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For

M.A. POLITICAL SCIENCE

SEMESTER II **COURSE NO. POL-201**

POLITICAL THEORY

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M.A. POLITICAL SCIENCE
SEMESTER II

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1.1 POLITICAL THEORY: MEANING, NATURE, SIGNIFICANCE AND APPROACHES

- Dr. Suneel Kumar

STRUCTURE

1.1.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you should be able to:

- Know the meaning and definition of political theory;
- Understand the nature, characteristics and significance of political theory; and
- Major approaches of political theory

1.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Political theory is one of the core areas in Political Science. From ancient Greece to the present, the history of political theory has dealt with fundamental and perennial ideas of Political Science. Political theory reflects upon political phenomenon, processes and institutions and on actual political behaviour by subjecting it to philosophical or ethical criterion. Weinstein considers political theory as an activity which involves posing questions, developing responses to those questions and creating imaginative perspectives on the public life of human beings. It has been probing into questions like: nature and purpose of the state; why one should prefer a kind of state than the other; what the political organization aims at; by what criteria its ends, its methods and its achievements should be judged; what is the relation between state and the individual. Political theory has been engaged in these age old questions from Plato onwards because it is concerned with the fate of man which depends upon his ability to create a kind of political community in which rulers and ruled are united in the pursuit of common good. It is not necessary that political theory can provide answers to all questions but it can at least tell us how one should go about the solution.

Political theory is the categorization of social thought by a group or by the persuasion or beliefs of a geo-political mass. Many political theories are founded as critiques toward existing political, economic and social conditions of the theorist's time. Political theory can also be considered as a critical tradition of discourse that provides a reflection on collective life, the uses of collective power, and resources within a collectivity. The emphasis of political theory changes over time. There are many different elements that create the foundation for theoretical analysis towards political science. Since the ancient Greek period, political theory analyzes and interprets the foundations of political life and evaluates its principles, concepts and institutions. Political theory is the study of the concepts and principles that people use to describe, explain, and evaluate political events and institutions. It seeks to understand, explain and analyse the political phenomena and prescribe ways and means to rectify the shortcomings.

Political theory is a complex subject. Numerous political theorists are engaged in this field. Because of the diversity and changes in the socio-economic circumstances,

there have been substantial changes in both the subject matter of political theory and the methods of studying it. For the purpose of study, political theory is divided into distinct streams such as classical, modern and empirical. Classical political theory was dominated by philosophy and dealt with the description, explanation, prescription and evaluation of the political phenomena. However, empirical political theory claimed to be a science and has been primarily concerned with the description and explanation of the political reality. On the other hand, contemporary political theory has tried to blend the theoretical and practical aspects.

1.1.2 POLITICAL THEORY: MEANING AND DEFINITION

In common parlance, political theory is "…a body of knowledge related to the phenomenon of the state." While 'political' refers to 'matters of public concern', 'theory' refers to 'a systematic knowledge'. Political theory can be defined as the discipline which aims to explain, justify or criticize the disposition of power in society. It delineates the balance of power between states, groups and individuals. Different scholars have defined it in the following ways:

- David Held opines that political theory is a "…network of concepts and generalizations about political life involving ideas, assumptions and statements about the nature, purpose and key features of government, state and society, and about the political capabilities of human beings."
- According to Francis W. Coker, "…a branch of political science concerned chiefly with the ideas of past and present political thinkers and the doctrines and proposals of political movements and group discussion of the proper scope of governmental action … has usually been regarded as a proper part of political theory."
- David Peritz considers political theory as "…a tradition of thinking about the nature of political power; the conditions for its just and unjust use; the rights of individuals, minorities, and majorities; and the nature and bounds of political community. Rather than tackling pressing political problems one at a time, political theorists seek systematic solutions in overall visions of just societies or

comprehensive diagnoses of the roots of oppression and domination in existent political orders."

- Andrew Hacker defines it as "…a combination of a disinterested search for the principles of good state and good society on the one hand, and a disinterested search for knowledge of political and social reality on the other."
- George Catlin says, "political theory includes political science and political philosophy....It is concerned with means; political philosophy is concerned with the end or final value, when man asks what is the national good or what is good society."
- John Plamentaz defines it as "…the analysis and clarification of the vocabulary of politics and the critical examination, verification and justification of the concepts employed in political argument."

In brief, political theory by referring to the comprehensive definition given by Gould and Kolb who say that it is 'a sub-field of political science which includes:

- political philosophy – a moral theory of politics and a historical study of political ideas;
- a scientific criterion;
- a linguistic analysis of political ideas, and;
- the discovery and systematic development of generalizations about political behaviour.

On the basis of the above definitions, it can be concluded that political theory is concerned with the study of the phenomena of the state both in philosophical as well as empirical terms. It not only involves explanation, description and prescription regarding the state and political institutions but also evaluation of their moral philosophical purpose. It is not only concerned with what the state is but also what it ought to be.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient

1. Weinstein considers political theory as an activity. How do you understand this?

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2. Political theory is divided into distinct streams such as classical, modern and empirical. Elaborate.

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3. How Gould and Kolb defined political theory?

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1.1.3 POLITICAL THEORY: NATURE

Political theory is the study of the phenomena of the state both from philosophical as well as empirical points of view. In this context, certain similar terms are also used such as political thought, political philosophy, and political science. Although all of them are concerned with explaining the political phenomena, yet political theory is distinct from them. The distinction of political theory from other terms, as discussed by Biju P.R, has been mentioned as follows:

1.1.3.1 POLITICAL THEORY AND POLITICAL THOUGHT

It is generally believed that political thought is the general thought comprising of theories and values of all those persons or a section of the community who think and write on the day-do-day activities, policies and decisions of the state, and which has a bearing on our present living. These persons can be philosophers, writers, journalists, poets, political commentators etc. Political thought has no 'fixed' form and can be in the form of treatise, speeches, political commentaries etc. What is important about political thought is that it

is ‘time bound’ since the policies and programmes of the governments change from time to time. Thus, Greek thought or Roman thought of ancient period or the political thought of the medieval ages exist today. Political theory, on the other hand, is the systematic speculation of a particular writer who talks specifically about the phenomena of the state. This speculation is based on certain hypothesis which may or may not be valid and may be open to criticism. Theory provides a model of explanation of political reality as is understood by the writer. As such there can be different political theories of the same period. Also, political theory is based on certain discipline – be it philosophy, history, economics or sociology. And lastly, since the task of theory is not only to explain the political reality but also to change it or to resist change, political theory can be conservative, critical or revolutionary. According to Barker, while political thought is the immanent philosophy of a whole age, political theory is the speculation of a particular thinker. While political thought is implicit and immersed in the stream of vital action, political theory is explicit and may be detached from the political reality of a particular period.

1.1.3.2 POLITICAL THEORY AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is called ‘science of wisdom’. This wisdom can be about this world, man or God. This wisdom is all-inclusive and tries to explain everything. When this wisdom is applied to the study of political phenomena or the state, it is called political philosophy. Political philosophy belongs to the category of normative political theory. It is concerned with not only explaining what ‘is’ but also what ‘ought’ to be. Political philosophy is not concerned with contemporary issues but with certain universal issues in the political life of man such as nature and purpose of the political organisation, basis of political authority, nature of rights, liberty, equality, justice etc. The distinction between political philosophy and political theory is explained by the fact that whereas a political philosopher is a political theorist, but a political theorist may not necessarily be a political philosopher. Though theory deals with the same issues as political philosophy, it can explain them both from philosophical as well as empirical points of view. In other words, while political philosophy is abstract or speculative, political theory can be both normative and empirical.

A political theorist is as much interested in explaining the nature and purpose of the state as in describing the realities of political behaviour, the actual relations between state and citizens, and the role of power in the society. As has been pointed out by Arnold Bretch, philosophical explanations are theories too, but they are non-scientific. Political theory is concerned both with political institutions and the ideas and aspirations that form the basis of those institutions. However, we must not forget that though we can analytically distinguish between philosophy and theory, yet if political theory is separated from political philosophy, its meaning will appear distorted and it will prove barren and irrelevant. Theory must be supplemented by philosophy.

