a longing for equality. He portrayed America as the land of pluralism, localism, self-help and eagerness for voluntary associations. He expressed anxiety about America becoming more obsessed with material success and forgetting the political arena held together by public opinion and from there linked his fears about the emergence of a 'soft' despotism that allows manipulation of one's mind. He also understood the threat individuality faced under the clamour for social equality and democracy, a theme that J. S. Mill succinctly developed subsequently. He could perceive the threats that democracy posed to the 'sacred thing' called liberty. He also emphasised that only "political freedom could remedy the ills to which equality of conditions gives rise, he hopefully accepted that equality and, despite his fears, embraced the political freedom that democracy promised" (Mansfield and Winthrop 2000:xxxvi). He understood democracy in two senses. In the political sense it implied representative institutions based on extended franchise but more importantly it also meant social democracy or the acceptance of equality at the societal level. Democracy fosters equal social conditions and is different from both aristocracy and despotism. He also anticipated the present day pluralist theories of democracy popularised by Dahl and his associates. He could perceive that the strength of the American political system was derived from the Constitutional .provisions and from the tradition of local governments and mediating institutions, which people formed, a theme reiterated by the American neo-conservatives. Tocqueville was the pioneer to analyse the social roots of democracy for he emphasised the importance of shared beliefs and network of social relations, a theme resurrected by the communitarian critics of modern liberalism.

Tocqueville also highlighted two aspects of individualism, the basis of a democratic society. These were faith in individual reason as the sole. basis of opinion and belief in a self cenlred and self-interested pursuit of one's personal ends. He supported the individual right to rebel against intellectual authority as a natural democratic right. The other aspect of democratic individualism was the withdrawal from the public sphere and focus on material welfare of the family as the main goal. This would lead to greater personal ambition and competitiveness. In a society based on equality of opportunity it was possible to pursue this goal without being hindered by disadvantages of birth making competition intense and bitter. Those who succeeded were resented for that demonstrated inequality of ability. This middle class desire for material security was according to Tocqaeville 'natural. At the political level such a pursuit of material comforts threatened individual liberty encouraging conformism and tyranny of majority opinion. In a society of equals every individual felt he was equal to the others and thereby feeling powerless. None could claim to have a unique right over truth since the majority had to be right. This encouraged conformism for a dissenting individual came to believe that his position had to be a wrong one. This conformism leads to curtailment of individual autonomy and extension of state power. One casualty of extension of state power was the eclipse of intermediate institutions between the individual and the state. Individuals would increasingly be concerned with private benefits and indifferent to public responsibilities leaving politics to'politicians. All this would only result in the atomisation of society with the state being viewed as the main social organisation. This would lead to a new kind of despotism where the individuals permit

and accept a degree of benevolent intrusion for they are afraid of public opinion. This would only weaken individual liberty. As an antidote Tocqueville suggested strengthening political democracy through representative institutions, free political parties and free press. It is for these reasons that he styled himself as 'liberal of a new kind'.

Ever since the Pilgrim fathers settled down in America, the New World attracted the attention of European political thinkers. For instance, the libertarian liberalism of Locke would have been inconceivable without the discovery of America. Tocqueville's importance lies in his penetrating analysis of the social factors that are essential for strengthening democratic order anywhere in the world. It is because of this universalistic paradigm that *Democracy in* ***America*** is not merely a description of the consolidation of the first mass deinocracy in the world, but an essential primer for understanding the very nature of modern democratic order both in theory and practice.

12.6 SUMMARY

Alexis de Tocqueville has been labeled as an aristocratic conservative or even a liberal conservative. His passion for freedom and its protection of property rights represented his liberal tendencies but he cautioned against dangers about too much democracy. He disliked revolutions but offered a balanced view because revolution established liberty. But several revolutions in succession make orderly liberty impossible. He disliked the terror and despotism of the French Revolution but approved of its commitment to freedom and equality.

He was cautious about the spread of democracy, as in a democratic society there would be an absence of natural leaders. Individuals would fight for positions on the basis of interests rather than privileges. It is, in fostering free and participatory political institutions that he saw the key to resisting the despotic tendencies inherent in the principle of equality. He considered strong local institutions as a preventive to arbitrary intervention by central authority. According to him, religion was a 'political institution' and vital to the preservation of freedom in a democratic society particularly from the despotic tendencies tlzat equality of conditions unleashed. Democracy, because of equality of conditions needed moral ties and hence needed religion.

He attacked the institution of arranged marriages for it encouraged loose sexual morals thereby undermining personal freedom. According to him, marital freedom as practiced by the Americans guaranteed a high level of chastity. Tocqueville's central concerns were to understand the forces that created the democratic order in America and find ways and means to prevent revolution in France.

12.7 EXERCISES

1) Discuss Tocqueville's views on deinocracy, revolution and the modern state.

2) What role did religion play in politics according to Tocqueville?

3) Why did Tocqueville attack the institution of arranged marriage'?

UNIT 13 J. S. MILL

Structure

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Life and Times

13.3 Equal Rights for Women

13.4 The Importance of Individual Liberty

13.5 Representative Gavernrnent

13.6 Beyond Utilitarianism

13.7 Summary

13.8 Exercises

13.1 INTRODUCTION

The economic principles of utilitarianism were essentially proyided by Adam Smith's classic work ***The*** *Wealth* d *Nations* published in *1776.* The political principles of classical utilitarianism mainly emerged out of Bentham's application of rationalistic approach and his deep suspicion of "sinister interests" of all those entrenched in power and as a counter check he advocated annual elections, secret ballot and recall. But the Benthamite presumption of a mechanical formula of quantifying all pleasures and all pains equally exemplified by his famous uttering 'pushpin is as good as poetry" could not satisfy his most famous pupil John Stuart Mill who himself admitted that he was "Peter who denied his master". In his writings the first great criticism of Benthamite Utilitarianism emerged and with considerable impact of Wordsworth and other romantic poets he tried to work out a synthesis of rationalism and romanticism. In the process he transformed the entire underpinning of Benthamite utilitarianism by claiming that pleasures have great differentiation and that all pleasures were not of equal value as a dissatisfaction of a Socrates is more valuable than the satisfaction of a fool.

J. S. Mill's importance lies not only in his criticism of utilitarianism but also in his rich contribution to liberalism by his memorable defense of freedom of speech and individuality and in his defense of a liberal society as a necessary precondition for a liberal state.

13.2 LIFE AND TIMES

John Stuart Mill was born in London on 20 May 1806. He had eight younger siblings. All his learning came from his fatlier James Mill and lie read the books his father had been reading for writing the book on India, ***History*** d *British* ***India*** *(1*818). At the age of eleven he began to help his father by reading the proofs of his father's books. Immediately after the publication of History *of* ***British India*** James Mill was appointed as an Assistant Examiner at the East India House, It was an important event in his life as this solved his financial problems enabling him to devote his time and attention to write on areas of his prime interest, philosophical and political problems. He could also conceive of a liberal profession for his eldest son, John Stuart. At the beginning he thought for him a career in law but when another vacancy arose for another Assistant Examiner in 1823, John Stuart got the post and served the British government till his retirement.

As James Mill decided to teach his son all by himself at home, the fatter was denied the usual experience of going to a regular school. His education did not include any children's book or toys for he started to learn Greek at the age of four and Latin at eight. 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 was his father's influence that John Stuart could not recollect his mother's contributions to his formative years as a child. At the age of thirteen he was introduced to serious reading of English Classical Economists and published an introductory textbook in economics entitled *Elements of Political Economy* (1820) at the age of fourteen. From Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), Isidore Auguste Comte (1798-1857), Goethe (1749-1832), and Wordsworth (1770-1850) he came to value poetry and art. He reviewed Alexis de Tocqueville's (1805-59) *Democracy in America* in two parts in 1835 and 1840, a book that left a thorough impact on him.

From the training that John Stuart received at home he was convinced that nurture more than nature played a crucial role in the formation 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 1820s tried to elucidate a coherent philosophy of politics. The *Logic* combined the British empiricist tradition of Locke and Hume of nssociational 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 lzis ideal government based on proportional representation, protection of minorities and institutions of self government. His famous pamphlet ***Utilitarianism*** (1863) endorsed the Benthamite principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, yet made a significant departure from the Benthamite assumption by arguing that this principle could only be defended if one distinguished happiness from pleasure. His essays on Bentham and Coleridge written between 1838 and 1840 enabled him to critically dissect Benthamism.

In 1826 Mill experienced 'mental crisis' when he lost all his capacity for joy in life. He recovered by discovering romantic poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth. He also realised the incomplctcness of lzis education, namely the lack of emotional side of life. In his re-examination of Benthamite philosophy he attributed its one-sidedness to Bentham's lack of experience, imagination and emotions. He made use of Coleridge's poems to broaden Benthamism and made room for emotional, aesthetic and spiritual dimensions. However he never wavered from the fundamentals of Benthamism though the major difference between them was that Bentham followed a more simplistic picturisation of human nature of the French utilitarians whereas Mill followed the more sophisticated utilitarianism of Hume.

Mill acknowledged that both *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women* was *a* joint endeavour with Harriet Hardy Taylor whom he met in 1830. Though Harriet was married Mill fell in love with her. The two maintained an intimate but chaste friendship for the next nineteen years. Harriet's husband John Taylor died in 1849. In 1851 Mill married Harriet and described her the honour and chief blessing of lzis existence, a source of a great inspiration for his attempts to bring about human improvement. He was confident that had 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.

13.3 EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

The *Subjection of Women* (1869) begins with the revolutionary statement, "the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes—the legal subordination of one sex to the other—is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and... it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality," (p. 119) Mill's referent for the legal subordination of women was the mid 19th Century English law of the marriage contract. By this law, married Englishwomen could hold no property in their own name, and even if their parents gifted them any property that too belonged to their husbands. Unless a woman was legally separated from her husband, (a difficult and expensive process) even if she lived away from him, her earnings belonged officially to him. By law, only the father and not the mother was the guardian of a couple's children. Mill also cited the absence of laws on marital rape to prove the inequality suffered by the Englishwomen of that time.

What Mill found paradoxical was that in the modern age, when in other areas the principles of liberty and equality were being asserted, they were yet not applied to the condition of women. No one believed in slavery any more, yet women were sometimes treated worse than slaves and this was accepted as beyond questioning. Mill wanted to explain this resistance to women's equality in the contest of a general acceptance of the principles of equality and liberty. We did so by first presenting and then defeating the arguments for women's subordination, and then providing his own arguments for women's equality.

