UNIT 2 PLATO

Structure

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 tlie 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 tlie 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

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 5 NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI

Structure

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 13 J. S. MILL

Structure

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 no 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?