1.1.3.3 POLITICAL THEORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

As a discipline, political science is much more comprehensive and includes different forms of speculation in politics such as political thought, political theory, political philosophy, political ideology, institutional or structural framework, comparative politics, public administration, international law and organizations etc. With the rise of political science as a separate discipline, political theory was made one of its subfields. However, when used specifically with emphasis on 'science' as distinct from 'theory', political science refers to the study of politics by the use of Scientific methods in contrast to political philosophy, which is free to follow intuition.

Political theory when opposed to political philosophy is political science. Political science is concerned with describing and explaining the realities of political behaviour, generalizations about man and political institutions on empirical evidence, and the role of power in the society. Political theory, on the other hand, is not only concerned about the behavioural study of the political phenomena from empirical point of view but also prescribing the goals which states, governments, societies and citizens ought to pursue. Political theory also aims to generalize about the right conduct in the political life and about the legitimate use of power. Thus, political theory is neither pure thought, nor philosophy, nor science. While it draws heavily from all of them, yet it is distinct from them. Contemporary political theory is trying to attempt a synthesis between political philosophy and political science.

1.1.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL THEORY

Main characteristics of political theory as discussed by Biju have been given as below:

1. Political theory is an intellectual and moral creation of man. It is the speculation of a single individual who is attempting to offer us a theoretical explanation of the political reality i.e. the phenomena of the state. Every theory by its very nature is an explanation, built upon certain hypothesis which may be valid or not and which are always open to criticism. Thus, political theory is a number of attempts made by thinkers from Plato onwards to unravel the mysteries of man's political life. They have given numerous modes of explanations that may or may not convince human beings. An attempt to seek the truth as the thinker sees it and it is usually expressed through a treatise such as Plato's ***Republic***, Aristotle's ***Politics***, Machiavelli's ***Prince***, Hobbes' ***Leviathan*** and John Rawls' ***A Theory of Justice***.

2. Political theory contains an explanation of man, society and history. It probes the nature of man and society: how a society is made up and how it works; what are the important elements; what are the sources of conflict in the society and how they can be resolved.

3. Political theory is discipline based. It means that though the phenomena which the theorist seeks to explain remains the same i.e. the state. Thus we are confronted by a variety of political theories, each distinguished by a discipline on which it is based.

4. Political theory not only comprehends and explains the social and political reality but is also actively engaged in hastening the process of history. The task of political theory is not only to understand and explain but also to device ways and means to change the society. As Laski put it, the task is not merely one of description of what it is but also a prescription of what ought to be. Thus, political theory recommends agencies of action as well as means of reform, revolution or conservation. It contains programmes that embody both ends and means. Political theory plays a double role: to understand society and to suggest how to remove the imperfections.

5. It also includes political ideology. Ideology in simple language means a system of beliefs, values and ideals by which people allow themselves to be governed. We find a number of ideologies in the modern world such as liberalism, Marxism, socialism etc. All political theories from Plato to date reflect a distinct ideology of the writer. Political theory in the form of political ideology includes a system of political values, institutions and practices, which a society has adopted as its ideal. For example, all political theories adopted by Western Europe and America have been dominated by liberalism and the theories accepted by China and erstwhile USSR were influenced by a particular brand of Marxism. Each brand of theory or ideology in this sense claims for itself the attributes of universality and compels others to accept it, leading to what is generally known as 'ideological conflicts'.

In brief, political theory is associated with the explanation and evaluation of the political phenomena. These phenomena can be examined as a statement of ideas and ideals, as an agent of socio-economic change, and as an ideology.

The nature of political theory can also be understood from the kind of issues it has been grappling Greek period. Different political issues have been dominant in different epochs. Classical political theory was primarily concerned with the search for a perfect political order. As such it analyzed the basic issues of political theory such as the nature and purpose of the state, basis of political authority, the problem of political obligation and political disobedience. It was more concerned with what the state ought to be i.e. the ideal state. The rise of modern nation-state and the industrial revolution gave birth to a new kind of society, economy and polity. Modern political theory starts from individualism and made liberty of the individual as the basic issue. Hence it was concerned with issues like rights, liberty, equality, property and justice for the individual, how to create a state based upon individual consent, and a right to change the government. At one time, it also became important to explain the interrelation between one concept and the other such as liberty and equality, justice and liberty, equality and property.

Empirical political theory shifted the emphasis from concepts to the political behaviour of man. It invented a number of new issues largely borrowed from other social sciences. These were authority, legitimacy, elite, party, group, political system and

political culture. With the resurgence of value-based political theory, there is once again an emphasis on the issues of freedom, equality and justice. Apart from them, some new issues have come to dominate the scene such as feminism, multiculturalism, environmentalism, ecology, post-colonialism, post-modernism, community and subalterianism.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 2

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

3. How you distinguish Political Theory from Political Thought?

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4. Whereas a political philosopher is a political theorist, but a political theorist may not necessarily be a political philosopher. How do you understand this?

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3. Political theory when opposed to political philosophy is political science. Comment.

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4. Classical political theory was primarily concerned with the search for a perfect political order. Explain.

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1.1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF POLITICAL THEORY

The significance of political theory can be derived from the purpose that it serves or supposed to serve and the task performed by it. Biju explains the significance of political theory as following:-

1. Political theory is a form of all embracing system of values which a society adopts as its ideal with a view to understand the political reality and, if necessary, to change it. It involves speculation at higher level about the nature of good life, the political institutions appropriate for its realization, to what end the state is directed and how it should be constituted to achieve those ends. The significance of political theory lies in providing the moral criteria that ought to be used to judge the ethical worth of a political state and to propose alternative political arrangements and practices likely to meet the moral standards.

2. The importance of political theory lies in providing a description of the political phenomena; a non-scientific and a scientific explanation; proposals for the selection of political goals and political action, and; moral judgment. The fundamental question facing human beings has been 'how to live together'. Politics is an activity engaged with the management of the collective affairs of society.

3. The significance of theory lies in evolving various doctrines and approaches regarding the nature and purpose of the state, the bases of political authority, vision of an ideal state, best form of government, relations between the state and the individual and basic issues such as rights, liberty, equality, property and justice. Again what has become important in our times is to explain the inter-relation between one concept and another such as the relationship between liberty and equality, equality and property, justice and property. This is as important as peace, order, harmony, stability and unity in the society. In fact peace and harmony in the society very much depends upon how we interpret and implement the values of liberty, equality and justice.

4. In the contemporary times, states face a number of problems such as poverty, over-population, corruption, racial and ethnic tensions, environment pollution,

conflicts among individuals, groups as well as nations. The task of political theory is to study and analyse more profoundly than others, the immediate and potential problems of political life of the society and to supply the practical politician with an alternative course of action, the consequences of which have been fully thought of. It helps us to understand the nature or' the socio-economic system and its problems like poverty, violence, corruption, and ethnicity. Since the task of political theory is not only to understand and explain the social reality but also to change it, political theory helps us to evolve ways and means to change society either through reform or revolution. When political theory performs its function well, it is one of the most important weapons of struggle for the advancement of humanity. To imbibe people with correct theories may make them choose their goals and means correctly so as to avoid the roads that end in disappointment.

1.1.6 MAJOR APPROACHES OF POLITICAL THEORY

Approaches to the study of political theory have been changing during the last two thousand years. Major schools that have helped in the development of key concepts of political theory have been explained below.

1.1.6.1 CLASSICAL APPROACH

Classical political theory starts from 6th century B.C. and covers the political ideas of a large number of Greek, Roman and Christian thinkers and philosophers. Plato and Aristotle are the two great thinkers of the classical period. They had enormous influence in their own times and on later thinking. Classical political theory includes politics, the idea of theory and the practice of philosophy. Politics referred to participation in the public affairs, theory referred to the systematic knowledge gained through observation, and philosophy referred to the quest for reliable knowledge – knowledge that would enable men to become wiser in the conduct of collective life. Thus, political theory was a "systematic inquiry to acquire reliable knowledge about matters concerning public affairs".