The first argument for women's inequality which Mill refuted was that since historically it has been a universal practice, therefore there must be some justification for it. Contra this, Mill showed that other so called universal social practices like slavery, for example, had been rejected, so perhaps given time women's inequality would also become unacceptable. Mill also said that from the existence of something, one could argue for the rightness of that thing, only if the alternative has been tried, and in the case of women, living with them on equal terms had never been done. The reason why women's inequality had survived slavery and political absolutism was not because it, was justifiable, but because whereas only slave holders and despots had an interest in holding on to slavery and despotism, all men, Mill argued, had an interest in women's subordination.

A second argument for women's inequality was based on women's nature—women were said to be naturally inferior to men. Mill's response was that one could not make arguments about women's inequality based on natural differences because these differences were a result of socialisation. Mill was generally against using human nature as a ground for any claim, since he believed that human nature changed according to the social environment. At the same time, Mill also pointed out that in spite of being treated so differently from men, many women throughout history had shown an extraordinary aptitude for political leadership—here Mill cited examples of European queens and Hindu princesses.

The third argument refuted by Mill was that there is nothing wrong with women's subordination because women accept it voluntarily. Mill pointed out that this claim was empirically wrong—many women had written tracts against women's inequality and hundreds of women were already demonstrating in the streets of London for women's suffrage. Further, since women had 1-10 choice but to live with their husbands, they were afraid that their complaints about their position would only lead to worse treatment from them. Lastly, Mill also claimed that since all

women were brought up from childhood to believe—"that their ideal of character is the very opposite to that of men; not self-will, and government by self-control, but submission, and yielding to the control of others," (p. 132)—what was not to be remarked was that some women accepted this subordination willingly but that so many women resisted it.

The last point against which Mill argued was that for a family to function well, one decision maker is needed, and the husband is best suited to be this decision maker. Mill scoffed at this argument—the husband and wife being both adults, there was no reason why the husband should take all the decisions.

Having refuted all of these four arguments for women's inequality, Mill wrote: "There are many persons for whom it is not enough that the inequality has no just or legitimate defence; they require to be told what express advantage would be obtained by abolishing it." (p. 196) The question was, would society benefit if women were granted equal rights. Answering in the affirmative, Mill detailed four social benefits of women's equality.

The first advantage would be that the family would no longer be "a school of despotism".(p. 160) According to Mill, the patriarchal family teaches all its members how to live in hierarchical relationships, since all power is concentrated in the hands of the husband/father/master whom the wife/children/servants have to obey. For Mill such families are an anachronism in modern democratic polities based on the principle of equality. Individuals who live in such families cannot be good democratic citizens because they do not know how to treat another citizen as an equal: "Any sentiment of freedom which can exist in a man whose nearest and dearest intimacies are with those of whom he is absolute master, is not the genuine love of freedom, but, what the love of freedom generally was in the ancients and in the middle ages—an intense feeling of the dignity and importance of his own personality; making him disdain a yoke for himself,...but which he is abundantly ready to impose on others for his own interest or giorification." (p. 161) In the interests of democratic citizenship then, it was necessary to obtain equality for women in the family.

Another advantage, Mill pointed out, would be the "doubling of the mass of mental faculties" (p. 199) available to society. Not only would society benefit because there would be more doctors, engineers, teachers, and scientists (all women); ail additional advantage would be that men in the professions would perform better because of competition from their female colleagues.

Third, women enjoying equality will have a better influence on mankind, Under relations of subordination, women assert their wills only in all sorts of perverse ways; with equality, they will no longer need to do this.

Finally, by giving women equal rights, their happiness would be increased manifold, and this would satis%-,Mill argued, the utilitarian principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Note some of Mill's conceptual moves—for instance, the link he established between the private and the public. Unlike other liberals, who not only saw the extant family as the realm of freedom, but since this freedom was mostly defined as arbitrariness, disassociated the family as irrelevant to larger public concerns of liberal democracy, Mill argued that without the reform of the patriarchal family, it would be impossible to firmly ground democracy. Note that he was not merely saying that without equal rights to women, the democratic project is incomplete, but that democracy in tlze political/public sphere will remain shaky unless we bring up or create democratic citizens in egalitarian families.

What still makes some feminists uncomfortable is that Mill insisted that patriarchal families are an anachronism in modem society: "[t]he social subordination of women thus stands out as an isolated fact in modern social institutions...a single relic of an old world of thought and practice..." **(p.** 137) Many feminists now talk about capitalist patriarchy—the reinforcing of patriarchal institutions by modern capitalism.

13.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY

On Liberty (1859) begins with a paradox—civil liberties are under greater threat in democratic than in despotic regimes, wrote Mill. In the absolutist states of earlier times, the ruler's interest was seen as opposed to that of the subjects, who were specially vigilant against any encroachment on their existing freedoms. In modern democracies based on the principle of self government, the people feel less under threat from their own government. Mill berated this laxity and said that individuals needed to be more vigilant about the danger to their liberty not only from the government, but also from social morality and custom.

Why is it important to protect individual liberty'? When individuals make their own choices, they use many of their faculties—"The human faculties of perception, judgement, discriminative feeling, mental activity, and even moral preference, are exercised only in making a choice...The mental and moral, like the muscular powers, are improved only by being used...He who chooses his plan for himself, employs all his faculties. He must use observation to see, reasoning and judgement to foresee, activity to gather materials for decision, discrimination to decide, and when he has decided, firmness and self-control to hold to his deliberate decision." (p.59) Individuals who act in a certain fashion only because they have been told to do so, do not develop any of these faculties. Emphasising that what is important is "not only what men do, but also what manner of men they are that do it", (p. 59) Mill said that we might be able to 'guide' individuals in 'some good path'·without allowing them to make any choices, but the 'worth' of such human beings would be doubtful. ·

Mill clarified and detailed his position on liberty by defending three specific liberties, the liberty of thought and expression including the liberty of speaking and publishing, the liberty of action and that of association. We will follow Mill's argument in each of these cases.

Liberty of thought and expression: "If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind." (p. 20) Mill provided four reasons for this freedom of expression. For Mill, since the dominant ideas of a society usually emanate from the class interests of that society's ascendant class, the majority opinion may be quite far from the truth or from the social interest. It's more than likely that the suppressed minority opinion is true, and those suppressing it will only prevent or at least delay mankind from knowing the truth. Human beings are fallible creatures—and their certainty that the opinion they hold is true is justified only when their opinion is constantly opposed to contrary opinions. Mill wanted us to give up the assumption of infallibility—when our certainty about our beliefs makes us crush all contrary points of view so that our opinion is not subject to criticism.

What if the minority opinion were false'? Mill gave three reasons for why it should still be allowed freedom of expression. It's only by constantly being able to refute wrong opinions, that we hold aur correct opinions as living truths. If we accept an opinion, even if correct, on the

basis of authority alone, that opinion becomes a dead dogma. Neither do we understand its grounds, and nor does it mould our character or move us to action. Finally Mill argued that truth is a multifaceted thing and usually contrary opinions both contain a part of the truth. Suppressing one opinion then, leads to the suppression of one part of the truth.

When it comes to the liberty of action, Mill asserted a very simple principle: "tlie sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection...the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant." (p. 13) Mill acknowledged that it was difficult to draw a line between self-regarding and other regarding action, and he provided some hypothetical examples as proof of this difficulty. If a man destroys his own property, this is a case of other regarding action because others dependent on that man will be affected. Even if this person has no dependants, his action can be said to affect others, who, influenced by his example, might behave in a similar manner.

Against this, Mill said that only when one has specific obligations to another person, can one be said to affect his or her interests; therefore the case of an individual affecting others by his example will not stand. On his own ground, Mill cited all lcinds of restrictions on not eating pork or beef, or priests being required not to marry, as examples of unnecessary restrictions on self-regarding action. Other examples are Sabbatarian legislation which prevents individuals from working or even singing and dancing on Sundays.

Mill wrote that sometimes even in the case of other regarding action, no restrictions can be placed on one—for instance, if one wins a job through competition, this action can be said to affect others' interests by ensuring that they do not get the job, but no restrictions are applicable here. Similarly, trade has social consequences, but believing in the principle of free trade, Mill argued that lack of restrictions on trade actually leads to better pricing and better quality of products. And when it comes to self-regarding action, as we already showed, the principle of liberty requires the absence of all restrictions.

Mill defended freedom of association on three grounds. First, "when the thing to be done is likely to be done better by individuals than by government. Speaking generally, there is no one fit to conduct any business, or to determine how or by whom it shall be conducted, as those who are personally interested in it." (p. 109) Second, allowing individuals to get together to do something, even if they do not do it as well as the government might have done it, is better for tlie mental education of these individuals. The right of association becomes, for Mill, a "practical part of the political education of a free people, taking them out of the narrow circle of personal and family selfishness, and accustoming them to the comprehension of joint concerns—habituating them to act from public or semi-public motives, and guide their conduct by aims which unite instead of isolating them from one another." (pp. 109-110) Further, government operations tend to be everywliere alike; with individuals arid voluntary associations, on the contrary, there are varied experiments, and endless diversity of experience. Third, if we let tlie government do everything, there is the evil of adding unnecessarily to its power.

Mill's ideal was improvement—he wanted individuals to constantly better themselves morally, mentally and materially. It was to this ideal that he saw individual liberty as instrumental: "The only unfailing and permanent source of improvement is liberty, since by it there are as many possible independent centres of improvement as there are individuals." (p. 70) Individuals improving themselves would naturally lead to a better and improved society.

13.5 REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Mill began his Representative Government by stating that we can only decide which is the best form of government, by examining which form of government fulfils most adequately the purposes of government. For Mill, the point of having a government was that it perform two main functions: it must use the existing qualities and skills of the citizens to best serve their interests, and it must improve the moral, intellectual and active qualities of these citizens. A despotic government may be able to fulfil the first purpose, but will fail in the second. Only a representative government is able to fulfil these two functions. It is a representative government that combines judiciously the two principles of participation and competence which is able to fulfil the two functions of protecting and educating the citizens.

Let us look more carefully at what Mill had to say about the first function of government. Mill began his discussion of this subject by introducing Bentham's concept of sinister interests. How does representative government ensure that the common interest of society is being furthered instead of the partial and sinister interest of some group or class? Even though Mill distinguished between short term and long term interests, he was certain that every individual and every class is the best judge of its own interests. He scoffed at the idea that some human beings may not be aware of their 'real' interests, retorting that given these persons' current habits and dispositions, what they choose are their real interests. It follows then that participation in the political process must be as extensive as possible, so that every individual has a say in controlling the government and thus protecting his interests. It is on this basis that Mill demanded the right to vote for women. He advocated the extension of the suffrage to cover everyone except those who could not read and write, did not pay taxes or were on parish relief.