Classical political theory has certain specific characteristics. Firstly, it was dominated by philosophy. The great philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle were great because of the comprehensiveness and scope of their thought. They were more than political thinkers. The dimensions of political theory included description, explanation, prescription and evaluation. Secondly, there was no clear distinction between philosophical, theological and political issues. Political theory was not an autonomous subject as it is today. Thirdly, political theory was concerned with probing into issues, asking important questions and serving as a sort of conscience keeper of politics. Fourthly, classical tradition believed that political theory dealt with the political whole - the theory must be all-comprehensive and all-inclusive. It included ruling, warfare, religious practices, economic problems or relations between the classes and also beliefs such as God, justice, equality etc. The quest for an absolutely best form of government was also an important preoccupation of classical political theory. Fifthly, since classical tradition believed in the ultimate good, political good was a part of it. State was a part of the moral framework of man's earthly living. State was considered as a natural institution and prior to the individual because 'the individual when isolated is not self-sufficing and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole'. State was also an educational institution which made man a good citizen, sensitive to the recognition of law and virtue of civic obedience. The end of the state was the promotion of good life. Though there has been a debate about which comes first - the common good or the individual good, but the classical tradition believed that the common good was the good of the individuals as part and member of the society and sought by them precisely as members of society. The common good was more complete than the private good of the individual and it was this completeness 'which determined the greater excellence of the common good'. And lastly, an important theme of classical political tradition was the search for an ideal state and the most stable system of government. Classical theorists repeatedly asked questions like: Who should rule and why; what is the best form of government? Theory was preoccupied with analyzing the sources of conflict and to enunciate the principles of justice which might guide the political organization in discharging its distributive functions of assigning material and non-material goods. The search for an ideal state provided an invaluable means of practicing theory and of

acquiring experience in its handling. The trend of an idealist state as set by classical political theory had clear reflection on later political thinking. The classical political tradition -a tradition usually considered to include eighteen or so centuries sandwiched between Plato and Machiavelli was considerably richer and more varied. However, even differences that are more important and variations were yet to come. With Renaissance, Reformation and industrial revolution, new ideas and events shook the foundation of Western world. During this period a new school of political theory was born, which was later known as liberalism.

1.1.6.2 LIBERAL APPROACH

The long spell of Plato, Aristotle, S. Augustine, Cicero and other thinkers of classical age was broken in a variety of ways after the twin revolutions of Renaissance and Reformation in Europe from 15th century onwards, coupled with the industrial revolution later on. Renaissance produced a new intellectual climate, which gave birth to modern science and modern philosophy and a new political theory known as liberalism. This new political theory found expression in the writings of Grotius, Hobbes, Locke, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Jeremy Bentham, J.S. Mill, Herbert Spencer and a host of other writers.

Whereas classical political theory considered the moral development of individual and the evolution of the community as co-terminus, the liberal political theory developed the concept of sovereign individual. The central theme of this political theory was Individualism. It started with the belief in the absolute value of human personality and spiritual equality of all individuals and in the autonomy of individual will. Secondly, it believed in individual freedom in all spheres of life - political, economic, social, intellectual, religious etc. Freedom meant as freedom from all authority that is capable of acting arbitrarily and freedom to act in accordance with the dictates of 'right reason'. Thirdly, it brought in the concept of individual rights - that man is 'endowed by his creator with certain inalienable rights' commonly known as the natural rights of 'life, liberty and property'. Since man and his rights exist prior to the establishment of state, these cannot be bargained away when the state is established. Fourthly, the new theory

declared that state is not a natural institution but comes into existence by mutual consent for the sole purpose of preserving and protecting the individual rights, The relation between state and the individual is contractual and when the terms of the contract are violated, individuals not only the right but the responsibility to revolt and establish a new government. The state was not a natural institution as claimed by classical political theory but a machine devised by men for certain specific purposes such as law, order, protection, justice, and preservation of individual rights. The state is useful to man but he is the master. Social control is best secured by law rather than by command - the law which was conceived as being the product of individual will and the embodiment of reason. Fifthly, the new political theory dismissed the idea of common good and an organic community. Instead it gave the idea that 'government that governs' the least is the best' and the only genuine entity is the Individual. Political theory during this period was not searching for an Ideal State or a Utopia but was preoccupied with freeing the individual from the social and economic restraints and from the tyrannical and non-representative governments. In this context, it redefined the concept of state, relations between the individual and the state, and developed the concepts of rights liberty, equality, property, justice and democracy for the individual'

1.1.6.3 MARXIST APPROACH

Marxist political theory is based on the ideas of Karl Marx, Engels and their subsequent followers in the later half nineteenth century by their 'scientific socialism'. While socialism extends back far beyond Marx's time, it was he who brought together many ideas about the ills of society and gave them a great sense of urgency and relevancy. No political theory can ignore the study of Marxist history, politics, society and economics. The knowledge of Marxism has put us in a better position to analyse the socio, economic developments. Marxism introduced a new concept of philosophy conceived as a way to the liberation of mankind.

The task of knowledge, according to Marx, is not only to understand the world but also to change the material conditions of human life. He insisted that the salvation is to be found by man in this world itself and it laid in the revolutionary reconstitution of the

present society and the establishment of a socialist society. His complaint against liberal capitalism was that it was a civilization of property, inequality and family fortune for a few and most degrading conditions for the vast number of people. Socialism was an attempt to secure the necessary, if not sufficient, conditions for the realization of emancipation of mankind. It is the establishment of a society on rational basis—a society in which 'man shall not be exploited by man', a society in which men will have the full opportunity to develop their potentialities and personality, a classless and stateless society in which 'the free development of each shall be the condition for the free development of all'. Marxist political theory is a theory of social change and revolutionary reconstitution of society. In this context, Marxism consists of three inter-related elements:

- An examination and critique of the present and past societies. This is known as Dialectical materialism and historical materialism;
- The notion of an alternative model against a society based upon exploitation and divided among classes. The new society is based on the common ownership of the means of production in which human potential will be allowed to freely develop its manifold facets. Such a society will be classless and stateless;
- How to being about such a society'. Though there was a general agreement that capitalist system was unstable and crisis-ridden but the advent of socialism required a revolutionary action by the proletariat, whose growing impoverishment will lead to revolution, and establishment of a socialist state and society.

The central themes of Marxist political theory are mode of production, class division, class struggle, property relations, revolution and state as an instrument of class domination. Marxism also examined the nature of rights, liberty, equality, justice and democracy but came to the conclusion that in a class divided society, they are the prerogatives of the propertied class. Real liberty and equality can be achieved only in a classless and stateless society. Therefore Marxist political theory preoccupied itself with the establishment of a socialist state through revolutionary action.

Marxism as the economic, social and political theory and practice has originated in the works of Marx and Engels. It has been enriched by a number of revolutionaries, philosophers, academicians and politicians. In the twentieth century, the prominent

contributors to the Marxist thought were Lenin, Bukharin, Stalin, Rose Luxemburg, Gramsci, Lukacs, Austro-Marxists, the Frankfurt school, Herbert Marcuse, the New Left theorists, Euro-communists, Mao Tse Tung and host of others. Up to the First World War, Marxism was highly deterministic and represented a philosophy of socio-political changes which culminated in the Russian revolution. However, during the inter-war period and the post-second world war, Marxism developed more as a critique of present socio-economic and cultural conditions than a philosophy of revolutionary action. It is known as contemporary Marxism. It has been more concerned with the problems of superstructure, culture, art, aesthetics, ideology, alienation etc.

1.1.6.4 EMPIRICAL-SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

Empirical-scientific political theory developed in the United States of America. The study of political theory through scientific method and based upon facts is the core of this approach. The credit to development of this approach goes to the American social scientists. In the early twentieth century, Max Weber, Graham Wallas and Bentley gave an empirical dimension to the study of political theory and advocated that its study should be based upon 'facts' only. Another writer George Catlin emphasized that the study of political theory should be integrated with other social sciences such as sociology, psychology, anthropology etc. However, it was during the inter-war period and after the Second World War that a new theory was developed by the political scientists of Chicage University such as Charles Merrium, Harold Lasswell, Gosnell, and others like David Easton, Stuart Rice, V.O. Key and David Apter.

The new political theory shifted emphasis from the study of political ideals, values and institutions to the examination of politics in the context of individual and group behaviour. The new approach advocated that the method of studying should be through the behaviour of human beings as members of political community. The task of political theory is to formulate and systematize the concept of science of political behaviour in which emphasis is placed on empirical research than on political philosophy. A political theorist should clarify and criticize systems of concepts which have empirical

relevance to political behaviour. According to Easton, 'systematic theory corresponds at the level of thought to the concrete empirical political systems of daily life'.

Empirical-Scientific theory is different from the classical tradition in many respects. Firstly, the scientific theory believes that the political theory is to order, explain and predict the phenomena and not to evaluate it. Nor is it concerned with the creation of grand political Utopias. What is worth noting is that the relation with philosophy is completely severed. Political theory is meaningful to the point or degree it is verifiable.