It was this same impetus for wanting everyone to be represented that made Mill support Hare's system of proportional representation for electing deputies to Parliament. Under the current system, Mill pointed out, minorities went unrepresented, and since they too needed to protect their interests, another electoral mechanism should be found to ensure their representation.

Whereas his belief in participation led him to advocate a widening of the franchise, his belief in competence led him to recommend plural voting. In fact, lie said that the franchise should not be widened without plural voting being introduced. Plural voting meant that with everyone having at least one vote, some individuals would have more than one vote because they were, for example, more educated. It assumed 'a graduated scale of educational attainments, awarding at the bottom, one additional vote to a skilled labourer and two to a foreman, and at the top, as many as five to professional men, writers and artists, public functionaries, university graduates and members of learned societies'[3] (see p. 285). Plural voting would ensure that a better calibre of deputies would be elected, and so the general interest would not be hampered by the poor quality of members of Parliament.

Mill sought to combine his two principles in other institutions of representative democracy as well. Take the representative assembly, for instance. Mill said that this body must be 'a committee of grievances' and 'a congress of opinions'. Every opinion existing in the nation should find a voice here; that is how every group's interests have a better chance of being protected. At the same time Mill argued that this body was suited neither for the business of legislation nor of administration. Legislation was to be framed by a Codification Commission made up of a few competent legal experts. Administration should be in the hands of the bureaucracy, an institution characterised by instrumental competence, that is, the ability to find the most efficient means to fulfil given goals. Mill's arguments employed two kinds of competence—instrumental

and moral. Instrumental competence is the ability to discover the best means to certain ends and the ability to identify ends that satisfy individuals' interests as they perceive them. Moral competence is the ability to discern ends that are intrinsically superior for individuals and society. Morally competent leaders are able to recognise the general interest and resist the sinister interests that dwell not only in the government but also in the democratic majority. The purpose of plural voting is to ensure that morally competent leaders get elected to the legislature.

What about the other goal of government, that of making the citizens intellectually and morally better? Again it is a representative government that is based on a combination of participation and competence which is able to improve the quality of its citizens in the mental, moral and practical aspects. Let us again look at some of the specific institutional changes recommended by Mill. He wanted to replace the secret ballot with open voting, that is, everyone must know how one has voted. For Mill, the franchise was not one's right in the sense of, for example, the right to property, which implies that one can dispose of one's property in any arbitrary manner. The franchise is a. trust, or a public duty, and one must cast one's vote for that candidate whose policies seem to best further the common interest. It is the need to justify one's vote to others that makes the vote an instrument of one's intellectual and moral growth. Otherwise one would use one's vote arbitrarily, voting for instance, for someone because of the colour of his eyes. Everyone must have the franchise, but it must be open—this is how Mill combined the principle of participation and competence in the suffrage, to ensure the improvement of the voting citizens.

We find here the motif of improvement again. Representative government scores over despotism not because it better protects the given interests of the citizens, but because it is able to improve these citizens. The citizens develop their capabilities by being able to participate in government, minimally by casting their vote, and also by actually taking decisions in local government. At the same time, this participation is leavened by the principle of competence to ensure that the political experience does have an educational effect;

13.6 BEYOND UTILITARIANISM

Having looked separately at three tests, let us bring out some general themes in Mill's writings. Mill never gave up his self-characterisation as a utilitarian, no matter how far his principles seemed to have moved away from that creed. When he spoke about rights, for instance, he subsumed rights under the conccyt of utility, defining rights as nothing else but some extremely important utilities. As we all know, Mill's father, James Mill, was the closest associate of Jeremy Bentham, the founder of utilitarianism. J.S. Mill grew up in the shadow of utilitarianism, and even after his emotional crisis in his early twenties, he managed to write a defence of utilitarianism. Throughout his work we have seen him applying the standard of utility. One consideration for giving equality to women was that it would increase their happiness. The principle of liberty was defended on the grounds of its social utility—social progress depended on individual freedom. A modified liberal democracy was characterised as the best form of government because of its usefulness.

Utilitarianism (1862) is the slim tract which Mill put together to answer all the objections that had been raised against this philosophy. The work begins by Mill pointing out that there has been, over the centuries, little agreement on the criteria of differentiating right from wrong. Rejecting the idea of human beings having a moral sense like our sense of sight or smell, which can sense what is right in concrete cases, Mill put fonvard the criteria of Utility or the Greatest Happiness principle as the basis of morality, That action is moral which increases pleasure and'

diminishes pain. In defending utilitarianism here, Mill made a significant change from Bentham's position. Pleasure is to be counted not only in terms of quantity but also in tenns of quality. A qualitatively higher pleasure is to count for more than lower pleasures. "It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognisc the fact, that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others... It is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied." (pp. 7-9)

Having responded to tlie criticism that utilitarianism assumes an animal like human nature, Mill moved to the next serious problem. Why would individuals be interested in the happiness of others? Mill answered in tenns of tlie "social feelings of mankind; the desire to be in unity with our fellow creatures: a powerful principle of human nature." (p. 29) Because "the social state is at once so natural, so necessary, and so habitual to man," Mill believed that our taking an interest in other's happiness was not questionable at all.

Finally, the only objection that Mill took seriously was that justice instead of utility is the foundation of morality. Mill's response was first to link justice with rights—an injustice is done when someone's rights are violated—and then to assert that rights are to be defended because of their utility. "To have a right, then, is, to have something which society ought to defend me in the possession of. If the objector goes on to ask, why it ought'?I can give him no other reason than general utility" (p. 50). A society in which individuals are certain of enjoying their rights is the one, which according to Mill is able to progress. Thus rights do not replace the concept of utility; for Mill utility was the justification for rights.

13.7 SUMMARY

Mill's liberalism provided the first major framework of modern democratic equality by extending the logic of the defence 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. Hc was the first male philosopher, as Okin points out to write about women's oppression and subjugation. Hc also portrayed the wide diversity in our society and cautioned the need to protect the individual from the fear of intruding 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 later, the individual's social public sphere. He stressed on 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. Realising that his scheme is very different from that of Bentliam, he also described himself as a socialist. His revision of liberalism provided the impetus to T.H. Green who combining the British liberal tradition with the continental one provided a new basis of liberalism with his notion of common good.

It might be apposite here to cite his characterisation, in the *Autobiography*, of his later development away from democracy and towards socialism. "I was a democrat, but not least of a socialist. We were now much less democratic than I had been...but our ideal of ultimate improvement went far beyond Democracy, and would class us decidedly under the general designation of Socialists" (p. 239). "The social problem of the future we considered to be, how to unite the greatest individual liberty of action, with a common ownership in tlie raw material of the globe, and an equal participation of all in the benefits of combined labour." If these are the requisites of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, the link between capitalism and democracy, had become questionable for the later Mill.

13.8 EXERCISES

1) What did Mill mean by the statement that "the family is a school of despotism'"? Explain his claim that children who grow up in such families cannot be good democratic citizens.

2) One of Mill's arguments for women's equality is that it will make so many women happier. Is it a good idea to try to-get rid of an injustice by making an argument about happiness?

3) How would you choose between a natural rights and a utilitarian defence of individual liberty?

4) Does it make sense for Mill to say that after food and clothing, liberty is a 'want' of human nature. Does not this claim go against Mill's own historicist position on human nature?

5) What do you think of some of the specific institutional reforms in the liberal democratic form of government advocated by Mill—for instance, open voting, plural voting, Hare's system of proportional representation, and the Codification Commission? Are these reforms consistent with each other'?

6) What do you think of tlie utilitarian idea that a moral person is impartial between his own happiness or tlie happiness of his loved ones and the happiness of strangers?

7) How does Mill attempt to subsume justice and rights under the concept of utility'? What do, you think of this attempt?

UNIT 14 GEORGE WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL

Structure

14.1 Introduction

14.2 Life and Times

14.3 Spiritual Ancestry

14.3.1 Influence of Historical Events

14.4 Idealism

14.4.1 Dialectical Method

14.4.2 Use of Dialectical Method

14.5 Philosophy of History

14.6 Theory of State

14.7 Theory of Freedom of tlie Individual

14.8 Conclusion

14.9 Summary

14.10 Exercises

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Hegel was a product of German Idealism, wlzich drew considerable inspiration from Rousseau and Kant and integrated it with contemporary popular desire for German unification leading to the rise of the nation states in Europe. Hegel like Fichte echoed the sentiment of idealism.

His assertion that tlze real will of the individual is not in negation but an affirmation with society meant that the rational will of tlie individual was expressed in the totality of the will of the state. The consciousness and moral authority of the state subordinated the individual will. By the dialectical logic of a spirit, the march of liistory moves from tlie imperfect to the perfect stage rationally removing all the obstacles of acquiring the distinction between 'is' arid 'ought' as real became rational. Though the state is the most important institution of this present ideal, the other two important components were civil society and the family. Freedom played an important role in Hegel but Hegelian version of freedom was associated with rationality unlike the thrust of British liberalism, which associated freedom with liberty and individuality.

14.2 LIFE AND TIMES

Born in 1770 in the princely state of Wurtemberg (Southern Germany), Hegel studied theology because his father wanted him to become a clergyman. In'1793 lie got the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from the University of Tubingon. Thereafter lie became a tutor at Bern and Frankfurt and worked as such for about seven years. In 1801 he got a job as lecturer at the University of Jena and later became a Professor. In 1816 he was appointed Professor of Philosophy at the University of Heidelberg and in 1818 he became ***Professor*** *of Philosophy* at the Berlin University. This position was held till then by the renowned German philosopher Fichte. Along with this assignment Hegel also worked the official advisor of Emperor of Prussia (Germany). He held these two positions till his death in 1830.

Hegel wrote extensively on various aspects of Political Philosophy. It was at Jena that he wrote his first major work *Phenomenology of Mind*, which was published in 1807. This was followed by publication of *Science of Logic* in *1811-12.* After the publication of this work Hegel earned the recognition as an outstanding philosopher of Germany. His third work, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences,* which lie wrote during his stay at Heidelberg, made him famous all over Europe. It was at Berlin that lie wrote his major work in political theory, *Philosophy* d *Right.* He also delivered very scholarly and brilliant lectures, which were published by his son after his death under, the title, *Philosophy of History.* His writings and lectures and his many positions as Advisor of the emperor earned him international fame and won him many followers. He became not only the King of philosophers but also the philosopher of kings.

14.3 SPIRITUAL ANCESTRY

Hegel's writings show that several philosophers and thinkers of the past immensely influenced him. Hegel borrowed his dialectical method from Socrates. So the ancestry of Hegelian doctrine of dialectical idealism can be traced back to these two great Greek thinkers of tlie past. One can also discern some influence of Aristotle's teleology on Hegel. Teleology is a theory of knowledge according to which a thing is understood in terms of its end or purpose. For example, tlie end or purpose of a watch is to tell time. So telling time is the true nature or the true end or purpose of watch. The great German rationalist Immanuel Kant's influence is also discernible in Hegel's writings. The Hegelian idea that the state is founded on reason and the laws made by the state are the dictates of pure reason is quite similar to the Kantian position. Like Kant, Hegel did not give to the individuals the right to resist or oppose the state or the laws made by it. There are even traces of Rousseau's influence on Hegel. Like Rousseau's General Will, the Hegelian Idea, Spirit or Reason is infallible. Again like Rousseau, Hegel gives primacy to public interest over the private interest. You would recall that Rousseau had drawn a distinction between the actual will and the real will. To put it in Hegelian terms, Rousseau's actual will is that which promotes the self-interest of the individual while tlie real will is that which promotes tlie public interest. Because the general will is the condensation or the sum total of all the real wills (based on reason) it is infallible.

Hegel's philosophy was historicist in nature. Historicism is a doctrine, which is variously understood by different thinkers. In its most general sense it is rooted in the assumption that there are limits to scientific knowledge about human activities and achievements and such inadequate scientific knowledge cannot be used as a means for controlling the future course of events. Contrary to this, historicism is linked to ambitions for subjecting all human happenings to rational control.

14.3.1 Influence of Historical Events

In the previous part some of the major influences on Hegel have been spelled out; but Hegel was not influenced only by the great thinkers of past. Some major contemporary events also influenced him. Two events which exercised considerable influence on Hegel were the French Revolution (1789) and the subjugation of Germany by Napoleon in tlie beginning of the 19th Century. French Revolution overthrew the old oppressive feudal order and projected the vision of a new society wedded to the values of liberty, equality and fraternity. The values of liberty and fraternity pal-titularly influenced his writings. The subjugation of the German state by Napoleon disillusioned him and he set out to resolve the perennial political problems of the states. The reconciliation that he advocated in his writings is unique and paradoxical in many respects.

Before we take up an analysis of Hegel's political philosophy it is necessary for us to bear in mind that although-he borrowed many of his ideas from Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Kant and Rousseau, he used them to evolve his own philosophy. He assimilated their ideas in his logical system. In other words, the Hegelian political philosophy stands apart from each of them.

14.4 IDEALISM

In the history of political ideas there are two major schools of thought about the nature of reality — idealism and naturally, rationalism and empiricism. The question about tliat nature of reality is ontological; while the question about knowing it is epistemological according to the Idealist school, of which Hegel is a major proponent, (the other one being Plato), true knowledge of every thing in the world — material and non material — is deduced from idea of the thing. In other words, the idea of the thing, is more important than the thing itself. Therefore, what is real and permanent is the "idea of a thing" not the thing as much. This is so because the physical world is constantly in a state of flux and change but the idea is permanent. The physical world is only a manifestation of tlie idea. For example, the true knowledge of table or chair lies in comprehending the idea of table or chair. An actually existing table is a table in so far as it has the characteristics of table-hood. A carpenter is able to make a table because he has the idea of table in his mind and tlie table that he makes is only a manifestation or approximation of that idea. The terms hot and cold are understood as idea. The knowledge of actually existing things is relative and hence imperfect. When you say that water in this glass is hot it is only a relative truth because as compared to boiling water it is cold but as compared to water in the refrigerator it is hot. So the real knowledge is to comprehend the idea of hot and cold.

Hegelian idealism is often referred to as Absolute Idealism because it provides us with a set of categories (hot and cold, pleasure and plain) in terms of which allhuman experiences of the past and the present can be understood. There is another dimension of Hegelian idealism. This may be called Idealist Interpretation of History. According to this theory it is the ideas that constitute the true motor of history. What gives momentum to history is the development of ideas. All changes in society, economy, polity and culture take place because of development of ideas. Hegel's Idealism which is often called Absolute Idealism sees a certain relationship between the subject and the object. It is a relationship between the subject and the object. It is a relationship between a knowing subject and the objective world, which is known, i.e. relationship between the mind and the world.

14.4.1 Dialectical Method

Hegel's political philosophies rest mainly on his dialectical method. As already pointed out Hegel borrowed his method from Socrates who is the first exponent of this method. Hegel has himself expressed his debt to Socrates for this method. The dialectic means to discuss. Socrates believed that one can arrive at the truth only by constant questioning. It was the process of exposing contradictions through the method of discussion. Having taken a clue from Socrates I-Iegel argued that absolute Idea or the Spirit, in search of self-realisation moves from Being to non-being to becoming. To put it in simple words, an idea moves from a thesis to antithesis until a synthesis of the two is found. Synthesis has in it elements of thesis as well as antithesis. In due course the synthesis itself acquires the status of a thesis and gives rise to its own antithesis. This process goes on. In practice, Hegel applied his dialectical method to the domain of ideas. Therefore, his method may be described as dialectical idealism. It means that every idea (thesis) gives rise to a counter idea (antithesis) and the original idea and counter idea

(merge) to give rise to a new idea (synthesis). This new idea, in due course, itself becomes a thesis and gives rise to its antithesis and the process goes on. Hegel argued that through the use of his dialectical method he has discovered the greatest formula in the history of philosophy. He maintained that the march of reason in history was a complex dialectical process. It is a mechanism by which thought propels itself. Dialectical idealism was a logical apparatus for interpreting the history in its true perspective.

14.4.2 Use of Dialectical Method

Having stated his dialectical method Hegel argued that a phenomenon can be best understood according to the law of dialectics, i.e. when contrasted with its opposite. Pleasure is best understood in opposition to pain, heat in opposition to cold, goodness in opposition to badness, justice in opposition to injustice and so on. Hegel has given several instances of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The following instances given by him are note worthy and you should remember them.

i) Family is the thesis, civil society is its antithesis and state is the synthesis.

ii) Similarly, despotism is thesis, democracy is its antithesis and constitutional monarchy 'is the synthesis.

iii) Inorganic world is the thesis, organic world is its antithesis and human beings are the synthesis.

Hegel believed that the true nature of thing can be known only if its contradictions are also known. In this sense, his theory of dialects is rooted in contradiction or negation. He considered contradictions as the driving force of the whole process of evolution. This is the fundamental law of the cosmos as also of thought.

14.5 PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Hegel's philosophy of history is contained in the lectures that he delivered while he was at the Berlin University. He does not attach much importance to the material things. He views them merely as the cumulative result of evolution of absolute Idea. Absolute Idea is dynamic and ever evolving. It moves forward in search of self-realisation. This is termed by Hegel as unfolding of *the reason.* The whole universe is the result of this process of unfolding of Reason. In fact, Hegel's philosophy of history is somewhat similar to the Christian theology, which sees history as a pattern of meaningful events which can be understood in terms of cosmic design. It is unfolding of reason under God's guidance or as willed by God. The Absolute Idea moves forward in an evolutionary process. In this evolutionary process the absolute Idea or the spirit takes many forms, discarding the earlier ones and getting newer ones. The first stage in this evolution is the physical or the inorganic world. At this initial stage the Absolute Idea (or Spirit) acquires the form of gross matter. The second stage in this process is the organic world: animals, plants etc. This stage is an improvement on the earlier stage. The third stage is the evolution of human beings. Each stage is more complicated than the previous stage. The evolution of human beings marks a qualitatively higher stage because the human beings are rational agents capable of distinguishing between good and bad. The fourth stage marks the evolution of family system, In addition to rational element it involves mutual cooperation and accommodation. The fifth stage marks the evolution of Civil Society. Here economic inter-dependence is the main feature in addition to mutual cooperation and accommodation. The last

and highest stage witnesses the evolution of the state, which represents a perfect moral order. Hegel argues that family symbolises unity; civil society symbolises particularity and the state syinbolises universality. The unity of the family, particularity of the civil society is realised with the appearance of the state as the actuality of the universal order. Both the family and civil society are to some degree rational but only the state is perfectly rational and perfectly ethical. In short, the evolutionary process passes through the following stages and each successive stage is a distinct improvement on the predecessor stages:

Inorganic would - organic world - human beings - family - civil society - State

It should be noted that with the help of the above argument Hegel tried to solve the basic problem about the relationship between matter and Spirit. He did so by arguing that matter is only a manifestation of Spirit in its crude form. Matter is not only a negation of Spirit but also the conscious realisation of Spirit.

The second important dimension of Hegel's philosophy of history is the doctrine of historicism. It is difficult to explain this doctrine. Broadly speaking, historicism is a doctrine, which holds that the whole course of history is predetermined course. The human intervention or human effort can be effective only if it falls in line with the dialectical direction of the world history. Like the stoic God history leads the wise man and drags the fool.

The third major dimension of Hegel's philosophy of history is the use of Aristotelian teleology. According to it every thing in the world is moving towards the realisation of its end, its true nature. From the point of view of the human actors, history is a union of irony and tragedy; from the point of view of the Whole it is a cyclic. When we look at Hegel's philosophy of history in its totality we can say that it is an attempt to synthesise Kant's and Herder's philosophies of history. Kant advocated scientific understanding of history, while Herder emphasised the place of feelings and speculation. In this sense Hegel's philosophy of history is speculative reason. Let us elaborate this point.

For filler understanding of thrust of Hegel's philosophy of history you must understand that there is philosophical as against empirical history. The historians of latter category insist on accurate delineation of the facts which is their paramount concern. The former .(philosophic historians) on the other hand are not satisfied with mere narration of facts and try to provide divination of the meaning and look for the exhibition of reason's working in the sphere of history. They do not feel satisfied by mere reproduction of empirical facts and try to incorporate their knowledge of the Idea, the articulation of reason. Thus they elevate empirical contents to the level of necessary truth.

For Hegel the world history exhibits the development of the consciousness of freedom on the part of Spirit. Hegel actually applies his philosophy of history when he says that in the oriental world (China etc) there was despotism and slavery and freedom was confined only to the monarch. But in Greek and Roman civilisations although slavery was there, yet the citizens enjoyed freedom. In Europe particularly in Germany there is emphasis on liberty for all and infinite worth of each individual is recognised. The world history thus consists of definite stages of progression—Oriental, Greek, Roman and Germanic. In short, Hegel's philosophy of history consists of two parts: (i) the general pattern and (ii) various stages in this general pattern. Finally, Hegel's philosophy of history talks of doctrine of moving forces in historical change. He argues that Reason's great design can be carried out with the help of human passions. Certain great men (like Caesar or Alexander) are chosen as instruments of destiny. Such men are necessary if the plot of history is to be carried out. This amounts to saying that ideas are important but there must be will power to implement them.