Secondly, the study of political theory should be value free; it should concern itself with 'facts' only. The task of theory is to analyse the present political phenomena and not with the evaluation of what is happening and what should happen. The concern of political theory should not be with 'who rules, should rule or why?' but with only 'who does rule and how'. It should focus attention on the study of political behaviour of man, group and institutions irrespective of their good or bad character.

Thirdly, practical theory is not only concerned with the study of the state but also with the political process. Fourthly, scientific theory does not believe in critical function, that is, it should not question the basis of the state but should be concerned with maintaining the status quo, stability, equilibrium and harmony in the society. Fifthly, it developed many new concepts borrowed from other social sciences such as power, elite, decision-making, policy-making, functioning of structures, political system, political culture etc.

Because of too much stress on science, value-free politics, methods and its failure to study the pressing social and political issues, empirical political theory began to attract criticism after 1960s. The 'Behavioural Revolution' announced by David Easton laid less emphasis on scientific method and technique and showed greater concern for the public responsibilities of political theory. According to Elaine and Nathan Elaine empirical political theory is focused on explaining 'what is' through observation. In this approach, scholars seek to generate a hypothesis, which is a proposed explanation for some phenomena that can be tested empirically. After formulating a hypothesis, a study will be designed to test the hypothesis.

- Broadly speaking, the empirical approach seeks to discover and describe facts. Contrary to this, the normative approach seeks to determine and prescribe values.
- The empirical approach aims at making an empirical statement which is concerned with 'is' whereas the normative approach aims at making a normative statement which is concerned with what 'ought to be' or ' should be'.
- Empirical statement is concerned with a situation which can be observed by our sense-experience, which can be verified by repeated observation and whose accuracy can be tested. On the other hand, a normative statement tends to express preference for a particular type of order as dictated by a sense of duty or universal need or by commitment to moral principle or ideal. Normative statements are not capable of being discovered, described or verified by our sense-experience. A normative statement requires something to be done in order to serve an intrinsic value-which is an end-in-itself. On the other hand, an empirical statement requiring something to be done is intended to serve an instrumental value which is a means to some higher end. In short, it is the content of a statement, not its form, which makes it empirical or normative.
- The empirical approach remains largely descriptive while the normative approach is mainly prescriptive. Empirical approach seeks to discover laws that are unalterable. Hence, they are beyond man's control; one can discover and describe them. Normative approach is concerned with laws and conditions largely created or adopted by human society, which are alterable. One can examine how far they are morally right or wrong and then prescribe the right course.

The champions of empirical-scientific approach are very vocal in criticising the normative approach. They argue that there is no 'scientifically valid' or reliable method of determining what is morally right or wrong. The supporters of normative approach do not condemn the empirical approach as such, but they criticize its indifference towards values, particularly its ignorance of discrimination between higher and lower values.

1.1.6. 5 CONTEMPORARY APPROACH

Since 1970s, there has been a revival of interest in political theory in USA, Europe and other parts of the world. At the heart of this renaissance has been the emerging clash of values on the one hand and the changes in the humanities and social sciences, on the other. Moreover, the passing away of the shadows of Second World War, re-emergence of Europe, and crisis in the ideologies of socialism and Marxism brought about a new fluidity in political ideologies. Whether it is Marxism or socialism, liberalism or democracy - all stand challenged and new powerful social movements are seeking to redraw the issues in political theory. During the era of domination of behaviouralism, political theory was overpowered by political science. Theory was denied the status of a legitimate form of knowledge and inquiry. Though the hold of empiricism did not last long, yet it left an enduring legacy in the development of political and social sciences particularly in North America in the form of 'scienticism'. The encouragement for the regeneration of political theory came from many sources.

Thinkers like Thomas Kuhn, John Rawls, Herbert Marcuse, Eric Vogelin, Robert Nozick, Issah Berlin and Leo Strauss have contributed to the revival of political theory in the form of contemporary approach. Thomas Kuhn had challenged the whole model of what is science, there were others who felt that there are distinctive problems of understanding the social sciences and social issues which could not be grasped by the model of a unified science. This is because of two factors: Firstly, the object of social sciences is the self-interpreting social being and different thinkers interpret the social issues differently. Secondly, political theory cannot be limited to a systematic account of politics; it must also perform its critical role, i.e., its capacity to offer an account of politics which transcends those of lay men. As a result of the great debates, a number of important innovations in the study of political theory followed. Contemporary political theory has the following distinctive features:

1. An important feature of empirical theory was its break with history. Contemporary political theorists believe that political theory must not be disassociated from history. Political theory has Once again been renewed as history of political thought.

2. All knowledge about human activities involves interpretation and the interpretation can lead to different conclusions. Hence the idea of political theory being neutral and value-free is wrong.

3. Political understanding cannot escape the history of tradition. Knowledge is a part of the tradition and the process of understanding aspects of the world contributes to our self-understanding. However, the process of self-understanding is never complete. 'History does not belong to us but we belong to History'. There is no final truth. As such there can be no such thing as 'the only correct or the final' understanding of the political phenomena. The meaning of a text on political theory is always open to further interrelations from new perspectives.

4. Political theory is concerned with conceptual analysis. This involves seeing political theory as a systematic reflection upon the meaning of the key terms and concepts like sovereignty, democracy, right, liberty and justice.

5. There is a revival of normative element. Contemporary political theory is concerned with the systematic elaboration of the underlying structure of our moral and political activities, as well as examination and reconstruction of the principal political values such as justice, liberty, common good and community living.

6. Theory is concerned with both abstract theoretical questions and particular political issues. This is due to the belief that consideration of political concepts without detailed examination of the condition of their realization may not be able to bring out the actual meaning of the concept. Political theory should be problem-oriented and should probe issues like democracy, market, equal opportunities in such contexts. Political theory is a theoretical aspect of political science, trying to construct a theory on the basis of observation.

David Held has identified the following four distinct tasks of contemporary political theory:

- **Philosophical**: It is concerned with the normative and conceptual framework.

- **Empirical**: It is concerned with the problem of understanding and explanation of the concepts.
- **Historical**: It is concerned with the examination of the key concepts of political theory in historical context.
- **Strategic**: It is concerned with an assessment of the feasibility of moving from where we are to where we might likely to be. It is only through the combination of these elements that the central problems of political theory can be solved.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 3

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What are the basic traditions that the traditional approach identified with?

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2. The central theme of this political theory was Individualism. How do you understand this?

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3. Marxism consists of three inter-related elements. What they are?

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4. What are the basic propositions of scientific approach?

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5. David Held David Held has identified the four distinct tasks of contemporary political theory. What they are?

1.1.7 LET US SUM UP

In nutshell, it can be argued that political theory is a never ending dialogue. Speculation on politics will continue because it relates to the life and values by which men live and die. The goal of theory is to enhance our understanding of the social reality and create conditions for good life. In this context, both classical and empirical theories need to be synthesized. Political theory cannot be based purely either on philosophy or science. All issues raised by philosophy must be examined within modes of inquiry at empirical level. Conversely, the normative issues raised by political science cannot be evaded. For example, the meaning of justice, equality or freedom cannot be explained by science. Similarly, the problems of our times - whether they are racial and ethnic tensions and bigotry, overpopulation, unemployment, decaying cities, corruption, conflicts between the nations - are such that we need every available brain to work for their solution. While the political scientists produce more comprehensive explanation of how and why things happen in the world of politics, the task of political philosopher is to relate this knowledge with the big problems of mankind and to inquire into how these can help in enhancing liberty, equality, justice and fraternity in the society and among the peoples so as to create conditions for good life.

1.2 DECLINE AND RESURGENCE, DEBATE IN POLITICAL THEORY – LEO STRAUSS

- Dr. Suneel Kumar

STRUCTURE

1.2.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to:

- Know the state of political theory in various phases
- Understand the reasons for decline of political theory in the post-Second World War period
- Comprehend the factors that contributed to the revival of political theory from 1970s onwards
- Know the state of political theory in contemporary period

1.2.1 INTRODUCTION

In 1939, George H. Sabine in his article, “What is Political Theory” announced political theory as a “subject of perennial concern”. The Post Second World War era witnessed professional maturation of 'Political Science' as a discipline. The high point in the enthusiasm for a ‘science of polities’ came in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States and in the form of behaviouralism emphasis was given on the studies of only the observable and measurable behaviour of human being. Despite the prominence that political theory had acquired through the ages seemed to be coming to an end. Although political theory was flourishing in the 1950s and 1960s, yet it was declared dead or in terminal decline during this period.