14.6 THEORY OF STATE

The most seminal contribution of Hegel to Political Philosophy is his theory of state. Like Plato, Hegel is a great system builder. His theory of state is rooted in the axiom: "What is rational is real and what is real is rational". It means that whatever exists in the world is according to Reason and whatever is according to reason exists. Hegel's theory of state is based on the basic premise about the gradual unfolding of Reason or Spirit or Absolute Idea through a dialectical process. Reason gets its perfect realisation in the state. Thus, the state is Reason personified. State is rational, state is real; therefore what is rational is real. Here, real does not only mean that which is empirical but that which is fundamental. In fact, Hegel distinguishes between real and that which merely exists. That which merely exists is only momentary and mere surface manifestation of underlying forces which alone are real. Thus, Hegel sought to bridge the gap between the rational and the real. The real is nothing but the objective manifestation of spirit.

This implies that for Hegel all states are rational in so far as they represent the various states of unfolding of Reason. By doing so he took a conservative position because it tantamounts to saying that whatever happens is manifestation of unfolding of Reason. No event ever occurs unless ordained by Reason. So every event takes place according to a rational plan. He considered the state as "March of God on Earth" or the ultimate embodiment of Reason.

State, for Hegel, is the highest manifestation of Reason because it emerges as a synthesis of family (thesis) and civil society (antithesis). Family fulfills man's biological needs—food, sex and love. It is the first manifestation of spirit but it cannot fulfill the higher or more complex needs for which we need a civil society. While the basic feature of family is unity based on love the civil society is necessary for the fulfillment of his competitive self-interest and for the satisfaction of diverse human needs, particularly the economic needs which the family cannot fulfill. The civil society is organised on the basis of individual's material needs, which are not wholly private and yet are primarily self-regarding. It is less selfish than the family. It is saved from disintegration because men begin to realise that their needs can be met only by recognising the claims of others. Civil society educates the individual where he begins to see that he can get what he needs only by willing what other individuals need. It is not a complete organic unity. Such unity is realised only when the tension involved in the contradiction between family and civil society is transcended in the final synthesis of the state. The civil society looks after the material needs of human beings and therefore, Hegel sees it as state in its embryonic form. The state looks after the universal interests of the whole community and it acquires an organic character.

By way of summing up this complex Hegelian theory of state we may say that first it has divine origin because the state is divinely ordained growth of absolute Idea or Reason. There can be no spiritual evolution beyond the state as there can be no physical evolution beyond man. It is the march of God on earth. Secondly, Hegel is statist because the state in his philosophy is not a means to an end but an end in itself. The statedoes not exist for the individuals but the individuals exist for the state. Thirdly, for Hegel the whole (state) is greater than the parts (individuals) that constitute it. Their (individuals') importance is only due to the fact that they are members of the state. Thus, Hegel makes the individuals totally subordinate to the state. Only the state knows what is in individual's interest. State in that sense is infallible. It is also infallible because it is divine. Hegel argued that,, "all the worth which the human being possesses—all spiritual reality—he possesses only through the State. For his spiritual reality consists in this, that his own essence—Reason—is objectively present to him, that it possesses objective immediate existence for him. The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth".

14.7 THEORY OF FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Hegel's theory of state leads us to another important conclusion. Because only the state knows what is in individual's interest and because the state is always infallible and because the state is divine therefore the individuals have no rights outside the state or against the state because state itself is the fountain of rights. Freedom of the individual lies in the complete obcdicncc of the laws of the state. It is only as an obedient citizen with the universal. In other words, state is a super-organism in which no one has any individual preferences different from those of the larger unit. Thus, one aspect of Hegel's philosophy which is of greatest significance is the exaltation of the state and complete negation of the individual's rights and freedoms. Real freedom of the individual can be realised only in the state. The only way for the individual to be free is to willingly obey the laws of the state.

In a subtle sense, Hegel's position on the question of relationship between state and individual is very close to Rousseau's position. You will recall that Rousseau had argued that each individual has two wills—actual will which is selfish and the real will which is rational. Freedom in Rousseau's philosophy means subordination of actual wills to the real wills (the General will). In the same way in Hegel's philosophy the individual is free only if he identifies himself consciously with the laws of the state. Because the state for Hegel is infallible and because it can'never be wrong therefore, if there is ever a conflict between individual and the state, the individual is always wrong and the state is always right.

It is also interesting to compare Hegel's position with the position of Hobbes on this (relation between the individual and the state). Hegel maintains that individuals have no right to resist the state or disobey the commands of the state. To take an analogy—just as parts of human body cannot revolt against the body in the same way the individuals cannot revolt against the state. Given this position of Hegel we can say that the Hegelian state is like the Hobbesian Leviathan in new garb. In fact, in Hegel the position of state *vis-á-vis* the individual is more exalted than in Hobbes. Hobbes at least grants to the individual the right to revolt against the state if the state fails to protect his life. The individuals in the Hobbesian social contract agreed to submit themselves to the state in the hope that it (state) will ensure safety of their life and property. If the state (or the sovereign) is unable to do so then the individuals have the inherent right to refuse to obey the sovereign. However, Hegel does not grant any such right to the individual. This is so because the state for Hegel is the embodiment of reason and individuals are the products of the state. In some sense the relationship between state and individual in Hegel is an organic relationship, while in Hobbes it remains a mechanical relationship based on contract.

14.8 CONCLUSION

Hegel is undoubtedly one of the greatest political thinkers of modern times. He is considered to be a pragmatic thinker because he tries to idealise and rationalise the actual existing Prussian State (what is real is rational). With a pronounced Euro-centricism in the background of the Protestant Revolution, he was convinced that Germany in particular and Europe in general have approached the near final form of historical evolution. The German State for him marked the culmination and final destination of Absolute Idea. He attributed to the state not only a distinct personality but also a moral totality. Hegel rejected Kant's notion of perpetual peace and accepting different forms of regimes, accepted war as a mechanism of settling two alternative claims of rights. Hegel had no doctrine of just war.

Hegel's greatest contribution was a new discipline, the philosophy of history, a method of measuring historical evolution with a confidence of inevitable progression. In this, he not only influenced Marx but also Saint-Simon, Comte and Toynbee. His overall intellectual influence extended from Marxism to Existentialism leading to conflicting claims, criticisms and adulation. Karl Popper saw him as a precursor of 20th Century fascism. Kaufmann reacting to Popper said that Hegel was not a radical individualist but certainly not a totalitarian. Both Avineri and Marcuse concurred with Kaufmann. Fukuyama, making a comparison between the continued influence of Marx and Hegel proclaimed the triumph of Hegel, as modern liberalism does not end "the desire for recognition" but transforms "into a more rational form".

The classical tradition ended with Hegel, as MacIntyre observed that no new fundamental innovations have been possible after him. This is reflected by the fact that after Hegel began a period of refinement in political theory. As last of the titans, Hegel's influence continues to be an important ingredient in contemporary political philosophy.

14.9 SUMMARY

Hegel was influenced by Socrates (Dialectics), Aristotle (teleology), Rousseau (actual will and Rational Will) and Immanuel Kant (Rationalism). Secondly, we have noted that I-Iegel's method is dialectical, In order to arrive at truth a thing must be understood in relation to its opposite. This is process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The third important aspect of Hegel's political is his theory of history. He looks at history as the gradual evolution of the Absolute Idea or the Spirit. History is progress but it moves in violent spirals. The most significant aspect of his Political Philosophy is his theory of the state which is based on the axiom that what is rational is real and what is real is rational. It means that for him all that exist (or all that is real) is rational because it is a part of unfolding of Reason. Similarly, all that is rational must actually exist. He raised the stnte to the highest pedestal and even called it the march of God on earth. This is so because state is the highest and the final manifestation of Reason or Absolute Idea. The earlier states witnessed in this evolutionary are the following: Inorganic world—organic world—human beings—fanlily and civil society.

By raising the state to such an exalted position he denied any freedom to the individual. He treated the state as an end rather than a means. Since state is Reason personified it is infallible. Individuals can enjoy their freedom only by fully identifying with the state. Therefore, in Hegel's philosophy individuals have no right against the state. State is a whole and individuals are parts that constitute this whole and this whole is larger than the sum total of its parts. As different organs of body can neither exist nor develop in opposition to or outside the body, similarly individuals had no existence apart from and outside the state. State in Hegel's philosophy is like Hobbes' Leviathan. In fact, Hegel goes beyond Hobbes in so far as Hobbes implicitly granted the right to the individual to resist the state but Hegel does not allow any such right to the individual.

Hegel's political philosophy has exercised great influence during the last two centuries. The rise of fascism in Italy and totalitarianism in Soviet Union is attributed to his philosophy. The general swing to the right is said to have drawn inspiration from his philosophy. He glorified wax because, in his view, it brings out the noblest qualities of man. He viewed war as an instrument in the hands of world spirits to facilitate the development of world according to the dialectic of history.

14.10 EXERCISES

1) What were the major influences on Hegel?

2) What did Hegel mean by 'real is rational"?

3) What is Hegel's Philosopliy of History'?

4) Explain the statement 'the State is the March of God on Earth'.

5) What are Hegel's views about freedom of the individual'?

UNIT 15 KARL MARX

Structure

15.1 Introduction
15.2 Life and Times
15.2.1 Beginning of an Intellectual Journey
15.3 Theory of Alienation
15.4 Dialectics
15.5 Theory of Historical Materialism
15.6 Theory of Class War
15.7 Theory of Surplus Value
15.8 Theory of Revolution
15.9 Dictatorship of the Proletariat
15.10 Vision of a Communist Society
15.11 General Assessment
15.12 Summary
15.13 Exercises

15.1 INTRODUCTION

In the entire history of political thought, both in influence and in criticism, few political theorists can match Karl Heinrich Marx. Reflecting on the contemporary world from the background of Victorian optimism in England, Marx was confident of human liberation by transcending the realm of necessity to a realm of freedom. Along with Friedrich Engels (1820-95), with whom he shared an unparalleled partnership, Marx dissected 19th Century capitalism as 'scientific socialism' mainly to distance themselves from the early socialism of Owen, Fourier and Saint-Simon whom they dubbed as 'utopian socialists'.

Like Hegel, for Marx, the study of history was of crucial significance. Rejecting Hegelian dialectical idealism, Marx offered dialectical materialism emphasising that the primacy of the mode of production of the material means of life essentially conditions the overall existence of human beings as manifested in human relationships. Understanding reality in terms of base that included mode and relationships of production and the superstructure that included political, cultural and intellectual dimensions, Marx observed that individual consciousness was determined by societal process. Emphasising all history as the history of class 'struggle, Marx's stages of social evolution had five different stages: (a) primitive communism, (b) slavery, (c) feudalism, (d) capitalism and (e) communism. Marx's major concentration was on analysing contemporary capitalism as in the first three he had little interest and desisted from making a blueprint for the future communist society except providing a sketchy outline. He analysed capitalism dialectically praising its role in revolutionising the means of production while condemning it for its inequities, wastage and exploitation. However he was mistakenly confident that the days of capitalism would be over soon. Many commentators believe that the best way to understand Marx is to see him as a critic of 19th Century capitalism.