Most of the political scientists of the 1950s and 1960s did not provide the modern age with a coherent conception of its needs and prescribe how we should live. They considered political theory primarily as a contemplative, reflective and explanatory enquiry concerned to understand rather than to prescribe. Since their writings did not confirm to their critics' narrow standards of what constituted true political philosophy, the latter predictably pronounced the discipline dead. Scholars such as David Easton, Alfred Cobban and Dante Germino declared political theory to be declining. Other two scholars Peter Laslett and Robert A. Dahl declared political theory as already dead. While Reimer saw it to be in the doghouse. The main thrust of their argument was that they associated political theory with political philosophy as Easton points out theory “lives parasitically on ideas a century old and what is more discouraging, we see little prospect of the development of new political synthesis. Its genesis had been synthesized in the background of a school called logical positivism known as Vienna Circle. The Vienna Circle laid stress on experience as a mode of knowledge construction.

However, there is a lack of unanimity among the scholars regarding the causes of the decline of political theory. According to Sonu Trivedi, a variety of reasons such as ignorance of the range of writings, behaviouralist triumphalism, and thinkers’ philosophically engagement with history of ideas were attributed for the decline of political theory. Views of different scholars regarding the decline of political theory have been discussed as following:-

1.2.2 DECLINE OF POLITICAL THEORY: VARIOUS VIEWS

1.2.2.1 DAVID EASTON'S VIEWS

David Easton in his article "The Decline of Modern Political Theory" had identified the following reasons for the decline of political theory:

1. **Historicism:** David Easton considered contemporary political scientists for the decline of political theory. According to Easton, they had been too busy analyzing political thoughts of the earlier centuries and tracing the political philosophy of individual political thinkers to the peculiar circumstances that existed in their times. This kind of historical analysis has played a major part in destroying the species of mental activity that has prevailed in literate civilizations and which emerges out of universal human needs. Hence, according to Easton historicism may be regarded as the major cause for the decline of political theory. Easton argued that writers like George H. Sabine, C.L. Wayper, A.J. Carlyle, R.W. Carlyle, William Dunning, McIlwain, Allen, and Lindsay have taken the subject very close to the discipline of history. A deep study of their works reveals that they have been motivated less by an interest in analyzing and formulating new value theory than in retailing information about the meaning, internal consistency, and historical development of contemporary and past political values. Easton was not satisfied with the contributions of those who subscribe to the way of historical analysis. They did not use the history of values as a device to stimulate their own thoughts on a possible creative redefinition of political goals. They used the history merely to understand the factual condition which gave rise to particular ideology of system or values. It was this historical approach which managed to crush life out of the value theory.

2. **Moral Relativism:** Growth of the relativistic attitude towards values or moral relativism was also responsible for the decline of political theory. David Easton accused David Hume and Max Weber of having relativistic attitude towards 'values'. They neglected what consequences they have for the 'facts.' A political scientist who is sensitive towards social problems, construct values and not

transplant them. Such a decline of interest in creative values and the consequent growth of moral relativism could be traced to the circumstances prevailing in Europe in 19th and early 20th centuries. Till the Russian revolution of 1917, capitalism, and democracy were the accepted and cherished values of the western European politics. Like the Russian Revolution which challenged the existing values, the rise of Fascism and Nazism also conflicted with the prevailing values. A deep conflict thus began between the existing values and the emerging new values and the conflict evoked a deep response from the political theorists. However, even in such a critical state of things, the political theorists failed to subject the old values to critical analysis and imaginative reconstruction. Easton stressed on the reviving critical theory which once again shall act as a bridge between the needs of society and the knowledge of social sciences. In Easton's view, it is not only the neglect of values theory but also the indifference of casual systematic or the empirically- oriented theory about political behaviour which has led to the decline of political theory.

3. **Confusion between Science and Theory:** David Easton accused that the use of both science and theory in a wrong way by the political scientists was also responsible for the decline of political theory. They confused science with theory and forgot that theory goes beyond science. It is one thing to apply the scientific method to research problem and quite another to evolve a theory of the research done. Any attempt to accumulate facts and to use them to evolve alternative mechanism process is not likely to lead by itself to the constitution of a scientific theory unless one identifies the major variables of political life and establish their relationship with each other. The traditionalists and the behaviouralists have both been engaged for too long in the controversy whether what ought to be is more important than what is or vice versa and whether insight alone is necessary for a proper understanding of politics or observation of the concrete political phenomena. The behaviouralists have unanimously advocated the importance of what is, but they have hardly cared to find out why or how it is so. It is here, that the role of theory comes in.

4. **Hyper-factualism:** - Easton stresses that hyper-factualism is another cause for the decline of political theory. Bryce is generally charged with overstressing hyper-factualism. But in his earlier work he had not neglected theory. He had advocated that the study of facts was meant to "lead up to the establishment of conclusions and the mastery of principles and unless it does this, it has no scientific values". But as he proceeds with his later work, and tried to reformulate theory to give it an empirical orientation, theory became subordinate to the accumulation of facts. There came a time when it was almost lost from sight. Easton accepted the need of fact in theory in order to make a scientific theory, but it is hyper-factualism which becomes a malady.

1.2.2.2 ALFRED COBBAN'S VIEWS

Alfred Cobban observed the following external and internal factors that led to the decline of political theory:-

- **External Factors:** Like David Easton, Alfred Cobban also argued that political theory was on the decline. He said that there has been an intellectual tradition, extending over some 2500 years of constant interaction between ideas and institutions. But no such synthesis has appeared since the end of the eighteenth century. In past also, political thought had ceased to exist during the hey-day of the Roman Empire. Cobban is apprehensive that the conditions of the contemporary world are reminiscent of the imperial Roman society and there is a great danger that the springs of meaningful and original political thought might get dried up in the desert of modern civilization.

  Cobban observed that the creation of a huge military complex, the size of a giant bureaucratic machine and irresistible increase in state intervention were inhibiting political thinking in the contemporary period. He argued that the totalitarian control exercised by the party elite was hostile to the growth of political theory in the communist countries. According to him the communist regimes are as repressive as any military machine and suppressed political dissent with an iron hand. Cobban thought that the situation in the western countries is not also

qualitatively different. The dominant political idea in these countries is that of democracy but there are very few political theorists of democracy today. Political thinkers of 19th and 20th century did not make any serious efforts to develop the theory of democracy to suit the new requirements.

- **Internal Condition of the Discipline:** Cobban feels that the internal condition in the discipline of Political Science is also partly responsible in the quality of political thought. He attributes the decline in political theory to absence of ethical purpose among the contemporary practitioners of the discipline. Classical political philosophers like Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Bentham, Mills, and Marx wrote with a clear objective in their mind and subscribed to certain ethical values. Cobban asserts that political theory from Plato to Marx was a branch of ethics and suggests that the decline of contemporary political theory is due to its historical and scientific approach which emphasizes the concept of a value free objectivist and empirical political science. Further, the existing exponents of the scientific methods in political science have insisted that the methods of natural science could be applied in absolute terms to the study of political phenomena as well. They forget that political theory has to cope with questions which the empirical methods of the physical sciences, with all its emphasis on exactness and verifiability, are unable to answer. A political scientist should be morally involved if he wants to contribute effectively to a discourse on politics. Political philosophy is dead and Cobban feels that empiricist and positivists have contributed a great deal to its extinction.

1.2.2.3 DANTE GERMINO'S VIEWS

Dante Germino in his book ***Beyond Ideology: The Revival of Political Theory*** discovered 'ideological reductionism' as the cause of decline of political theory. Germino opined that political theory was on the decline during greater part of the 19th and 20th century. He attributed this decline to positivism in earlier period and to ideology or the prevalence of political ideologies, culminating in Marxism in the later period. However, he believes that political theory is now again in ascendancy. According to him, the

traditional political theory is undergoing a noteworthy resurgence in the recent times. Its eclipse during the last 150 years was due to inimical intellectual forces and political movements of the time on the one hand, and the craze for science on the other. He believes that even during the heydays of positivism, philosophical currents of resistance were evident in the writings of Benedetto Croce, Henri Bergson, Julien Bevda, Max Scheler and others. This was followed by the partial survival of political theory in the elitist school of which Guido Dorso was the chief proponent. Above all, a full fledged revival of political theory was taking place in Michael Oakeshott, Hannah Arendt, Bertrand and de Journal, Leo Strauss and Eric Vogelin.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

3. The prominence that political theory had acquired through the ages seemed to be coming to an end with the rise of Behaviouralism. How do you understand this?

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4. According to Easton historicism may be regarded as the major cause for the decline of political theory. Explain.

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3. What are the external factors Cobban stated for decline of Political Theory?

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4. What are the basic propositions of scientific approach?

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5. What are the basic propositions advanced by Dante Germino in his book *Beyond Ideology: The Revival of Political Theory*?

1.2.3 RESURGENCE OF POLITICAL THEORY

In 1950s and 1960s the political theory is in a state of decline. The reason for this was the influence of historical approach, logical positivism, Marxism, hyper- factualism, growth of constitutional law, empirical political Sociology, on the minds of political thinkers. Nevertheless, Isaiah Berlin says that political theory is neither dead nor in the state of decline. Berlin challenges that there can never be any one kind of society and if even such a society exist the society's goals would always carry different and incomplete meanings to different persons in different situations. Thus he says that there cannot be an age without political philosophy. Berlin argued that as long as rational curiosity existed political theory would not die nor disappear. George H. Sabine also opined that "if political theory is systematic, disciplined investigation of political problems, then it is difficult to say that political theory was dead in 1950s and 1960s." According to him, political theory was alive in the works of Arendt, Oakeshott, Leo Strauss, John Rawls, Robert Nozick, Herbert Marcuse and Eric Vogelin, etc.

Hannah Arendt rejected the idea of hidden and anonymous forces in history. Like other leading scholars in the revival of political theory, Arendt also pointed to the essential incompatibility between ideology and political theory. She was aware of the loss of human experience in the modern world and desired a need to recover a sense of dignity and responsible freedom in human action, seeing it as a basis for the revival of political theory.

Oakeshott also stressed that philosophy served truth which was not determined by its historical setting. He wrote two books named ***Introduction to Leviathan*** (1946) and ***On Rationalism*** (1962). American scholar John Rawls also authored two books "Justice

as Fairness" (1957) and "A Theory of Justice"(1971). These were the important works on the revival of political theory. Hannah Arendt also has written a book "On human Conditions"(1958). This book is considered more important than "Theory of Justice" by John Rawls. Karl Popper wrote a book "Open Society and Its Enemies". In this book Popper characterizes democracy as welfare society, enlightened society and made other modifications in it. He criticized communism and called Plato, Hegel and Marx as enemies of open society.

Berlin has also written three books "Two Concepts of Liberty" (1958), "Does Political Theory Still Exist"(1962) and "Concepts and Categories"(1978). He accepted that the absence of commanding work and critical dimension that led to the declaration that political Theory was dead or dying. Further, in 1974, Robert Nozick wrote "Anarchy, State and Utopia" and rejuvenated political theory. This rejuvenation has been a return to the true tradition of the classics in which normative analysis uses empirical findings. Since 1970s similar approaches are being made by theorists in analysis and democracy. Since then political theory including critical political theory has been alive and has been using scientific politics to achieve progress. Thus political theory has not been killed by empirical analysis but has helped to progress better. The following new themes have surfaced during the resurgence of political theory:-

- **Communitarians:** Theorists such as Michael Walzer, Michael Sandel, Alistair Maclntyre and Charles Taylor belong to this school. They reject the liberal conception of individuated self and hold that self is part of social relations in which he/she is embedded.
- **Post-Modernism:** It got genesis in the writings of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-Francois Lyotard. These scholars attacked the universalistic foundations of political theory and stress on decentered, fragmented nature of human experience. Identity and culture are the prominent aspects on which post-modernists have emphasized.
- **Multiculturalism:** Scholars like Will Kymlicka, I.M. Young and Bhikhu Parekh have laid stress on the attribute of culture as context of experience and human well-being. They blame the contemporary political theory of being culture biased

and neglecting the concerns of different cultural groups. As such they have favoured-a regime of group differentiated right to address discrimination meted out to cultural identities as well as the ambit of democracy. Will Kymlicka's "Multicultural Citizenship" and Bhiku Parekh's "Rethinking Multiculturalism" are important works on multiculturalism.

- **Feminism:** The theorists of this school have attacked the alleged neutrality of public sphere. Instead, they locate structures of power that symbolize power of men over women. It neglects the aspect of gender and results in subjugation of women.
- **Environmentalism:** The theorists of this school have attacked the notion of progress that has led to depletion of flora and fauna over the years. Instead they place ecological components at the centre of political theory and emphasize its importance over other animate objects.

Thus, in brief, it can be argued that in 1950s and 1960s, factors such as historicism, hyper-factualism, moral relativism and ideological reductionism led to the decline of political theory. However, in 1970s onwards, works of scholars like Machel Oakeshott, Robert Nozick, Eric Vogelin, Hannah Arendt, John Rawls, F.W. Hayek, Isaiah Berlin, Bhiku Parekh and Karl Popper revived the political theory.

1.2.4 LEO STRAUSS AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Leo Strauss, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, whose death in October 1973 was a Leo Strauss, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, whose death in October 1973 was a great loss to political philosophy, is one of the most outstanding contemporary theorists and staunch critic of the behaviouralist approach. His impact on American philosophy and political science has been very great. In Chicago, there are a large number of political scientists who regard it as their privilege to be considered his disciples. In a way, he is the founder of a school of thought which believes in taking the study of political philosophers in particular, very seriously. His approach is objective and scientific. He takes interest in ancient political thought because he is deeply aware of the crisis of the modern civilization, and hopes that the crisis of our

time may enable us to understand ancient political thought in "an untraditional or fresh manner". Strauss also criticizes the view that all political theory is ideological in character, reflecting a given socio-economic interest. A political thinker who is not a philosopher may be interested in a specific order or policy but "the political philosopher is primarily interested in, or attached to, the truth".

With characteristic modesty, Strauss calls himself as principally a historian whose chief objective is to present the political thought of the great philosophers as they "intended it to be understood". His primary work in the field of political science lies in the study and reinterpretation of the political teachings of masters of political thought – Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke – but he has done it in the faith that his was necessary preliminary effort before the actual rebirth of political theory could take place. The classical political theory, in his view, can place a model of what a political theory ought to be before the political theorists of today.

Leo Strauss is one of the important philosophers who seriously criticized raw empiricism of Behaviouralists. He did not accept the appropriation of political science by the empiricists and the operationally minded such as Dahl. Strauss defended the ''old political science'' against the new political science. The new political science studied the ''sub-political'' in an effort to find what was ''susceptible of being analyzed.'' The concern with the observable ''sub-political'' came at the expense, however, of ''genuine wholes'' such as the common good. Thus, the new practitioners dominating the discipline, for instance, had chosen to replace the public interest with the interest group. Instead of understanding human activities in terms of political activities, which Strauss would regard as the highest, most distinctively human type of activity, the political science deals with the political as a function of the sub-political. While claiming itself as value neutral, the behavioural political science, Strauss believes, is committed to an implicit value judgement in favour of society grounded on "permissive egalitarianism" and promotes a creed which can be called "democratism". It "puts a premium on observations which can be made with the utmost frequency and, therefore, by people of the meanest capacity. Thus, it frequently culminates in observations made by people who are not intelligent about popole who are not intelligent".

Strauss argues that just as modern philosophy begins with an over-inflated sense of reason that privileges theory over practice and ends with a radical historicism that denies any meaning to reason outside of history, so too, modern political philosophy begins with the attempt to make the human being part of nature as defined by science and ends by denying any notion of nature all together.

Strauss makes a clear distinction between political theory and political philosophy and believes that they are both part of political thought. Political theory according to Strauss, is "the attempt truly to know the nature of political things". Philosophy is the "quest for wisdom" or "quest for universal knowledge, for knowledge of the whole'. Political thought extends to both political theory and political philosophy.

Strauss believes that values are an indispensable part of political philosophy, and cannot be excluded from the study of politics. All political action aims at either preservation or change, and is guided by some thought or evaluation of what is better and what is worse. A political scientist is expected to possess more than opinion. He must possess knowledge, knowledge of the good – of the good life or the good society.