15.2 LIFE AND TIMES

Marx was born at Trier in Rhineland (Prussia) in a Jewish family. He embraced Christianity during his childhood. He studied History, Law and Philosophy at Bonn, Berlin and Jena. He received his doctorate (Ph.D. Degree) in Philosophy from the University of Jena. It was during his student days that he was attracted to socialism—a doctrine, which was considered quite dangerous by the rulers of those times. Because of his socialistic convictions and his radical anti-state views he was expelled from Prussia and was forced to take shelter in France and Belgium. While he was in France he continued organising the German workers working in that country. Consequently the French Government under the pressure of the Prussian Government expelled him from France. In 1849 he migrated to England and stayed there till his death in 1883.

15.2.1 Beginning of an Intellectual Journey

Marx has written so extensively on various issues of Philosophy, Economics, Politics and Society that it is difficult to discuss all his complex ideas in a few pages. Because of a wide range of issues on which he wrote it is equally difficult to put him in a straight jacket of any one discipline. During his student days Marx was attracted to Hegelian Idealism but he soon shifted his interest to Humanism and ultimately to Scientific Socialism. He was also influenced by some of the major movements of his times. During his formative years the idea of evolution, in one form or the other, was very much in the air. While one version of evolution was articulated by Hegel (*Evolution of Absolute* ***Idea*** or ***Spirit),*** the other version was propounded by Darwin (in his *Origin of Species*). Although Marx accepted a few of the contemporary themes, he rejected some others. His most seminal contribution lies in offering an alternative theory of historical evolution—the theory of Dialectical Historical Materialism. Through this theory he rejected the Hegelian and Darwinian theories and propounded his own theory to explain the course of human history. Marx also entered in polemical argument with many of his contemporaries, particularly Proudhon and Bakunin and various socialist groups of Europe,

15.3 THEORY OF ALIENATION

One of the most original contributions of Marx is his Theory of Alienation. This is contained in his early work—*Economic and Philosophical* Manuscripts—which were written in 1843 but were discovered nearly fifty years after his death. These Manuscripts show that 'early Marx' was mainly interested in the problem of alienation.

In order to understand Marxian Theory of Alienation it is important to understand Hegel's views on alienation. This is so because Marx borrowed his idea of alienation from Hegel. And Feuerbach's, particularly from Hegel. He did so while dealing with the Hegelian notion of Phenomenology. For Hegel, alienation is the state of consciousness as it acquaints itself?with the external world in which objects appear to man external or alien. Nature is a self-alienated form of Spirit/Absolute mind. Man is self-alienated Spirit/God in the process of de-alienating itself. Feuerbach's position is just the opposite, i.e. that man is not self-alienated God; rather God is self-alienated man. According to Hegel, consciousness emancipates itself from this alienation by recognising that the objects that appear to consciousness to exist outside it are only a phenomenal expression of consciousness. In other words, it is recognition by consciousness that objects are merely alienated or reified consciousness. Marx vehemently attacks Hegel for identifying the existence of objects with alienation, which makes the objective world a mere phantasm. Marx does so by distinguishing between *objectification* and *alienation*. Objectification

is based on the premise of material existence of the objects; while alienation is a state of consciousness resulting from specific type of relationship between men and objects. Such relationships cannot be a fantasy because objects are real.

Since Marx recognises the autonomous existence of objects, alienation can be got over only by 'object-creating praxis', i.e. by changing the very conditions in which the objects are created. In short, whereas for Hegel alienation is a state of consciousness subject to elimination by another state of consciousness, for Marx alienation is related to the real existing objects and can be overcome in the real sphere of object-related activity.

In Marx's view one consequence of Hegelian position is that the whole history is reduced to an act of thinking because Hegel sees all concrete events only as manifestation of Idea or Spirit. Since in Hegel the abolition of alienation is merely at the level of consciousness it becomes 'impossible to abolish real alienation. I-Hence, men are forced to legitimise their chains. Secondly, for Marx alienation is rooted in the historical situation and its consequences. In the capitalist society the creation of objects (production) does not help man to realise himself, i.e. to realise liis potential. This inability of man to realise his potential while being engaged in the creation of objects causes alienation. Hence, alienation will be overcome when the production of objects will lead to unfolding of the human potentialities.

In capitalism production takes place in alienating circumstances and this makes objectification (creation of objects) into dehumanisation. The object produced by the labourer by his labour, its product, now stands opposed to him as an alien being as a power independent of him. In essence, labour itself becomes an object. What is embodied in the product of his labour does not belong to the labourer, it is no longer his own. It belongs to some one else: the capitalist. The greater this product is, the more he is diminished and de-humanised. Thus, you can say that, for Marx, labour becomes a dehumanising act when it is not a voluntary but a coercive activity. But what makes the labour coercive is not the nature of labour (nature of labourer's work) *per se* but the historical conditions in which this labour is performed. Hence, the society that will abolish alienation will not abolish labour, it will only abolish the alienating conditions in which labour is performed. In other words, labour will exist even in a socialist and a communist society but it will not be a coercive activity. The crucial question is whether the work serves 'as a *means for existence* for the labourer or becomes the very *content* of *his life*. This amounts to saying tliat objectification (producing objects by one's labour) will continue even under communism but alienation will not.

From the above account you must have noticed that alienation as it exists in a capitalist society has many dimensions. However, three dimensions are fundamental: i) Man's alienation from nature; ii) alienation from humanity or fellow workers; and iii) alienation from himself. Alienation from nature implies that the labourer is alienated from his faculty and capacity of shaping the world because the world appears to him as his master. Secondly, alienation occurs because of the worker's inability to 'own' the product of his work, which belongs to someone else, Not only this, even his labour is not his own because he has sold it to another. Moreover, what is embodied in the product of his labour is no longer his own. Hence, he gets alienated from the object of his labour. This object which he has produced assumes an external existence. It exists independently outside him and appears alien to him. It stands opposed to him as an autonomous power, as a hostile force. Thirdly, alienation occurs because work for the labourer is not voluntary but it is imposed on him. It is forced labour that he has to perform. It is not for the satisfaction of his needs but for the satisfaction of others' needs. Hence, work for him becomes drudgery, a monotonous and boring activity. For twelve hours the worker weaves, spins, drills, turns, builds, shovels, breaks stones, carries loads without knowing why he is

doing all this. Another aspect of alienation is tlie domination of dead, objectified labour (machinery) over the living labour (the worker). In this process the worker becomes an appendage of the machine. His product and his machines become his real masters. Me feels alienated from himself. It is because of this that man feels himself to be freely active only in animal functions—eating, drinking and procreating—while in his human functions he is reduced to an animal. The animal in him becomes human and the human in him becomes animal, Marx further explains it by saying that:

> the less you eat, drink, buy boolcs, go to theatre or to ball or to tlie public house, and the less you think, love, tlieorise, sing, paint, fence etc, the more you will be able to save and the greater will become your treasure which neither moth nor rust will corrupt—yoyour capital. The less you are, the less you express your life, the more you liave, the greater in your alienated life and tlie greater is the saving of your alienated being.

The above quotation shows that property for Marx is not the realisation or fulfillment of personality but its negation. Hence, it is not only the property-less (the workers) who are alienated, but so are those who have property (the capitalists). The possession of property by one person necessarily entails its non-possession by another. However, in Marx's view the problem of alienation cannot be solved by assuring property to all (which is in any case impossible) but by abolishing all property relations. Hence, the abolition of capitalism is a necessary pre-requisite for the abolition of alienation. Capitalism, by definition entails alienation.

Communism for Marx is not only tlie positive abolition of private property but also the abolition of human self-alienation. Therefore, it is the return of man to himself as a social, i.e. really human being. Secondly, Marx argued in his The *German Ideology* that the main cause of alienation is fixation of activity due to which what we ourselves produce becomes objective power .above us, going out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations. Man will be redeemed from alienation in the communist society because nobody will have any exclusive sphere of activity and each one can become accomplished in any branch he wishes. There it will be possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, doing just that which gives me pleasure without ever becoming a hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic. This will be the real state of freedom for man from alienation and exploitation.

15.4 DIALECTICS

Marx borrowed his dialectical method from Hegel but modified it in a fundamental way. While Hegel had applied his dialectical method in the domain of ideas, Marx applied the Dialectics to explain the material conditions of life. In the process of doing so he denounced the Hegelian philosophy of dialectical idealism, on the one hand, and tlie theory of mechanistic materialism, on the other. Hence, tlie Marxian theory of society and history may be called *Dialectical Materialism*. (In fact, Engels in his *Anti-Durhing* applied the dialectics even to physical nature. This has become a subject of intense debate among post-Marx Marxists). Marxian dialectical materialism, developed by Engels has three dimensions:

i) The law of transformation of quantity into quality. It means that quantitative changes lead to qualitative revolutionary situation.

ii) The law of unity of opposites (contradiction), and

iii) The law of negation of negation (thesis-antithesis and synthesis).

Marx holds that the *material* and the ideal are not only different but opposite and constitute a unity in which the material is primary and the mind (idea) secondary. This is so because matter can exist without mind but mind cannot exist without matter because historically it (mind) has developed out of matter: In this way Marx completely inverted the Hegelian position. You would recall that for Hegel mind was primary and matter secondary. Marx pointed out that with Hegel "dialectics is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up." This he did by making matter *primary* and mind secondary.

15.5 THEORY OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

The most seminal contribution of Marx is his theory of historical materialism. In his *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* Engels defined historical materialism as a theory which holds that the ultimate cause which determines the whole course of human history is the *economic* development of society. The whole course of human history is explained in terms of changes occurring in the modes of production and exchange. Starting with primitive *communism* the mode of production has passed through three stages: slavery, feudalism and capitalism and the consequent division of society into distinct classes (slave-master, serf-baron and proletariat-capitalist) and the struggle of these classes against one another. The most profound statement of Marx which explains his theory of historical materialism is contained in his Preface *to* a Contribution to the Critique of Political *Economy.* In this work Marx contends that:

> the economic structure of society, constituted by its relations *of production* is the real foundation of socieiy. It is the *basis* on which rises a legal and political *super-structure* and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. Along with it, the society's *relations* of production themselves correspond to a definite stage of development of its material productive forces. Thus, the mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general.

The general relations as well as forms of state are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from tlie so-called general development of human mind, but rather they have their roots in the material conditions of life. As the society's productive forces develop (animate energy getting replaced by inanimate energy—for example oxen ploughing getting replaced by ploughing with tractor) they clash with the existing relations of production which become a fetter on their further growth. Thus, begins the epocli of social revolution. This contradiction between *forces of production* and relations of production divides the society into classes. As people become conscious of this conflict they fight it out. The conflict is resolved in favour of the productive forces and new, higher relations of production, whose material conditions have matured in the womb of the old society emerge. The bourgeois mode of production not only represents the most recent of several progressive epochs, but it is the last antagonistic form of production.

Marx's materialist interpretation of history thus explains the general course of human history in terms of growth of productive forces. The productive forces, as already pointed out, consist of means of production (machines, tools and factories) and labour power. The relations of production correspond to society's productive level. In addition to ancient, *feudal* and bourgeois modes of production Marx also talked of the Asiatic *mode of production.* On the one hand, Marx distinguished between forces of production and relations of production on the other lie distinguished between the base and the super-structure. For Marx, the productive forces are not objective economic forces which do not require the mediation of human consciousness for their emergence or existence, Likewise, the distinction between the material base and the ideologicat super-structure is not the distinction between matter and spirit but between conscious human

activity aimed at the creation and preservation of conditions of human life, and human consciousness which provide rationalisation and legitimisation of specific form tliat human activity takes.

Like his dialectics, Marx constructed his materialist conception of history out of the Hegelian system itself which had sought to bridge the gap between the *rational* and the *actual.* Marx, in fact, borrowed such concepts as civil society and property from the Hegelian system and set them in a revolutionary relationship to the concept of the state. Hegel confronts civil society as a *sphere of materialism* and counter-poses it to the state as *sphere of idealism.* In sharp contrast to this, Marx holds that relations as well as forms of state are to be grasped neither from themselves, nor from the so-called general development of human mind but rather they have their roots in tlie material conditions of life. You must also understand the way in which Marx differentiates between his materialist conception of history and Hegelian idealist conception of history. To Hegel, it is tlie life process of the human mind, i.e. the process of thinking which under the name of tlie idea gives momentum to history. Thus, for Hegel, the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of the idea, while for Marx the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by human mind and translated into forms of thought. To put it differently, while in the Hegelian scheme *consciousness determines existence;* in the Marxian scheme it is the *social being* (conditions of existence) that *determine their consciousness*. Thus, the relationship between economic and the political in Marx is such that the political structure reflects the socio-economic conditions. It is the economic fact of life, which produce or determine the nature of ideas. Thus, Marx reduced all thought and actic ı to the material conditions of life. Consciousness is nothing but the reflection of material conditions of men's existence. However, this relationship between material conditions and ideas is not necessarily direct and automatic. It is rather complex. Marx expressed his position in a very technical language. He argued that the doctrine that men are products of circumstances and up-bringing and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed up-bringing forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that educator himself needs education.

The above statement of Marx will help you to understand that in Marx epistemology ceases to be merely a reflective theory of cognition but becomes a vehicle for shaping and molding reality. Thus, Marx's epistemology occupies a middle position between classical (mechanical) materialism and classical idealism. Since, it synthesises the two traditions, it transcends the classical dichotomy between subject and object. In short, Marx denies the validity of traditional mechanistic materialist modes of consciousness. To Marx, reality is always human reality, not in the sense that man shapes nature because this act of shaping nature also shapes man and his relation to other human beings. It is a total process, implying a constant interaction between subject and object "My relationship to my surroundings is my consciousness".

In a subtle sense, the Marxian philosophy of liistorical materialism is different not only from Hegelian philosophy; it is also different from that of Feuerbach. While Feuerbach saw the unity of man and nature expressed by man's being a part of nature, Marx sees man as shaping nature and his being, in turn, shaped by it. To put it in simple words, whereas Feuerbach *naturalises man,* Marx *humanises nature.* Marx argued that man not only satisfies his needs through his contact with nature but also creates new needs as well as possibilities of their satisfaction. Thus, according to Marx, man's needs are historical not naturalistic. The never-ending dialectical pursuit of their creation and satisfaction constitutes tlie main course Iiistorical development. Here again, the Marxist position is different from pragmatists. While pragmatism starts with the premise that man adopts himself to a given pre-existing environment, Marx views man not adopting himself to the environment but shaping his world. To put it differently, reality is viewed by classical materialism and pragmatism as if it were merely a passive object of

perception; while, for Marx, reality is not only shaped by man but it also reacts on man himself and shapes him. Thus, it is a two-way interaction: man shaping nature and getting shaped by nature.

15.6 THEORY OF CLASS WAR

The understanding of the concept of "class" is central to the understanding of Marxian philosophy. The sole criterion on tlie basis of which the class of a person is determined is his ownership (or control) of means of production (land, capital, machines & technology). Those who own or control the means of production constitute the bourgeoisie (exploiters), and. those who own only labour power constitute the proletariat (exploited). Thus, classes are defined by Marx on the basis of twin criteria of a person's place in the mode of production and his consequent position in terms of relations of production. The lack of ownership (or control) of means of production and lack of property and the immediate need to get work i.e. the class of concrete labour are some of the characteristic features of the proletariat class. Since class is based on ownership (or control) of means of production and ownership of property; the disappearance of class difference depends on the disappearance of property as the determining factor of status.

In *Communist Manifesto* Marx- Engels said: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". They argued tliat class conflict is the real driving force of human history. In the capitalist societies class differentiation is most clear, class consciousness is more developed and class conflict is most acute. Tlius, capitalism is the culminating point in the historical evolution of classes and class conflict. The distinctive feature of bourgeois epoch is that society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat.

Marx also made a distinction between the objective fact of existence of a class and its subjective awareness about its being a class—class consciousness. Division of labour is the main source of historical emergence of classes and class antagonisms. Each new class which puts itself in place of the one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aims, to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society.. The class making a revolution appears from the very beginning not as a class but as the representative of the whole society.

Through a detailed historical analysis Marx showed that no major antagonism disappears unless there emerges a new antagonism. Tlius, general antagonism between the rich and the poor has always been there but in capitalism it has been sharply polarised into antagonism between the capitalist and the proletariat. Thus, in capitalism the emergence of proletariat has a special significance. It is not just a historical phenomenon because its suffering, its exploitation and its dehumanisation is a paradigm' for the human condition at large. This is so because in proletariat class Marx sees the contemporary and the final realisation of universality. He endows this class with a historical significance and mission. It can redeem itself only by a total redemption of humanity. When the proletariat announces the dissolution of the existing class-based social order it only declares the secret of its own existence, because it is the effective dissolution of this order that will lead not only to the emancipation of the proletariat but to the emancipation of humanity. For such emancipation of humanity it is essential to abolish the institution of private property. Private property as private property, as wealth is compelled to maintain itself, and thereby its opposite—the proletariat, in existence. The proletariat is compelled as proletariat to abolish itself and thereby its opposite, the condition for its existence, what makes it proletariat, i.e. private property. Emancipation of society from private property, from

servitude takes the political form of emancipation of humanity as a whole. All human servitude is involved in the relation of the worker to production and all types of servitude are only modification or consequence of this relation. Hence, the proletariat can abolish all classes and all class antagonisms by abolishing itself as a separate class. In final analysis Marx visualised the emergence of a classless society. Such class-less society will also be a stateless society because with the disappearance of classes the very rationale for the existence of state will disappear. According to him the rationale for the existence of state is to defend the interest of the bourgeoisie.

15.7 THEORY OF SURPLUS VALUE

Another key feature of class relations in capitalism, according to Marx, is the expropriation of surplus value by the bourgeoisie from the labour of the proletariat. The theory of surplus value is discussed by Marx in great detail in his Capital. The theory of surplus value is rooted in the labour theory of value propounded by Ricardo and classical economists. The labour theory of value holds that labour spent by the labourer in the production of a commodity is the sole criterion for determining its value. Of course, it will also depend on the *"use-value"* of that commodity. Marx admits that human labour cannot create value by itself alone. It uses instruments of production which are owned by the capitalist. The capitalist buys the "labour power" of the labourer and applies it to the raw material to produce commodities which have an exchange value. The difference between the *exchange value* of the commodity and the wages paid to the worker by the capitalist in producing that commodity is surplus value.

In fact, Marx explains the whole process of exploitation with the help of his theory of surplus value. It is a distinct feature of capitalist mode of production. To put it in simple words, surplus value accrues because the commodity produced by the worker is sold by the capitalist for more than what he (the worker) receives as wages. In his Capital Marx elaborated it in a very technical language. He argued that the worker produces a commodity which belongs to the capitalist and whose value is realised by the capitalist in the form of price. The value of the commodity depends on the capital involved in its production. This capital has two parts— *constant* capital and *variable* capital. Constant capita! relates to means of production like raw material, machinery, tools etc used for commodity production. The variable capital refers to the wages paid to the worker. It is the value of what the labourer sells (his labour power). Surplus value is the difference between the value produced by the worker and what he gets in exchange for this value of his labour,. This is called variable capital' because it varies from beginning to the end. It begins as value of the labour power and ends as the value produced by that labour power in the form of a commodity. Labour power has thus a unique quality of its ability to create value.

Marx argued that the capitalist appropriates part of the labour of the worker for which he (the worker) does not get paid, Thus, surplus value is unpaid labours of the labourer. It can be variously measured in terms of time as well as in terms of money. Suppose a worker works for ten hours in producing a commodity. He may get paid for only what is equivalent to his eight hours labour. Thus, his two hours labour has been appropriated by the capitalist: Marx also arghed that gradually the proportion of surplus value becomes more and more. In the example cited above the worker was not paid for his two hours labour out of ten hours that he had spent in producing a commodity because he was paid only for his eight hours labour. By and by, the proportion of unpaid labour will increase from two to three, four or five hours. Finally, a stage comes when the worker gets paid only the minimum that is necessary for his survival. (His survival does not mean only his personal survival but also the survival of his

family so that when this worker is not able to work (due to old age or death or illness) his children may take his place). As pointed out above, the working class consists of those who own nothing but their own labour power which they are forced to sell in order to live. According to Marx, the history of capitalist production is a history of struggles by the capitalist to increase his surplus value and resistance by the workers against this increase.

There is a difference in the way in which surplus value was created in the slave society and under feudalism and the way it is created in the capitalist society. In the former the slave or the serf who created surplus value was tied to his master or the feudal lord but in capitalism there is a 'free contract' into which the worker 'voluntarily' enters with the capitalist. Of course, this freedom is a myth because the worker has no option but to sell his labour power. He must enter into contract with some capitalist. The only option that he has is to choose the capitalist to whom he wants to sell his labour power. Thus this freedom is freedom to choose his exploiter. The slave and the serf did not have this freedom.