If there is a distinctive politics in Strauss's writings, it concerns almost exclusively what could be called the politics of philosophy. Political philosophy meant for him not merely the philosophical treatment of politics, but the political treatment of philosophy. Strauss once declared his writings to be a contribution to the study of the "sociology of philosophy," by which he meant the study of philosophers as a class. What distinguishes all philosophers as a class from all non-philosophers is an intransigent desire to know, to know things from their roots or by their first principles. It is precisely because philosophy is radical that politics must be moderate. Accordingly, Strauss saw a permanent and virtually intractable conflict between the needs of society and the requirements of philosophy. Philosophy understood as the search for knowledge is based on the desire to replace opinion about all things with knowledge of all things. This desire to replace opinion with knowledge would always put philosophy at odds with the inherited customs, beliefs, and dogmas that shape and sustain social life. The politics of philosophy consists of the philosopher's twin needs to show a respect—a decent respect—for the opinions and beliefs that sustain the collective life of society and at the

same time to address and recruit new members into the ranks of the potential philosophers.

Strauss does not reject modern science, but he does object to the philosophical conclusion that "scientific knowledge is the highest form of knowledge" because this "implies a depreciation of pre-scientific knowledge." Strauss reads the history of modern philosophy as beginning with the elevation of all knowledge to science, or theory, and as concluding with the devaluation of all knowledge to history, or practice. In Strauss's words: "the root of all modern darkness from the seventeenth century on is the obscuring of the difference between theory and praxis, an obscuring that first leads to a reduction of praxis to theory (this is the meaning of so-called [modern] rationalism) and then, in retaliation, to the rejection of theory in the name of praxis that is no longer intelligible as praxis".

Strauss is highly critical of the artificial distinction which is now made between political science and political philosophy. "Originally", he writes, "political philosophy was identical with political science and it was the all-embracing study of human affairs. To-day, we find it cut into pieces which behave as if they were parts of a worm". The distinction between philosophy and science cannot be applied to the study of human affairs. There cannot be a non-philosophical political science or a non-scientific political philosophy. By emphasizing the historical aspects of political science too much, the historicists have divorced it from its scientific character and, by stressing the scientific character out of all proportion, those who advocate the scientific aspect of political science have tried to take away the very essence from it.

At the heart of Strauss' life's work was an examination of the profound tension in the Western tradition between reason, or the philosophical life, and revelation, or the religious life. While classical political philosophy and the Bible agree in significant measure about the content of morality and the mix of moral virtues, they differed, he argued, about whether the moral life culminated in devotion to the free exercise of human reason or in loving obedience to the one God. Restoring an appreciation of this tension and living the tension, Strauss contended, was crucial to the continued vitality of the West.

By respecting the competing truths contained in the two principal roots of Western civilization, Strauss exhibited decidedly more of the true liberal spirit than those who denounce him in the name of liberalism.

Strauss also provided powerful support for constitutional democracy through his unorthodox, spirited, and multi-layered readings of Greek political philosophy. The classics, he showed, furnished weighty arguments for limited government, representation of the people's interests in a regime that constrained popular will, and the indispensable role of education in the formation of responsible citizens.

The liberal education once built around the Great Books that Strauss championed and practiced also nourished the liberal spirit. It involved not the inculcation of a doctrine but the cultivation of an understanding of the material and moral preconditions of freedom, and of the political moderation that secures them. Indeed, study of the invigorating debate among the best minds across the centuries about what justice requires and what nobility demands itself provides a powerful lesson of moderation.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 2

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

5. Briefly state Isaac Berlin views on resurgence of Political Theory?

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6. Growing multiculturalism in the West is one of the important factor for the revival of political theory. Explain.

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3. Strauss defended the ‘‘old political science’’ against the new political science. Elaborate.

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4. If there is a distinctive politics in Strauss's writings, it concerns almost exclusively what could be called the politics of philosophy. How do you understand this?

5. "The root of all modern darkness from the seventeenth century on is the obscuring of the difference between theory and praxis…." Leo Strauss. Comment.

1.2.5. LET US SUM UP

During the 1950s and 1960s, there was strong perception among the significant section of the Political Scientists that political theory is on the verge of extinction. Some of the scholars like Alfred Cobban has alleged that political theory is in decline. Cobban's writings obviously captured the mood of a sizeable body of political scientists, who infact declared the death of political theory. But this perception is seriously in error and that its continued acceptance only obscures the fact that an extensive and significant effort is being made at the present time to restore political theory as a tradition of inquiry. In reality, what Cobban has described as a decline in political theory is actually a crisis in positivist political science. He has chronicled the inevitable demise of political theory within the positivist universe of discourse, where the "fact-value" dichotomy reigns as dogma. The Cobban position fails to recognize that political theory is an experiential science of right order in human society and that theory can never be redeemed or intellectually legitimized by indulgence in subjective "value" speculation. Only by virtue of the recovery of a sound ontology and an adequate epistemology will political theory be able to flourish as it once did; this will require an abandonment of the physicalist interpretation of experience that has for decades been dominant in political science. Such

a major philosophical reconstruction is now under way in Political Science discipline and already has produced sufficiently significant results to warrant the judgment that we may now be entering a period that will witness the renaissance of political theory in the grand manner. Leo Strauss with his philosophical approach is one of the scholars who contributed to the revival of political philosophy/theory.

1.2.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

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1.3 HISTORICISM, POSITIVISM AND LOGICAL POSITIVISM

- **Dr. Suneel Kumar**

STRUCTURE

1.3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to understand:

- Meaning and definitions of Historicism
- Debates and variants of Historicism
- Karl Popper's Critique of Historicism

- August Comte's ideas on Positivism
- Logical Positivism and its criticism

1.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Historicism is a mode of thinking. This mode of thinking assigns a central and basic significance to a specific context, such as historical period, geographical place or local culture. Generally, it is in contrast to individualist theories of knowledge such as empiricism and rationalism, which neglect the role of traditions.

Historicism is a position that holds that all knowledge and cognition are historically conditioned. It is also widely used in diverse disciplines to designate an approach from a historical perspective. The term is used both in the pejorative and neutral sense. Historicism in the most narrow sense signifies a philosophical position that appeared in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, primarily in Germany, held by a number of thinkers in diverse disciplines, such as philosophy, history, law, and economics. Historicism challenged a progressive view of history that interpreted history as a linear, uniform process that operated according to universal laws, a view widely held by thinkers since the Enlightenment. Historicism stressed the unique diversity of historical contexts and stressed the importance of developing specific methods and theories appropriate to each unique historical context.

Historicism rejects notions of universal, fundamental and immutable interpretations. Therefore, it also tends to be relativist. It is an outlook that history is governed by historical laws or principles and, further, that history has a necessary direction and end-point. This being so, historicists believe that the aim of philosophy—and, later, history and social science—must be to predict the future course of society by uncovering the laws or principles that govern history.

1.3.2 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF "HISTORICISM"

Historicism as Morris R. Cohen argues is "a faith that history is the main road to wisdom in human affairs." Friedrich Engel-Janesi opines historicism as:

> That attitude which was centered around history which saw most of the spheres of intellectual life as permeated by history, which made history the magistra, if not of active life at least, to a great extent, of theoretical life, will be understood here under the term "historicism."

Scholars like Dwight E. Lee and Robert N. Beck define the historicism as a "…the belief that the truth, meaning, and value of anything, i.e., the basis of any evaluation, is to be found in its history", and, more narrowly these scholars see it as a an "…antipositivistic and antinaturalistic view that historical knowledge is a basic, or the only, requirement for understanding and evaluating man's present political, social, and intellectual position or problem."

From the above given definitions one can argue that historicism has to do with explanation or evaluation by means of history and with the belief that historical knowledge is in some sense distinctively important in human affairs.

1.3.3 HISTORICISM: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The term "historicism", which is used both in the negative and neutral sense in its narrow sagacity, signifies a philosophical position that appeared in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, primarily in Germany. This was held by a number of thinkers in diverse disciplines, such as philosophy, history, political science, law, and economics. This philosophy challenged a progressive view of history that interpreted history as a linear, uniform process that operated according to universal laws, a view widely held by thinkers since the Enlightenment.