15.8 THEORY OF REVOLUTION

The basic cause of revolution, according to Marx, is the disjunction that arises between relations of production and the means of production. As means of production (technology etc.) grow with growth of scientific knowledge, they go out of step with the existing relations of production. A stage is reached where the relations of production become a fetter on the production process itself. This gives rise to immanent demand for a transition to a new mode of production. The capitalist mode of production emerged from the womb of feudal order in the same way as feudal mode of production emerged from tlie womb of the slave society. Likewise, socialism will emerge from the womb of bourgeois society itself. This is so because capitalism constantly revolutionises its own means of production and thus undermines its own conditions of existence. In fact, the bourgeoisie produces, above all, its own grave diggers. Marx asserted that the bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of social process of production—antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism but class antagonism arising from the social conditions of life of the individuals. Thus, the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create material conditions for the resolution of that antagonism.

Marx's assertion that the bourgeois relations of production are tlie last antagonistic form of social process of production is rooted in the assumption that all the previous historical movements (revolutions) were movements of minorities in the interest of minorities. The proletarian revolution will be different from them. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of capitalist society cannot stir, cannot raise itself to the position of ruling class without the whole superincumbent strata of officials being sprung into the air. Along with it, Marx also spelled out the method, which will be followed by the proletariat class to achieve its objective. In the Communist *Manifesto* Marx and Engels declared that communists scorn to hide their views and aims. They openly declare that their purpose (revolution) can only be achieved by the forcible overthrow of the whole capitalist order. Thus, the emancipation of the proletariat is predicated by Marx on the emancipation of humanity.

Here it is important for you to bear in mind that in the history of revolutions there is a debate about the role of *subjective* (human) and objective (material) factors in making a revolution. Whether it is tlie mere existence of a proletariat class which will bring about the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism or is it the consciousness of this proletariat which is necessary for doing so? Marx's position in this regard is very significant. He sees a dialectical relationship between philosophy's comprehension of the world and its ability to change it. Theory must

evolve a proper interpretation of the world before it is able to change it. The ultimate task of philosophy is not merely to comprehend reality but also to change it. Praxis revolutionises the existing reality through human action. Revolutionary praxis has, therefore, a dialectical aspect. Objectively, it is the organisation of the conditions leading to ultimate human emancipation and subjectively, it is the self-change that proletariat achieves by its self discovery through organisation.

Thus, the dilemma of determinism vs. *voluntarism* is transcended by Marx through the dialectical nature of revolutionary consciousness. Objective conditions themselves will not bring about the revolution until and unless the proletariat grasps the fact that by shaping its own view of the world it also changes it. If revolutionary consciousness exists then revolution is bound to occur. When the worker comprehends that under capitalist production lie is degraded to the status of a mere object, a commodity; lie ceases to be a commodity, an object and becomes a subject (active agent). This is revolutionary consciousness. The understanding of the existing reality by the proletariat is, therefore, a necessary condition for the possibility of revolutionising it. In other words, it is only an understanding of the internal dynamics of capitalism by the proletariat that will enable it to make revolution which will signal the transition from capitalism to socialism.

15.9 DICTATORSHIP OF PROLETARIAT

Dictatorship of the proletariat is another important concept in Marx's writings. Marx did not write very clearly and systematically about the dictatorship of the proletariat and about the exact nature and form of post-revolutionary communist society. At best his treatment is sketchy. In a letter to Wedemeyer (March 5, 1852) Marx said that he had not discovered the concept of classes and class struggles.

What I did that was new was to prove: (a) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular phases in the development of production; (b), that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (c) that this dictaforship (of the proletariat) itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes leading to the establishment of a classless society.

Thus, the dictatorship of the proletariat is a necessary intermediate point or a transitional phase on the path. from capitalism to socialism and communism. In the Critique of *the Gotha* Programme he further clarified that between capitalism and communist society lies a period of revolutionary transformation from one (i.e. capitalism) to the other (i.e. socialism). In political sphere this transformation will take the form of dictatorship of the proletariat. It is the first step in the revolution of the working class which will raise the proletariat to the position of a ruling class. In Marx's view during the dictatorship of the proletariat there will be a regime in which the proletariat will control the state power. Such a transitional phase of dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary because the destruction of whole capitalist social and political order cannot be fully achieved without capturing the state power and without using it as an instrument to create conditions for the ushering in of a communist social order.

15.10 VISION OF A COMMUNIST SOCIETY

Communism is explained by Marx as a form of society which the proletariat will bring into existence through its t-evolutionary struggle. In Communist *Manifesto* Marx and Engels argued that the communists have no interests separate and apart from the interests of the proletariat as

a wliole. In his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* Marx defined communism as the positive abolition of private property. It also entailed tlie abolition of classes and abolition of division of labour. In economic terms tlie communist society will be a "society of associated producers". In political terms communism will be the first state in the history of mankind to use political power for universal interests instead of partisan interests. Thus, it will be different from the state in capitalism which is no more than the Managing Committee of the Bourgeoisie. For Marx the state in capitalism is serving the long-term interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole. It promotes and legitimises the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie.

'In *Critique* of *the Gotha Programme* Marx talked of two stages of communist society. In the first state communism will bring about the socialisation of means of production. It 'means that the means of production will not be in the hands of any one class but in the hands of society as a whole. At this state wage labour will continue to exist and the organising principle of the economy will be: 'from each according to his capacity to each according to his work'. It means that every one will work according to one's ability and get according to the amount of work done. At the second and the final stage tlie communist society will ensure the end of man's domination by the objective forces. As already stated communism for Marx is not only the positive abolition of private property but also the abolition of state and abolition of human self-alienation. It will be a class less and stateless society in which government of men will be replaced by administration of things. It will be return of man to himself as a social, i.e. really human being. Communism is viewed by Marx as the true final solution of the conflict between existence and essence; objectification and self affirmation; freedom and necessity; individual and the species.

Marx also claimed that communism is the final solution to the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution. Man in communism will become conscious of himself as the prime mover of history as well as its product. As stated earlier, since communism will ensure the disappearance of social division of labour; it will become possible for man to do one thing to day, another tomorrow "to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening and criticise after dinner without ever becoming a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd or a critic' (*German Ideology*). Moreover, it will be a state of plenty where every one will work according to capacity (ability) and get according to need. The creation of new needs will also ensure the creation of means for their satisfaction. History will not come to an end; it will continue' in terms of creation of new needs and creation of methods of their fulfillment.

It should be noted tliat under communism alienation will come to an end but labour will continue to remain a vital need. The sphere of material production will remain' in the realm of necessity. The realm of freedom will begin only in the leisure time. Thus, work will continue to be an obligation even in a communist society.

15.11 GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Marx is undoubtedly one of tlie most influential philosophers of modern times. His ideas have acquired the status of a powerful ideology. His ideas on Alienation, I-Iistorical Materialism, Class War, Surplus Value and his vision of a Proletarian Revolution, Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Socialism and Communism have been extensively discussed, debated, modified and sometimes even rejected by his followers and adversaries. His writings are so voluminous and his themes are so wide-ranging that Marx has come to mean different things to different people. For example, there are studies which seek to distinguish between 'early' and 'later' Marx. While 'early' Marx is projected as a humanist philosopher interested in redemption of mankind

from alienation; the 'later' Marx is viewed as an economist and a revolutionary interested in abolishing exploitation. 'Early' Marx is Marx of the Economic and Philosophical *Manuscripts*; while the 'later' Marx is Marx of the *Communist Manifesto*, *A* Contribution to the Critique of Political *Economy* and Capital. There are also studies which see an underlying unity between the 'early' and the 'later' Marx. Some studies have even tried to assess the influence that Engels exercised on Marx and influence that Marx exercised on Engels. Such studies have a valid point to make because initially Marx was basically a philosopher, while Engels was basically an economist. Due to influence that they exercised on one another Marx moved from Philosophy to Economics; while Engels moved from Economics to Philosophy. So much so that it is almost impossible to give a universally acceptable and a non-partisan assessment of Marx.

Marx's vision of a new social order in which there will be neither alienation nor exploitation, no classes, no class antagonism, no authority, no state is highly fascinating and because of this attraction, Sabine called Marxism a utopia but a generous and a humane one. However, though he admitted that historical developments are always open to several possibilities yet he did not agree that such possibilities were open to his own theory. However though, not putting his own theory to the possibility of dialectical critique as Avineri said, was a grave mistake. Berlin commenting on his tremendous popularity for generations found that to be a negation of Marx's rigid framework of determinism. Plamenatz distinguished between a German Marxism and Russian Communism. Harrington portrayed the contemporary radical view of Marx as being an excellent critic of capitalism but unable to provide a detailed alternative to it. This failure of Marx is mainly because of the fact that he was writing at a time when democracy was only one of the possibilities and not a universal reality as it is today. Because of this lacuna he could not grasp the dynamics of democracy and the importance of civil and political liberties for any civilised society.

15.12 SUMMARY

Karl Marx is known for his radical socialist convictions and anti-state views. He borrowed the concept of alienation and the dialectical method from Hegel but modified them in a fundamental way. He attacked Hegel for identifying existence of objects with alienation which makes the objective world a mere fantasy. Marx even applied Dialectics used by Hegel in the domain of ideas to explain the material conditions of life. Marx holds that the material and the ideal are not only different but opposite and constitute a unity in which the material is primary and the mind (idea) secondary. Thus according to him, the ultimate cause which determines the whole course of human history is the economic development of society. This was explained by the theory of historical materialism. Starting with *primitive communism* the mode of production has passed through three stages: slavery, feudalism and capitalism and the consequent division of society into distinct classes (slave-master, serf-baron and proletariat-capitalist) and the struggle of these classes against one another. The general relations as well as forms of state are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from the so-called general development of human mind, but they have their roots in the material conditions of life. Classes are defined by Marx on the basis of twin criteria of a person's place in the mode of production. Class is based on ownership (or control) of means of production and ownership of property, Surplus value accrues to the capitalist, because the commodity produced by the worker is sold by the capitalist for more than what he (the worker) receives as wages and this is the distinct feature of the capitalist mode of production. The disappearance of class difference and the disappearance of property is the determining factor of status. In final analysis Marx visualised the emergence of a classless society and this can be achieved according to him, through revolution and dictatorship of the

proletariat. This will lead to the establishment of a Communist society and this is the final solution to the riddle of history.

15.13 EXERCISES

1) What is Marxian theory of alienation?

2) Is there a difference between the Young and the Old Marx?

3) "The history of the hitherto existing society is the history of **class** struggle". **Explain** and discuss.

4) Critically examine Marx's theory of **surplus** value.

5) Discuss Marx's theory of historical materialism.

6) What are Marx's views on Proletarian Revolution and his vision of post-revolutionary society?