The earlier formulations of historicism were made by French philosopher Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), Italian theorist G. B. Vico (1668-1744), and German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803). Vico and Herder developed the archetypal models of historicism. Vico criticized the concept that truth transcends history. He argued that truth is conditioned by human history. Herder rejected central ideas of the Enlightenment, such as a historical view of humanity, concept of universal rationality, and belief in the progress of human history according to the development of reason.

These ideas of the Enlightenment were built upon the presuppositions that there was only one kind of rationality applicable to all people and cultures and that human history is a linear process of progress whose pattern of development was the same for all. Herder argued that each historical period and culture contains a unique value system. He conceived history as the aggregate of diverse and unique histories and; stressed on the importance of understanding the unique context of each historical period in order to make an authentic interpretation of the past.

In nineteenth century Europe, particularly in Germany, historicism flourished in various disciplinary areas. In the field of law, Friedrich Carl von Savigny (1779–1861) developed the German Historical School of Law in opposition to theorists of Natural law of the Enlightenment. He argued that laws, like language, reflect the unique history and customs of each region or race. In economics, Friedrich List (1789-1846) criticized the idea of the universal economic laws of classical economics and argued that economic principles and policies had to be made according to unique historical contexts. List's ideas influenced Gustav von Schmoller (1838–1917), a German economic theorist who also held a historicist perspective.

Historicism had developed completely with writings of German philosopher G.H. F. Hegel. This can be seen in "Dialectic" of Hegel which became an influential philosophy in the 19th century Europe. Famous philosopher Karl Marx was also influenced by Hegel. Therefore, in his writings, Karl Marx also contains elements of historicism. The term has also been associated with the empirical social sciences and the work of Franz Boas. The Austrian-English philosopher Karl Popper attacked historicism. In his book, ***The Poverty of Historicism***, he has identified historicism with the view that there are "inexorable laws of historical destiny", which view he warned against. But, this is in sharp contrast with the contextually relative interpretation of historicism that its proponents argue for. Talcott Parsons had also criticized historicism as a case of idealistic fallacy in his study ***The Structure of Social Action*** (1937). Major historical theorists include Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), Johann Gustav Droysen (1808–1884), and Friedrich Meinecke (1862–1954). They opposed a progressive view of history, which interprets history as a process of uniform development based upon the progress of reason. They were also critical of the speculative interpretation of history as exemplified by

Hegel. They argued that there were diverse and unique characteristics to each region and people, which were irreducible to abstract uniform patterns based upon abstract speculative ideas in philosophy. Ranke, for example, approached history based upon a critical examination of primary documents and sources as opposed to Hegel's speculative approach.

1.3.4 DEBATE/VARIANTS/TYPES OF HISTORICISM

Historicism stressed the unique diversity of historical contexts. It stressed the importance of developing specific methods and theories appropriate to each unique historical context. Historicism also often challenged the concept of truth and the notion of rationality of modernity. Modern thinkers consider reason as a universal faculty of the mind which is free of interpretation that can grasp universal and unchanging truth. Historicism questioned this notion of rationality and truth. Thus these thinkers argue for the historical context of knowledge and reason. Although individual theories vary as to how and to what extent knowledge is historically conditioned, historicism is an explicit formulation of the historicity of knowledge. The major question to historicism is its relativist implications. If all knowledge is conditioned by history, there is no objectivity or universality in knowledge. The term "historicism" is used in several different fields of study such as philosophy, anthropology, theology, economics and political science to indicate some widely differing lines of thought:

1.3.4.1 HEGELIAN HISTORICISM

Hegelian Historicism is the position, adopted by G.H.F. Hegel that all human societies and all human activities are defined by their history, and that their essence can be sought only through understanding that. He further argued that the history of any such human endeavour not only builds upon, but also reacts against, what has gone before a position he developed from his famous dialectic teachings of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Hegel argued that to understand why a person is the way he is, you must put that person in a society; and to understand that society, you must understand its history, and the forces that shaped it. He is famously quoted as claiming that

"Philosophy is the history of philosophy." Right Hegelians or Old Hegelians who were the followers of Hegel in the early 19th century took his philosophy in a politically and religiously conservative direction. They took Hegel's conception of human societies as entities greater than the individuals who constitute them to influence 19th Century romantic nationalism and its 20th Century excesses. The Young Hegelians or Left Hegelians, by contrast, took Hegel's thoughts on societies shaped by the forces of social conflict for a doctrine of progress, and Karl Marx's theory of "historical inevitabilities" was influenced by this line of thought.

1.3.4.2 BIBLICAL HISTORICISM

This is a Protestant theological belief that the fulfilment of biblical prophecy has taken place throughout history and continues to take place today as opposed to other beliefs which limit the time-frame of prophecy fulfilment to the past, or to the future.

1.3.4.3 ANTHROPOLOGICAL HISTORICISM

This perspective is associated with the empirical social sciences and particularly with the work of the German-American anthropologist Franz Boas (1858-1942). This perspective combines diffusionism – the idea that all of culture and civilization was developed only once in ancient Egypt and then diffused throughout the rest of the world through migration and colonization – with historical particularism which says that one has to carry out detailed regional studies of individual cultures to discover the distribution of culture traits, and to understand the individual processes of culture change at work.

1.3.4.4 NEW HISTORICISM

New Historicism is the name given to a movement which holds that each epoch has its own knowledge system, with which individuals are inexorably entangled. Given that, post-structuralists then argue that all questions must be settled within the cultural and social context in which they are raised, and that answers cannot be found by appeal to some external truth.

1.3.4.5 Modern Historicism

Within the context of 20th-century philosophy, debates continues as to whether a historical and immanent methodologies were sufficient to understand meaning — that is to say, "what you see is what you get" positivism — or whether context, background and culture are important beyond the mere need to decode words, phrases and references. While post-structural historicism is relativist in its orientation, that is, it sees each culture as its own frame of reference, a large number of thinkers have embraced the need for historical context, not because culture is self-referential, but because there is no more compressed means of conveying all of the relevant information except through history. This view is often seen as being rooted in the work of Benedetto Croce. Recent historians in this tradition include Thomas Kuhn.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

7. Historicism is a mode of thinking. Elaborate.

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8. Herder argued that each historical period and culture contains a unique value system. How do you understand this?

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3. Briefly state Hegel's contribution to Historicism.

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4. What do you understand about new Historicism?

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1.3.5 KARL POPPER'S CRITIQUE OF HISTORICISM

Sir Karl Raimund Popper (1902 -1994) popularly known as Karl Popper was an Austrian-British philosopher and professor and, is generally regarded as one of the greatest philosophers of Science of the 20th century. He authored two famous books, *The Poverty of Historicism* (1944) and *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945). He describes historicism as "a methodology of the social sciences that emphasizes their historical character and aims at historical prediction." In *The Poverty of Historicism* Karl Popper sought to persuade the people of both the danger and the bankruptcy of the idea of historicism. *The Poverty of Historicism* was first written as a paper which was read in 1936, then updated and published as a book. The book is a treatise on scientific method in the social sciences. Popper defines historicism as: "an approach to the social sciences which assumes that historical prediction is their principal aim…". He considers it as a "…belief… that it is the task of the social sciences to lay bare the law of evolution of society in order to foretell its future… might be described as the central Historicist doctrine." He distinguishes two main strands of historicism, a "pro-naturalistic" approach which "favours the application of the methods of physics", and the "anti-naturalistic" approach which opposes these methods.

The first two parts of the book contain Popper's exposition of historicist views both pro-naturalistic and anti-naturalistic, and the second two parts contain his criticism of them. Popper concludes by contrasting the antiquity of historicism which, for example, Plato is said to have espoused with the claims of modernity made by its twentieth century adherents. In The Open Society and Its Enemies, Popper attacks "historicism" and its proponents, among whom he identifies and singles out Plato, Hegel and Marx — calling them all "enemies of the open society". The objection he makes is that historicist positions, by claiming that there is an inevitable and deterministic pattern to history, abrogate the democratic responsibility of each one of us to make our own free contributions to the evolution of society, and hence lead to totalitarianism.

Another of his targets is what he calls "moral historicism", the attempt to infer moral values from the course of history. This may take the form of conservatism, positivism or futurism. Futurism must be distinguished from prophecies that the right will prevail: these attempt to infer history from ethics, rather than ethics from history, and are therefore historicism in the normal sense rather than moral historicism.

Popper's critique of idea of historical prediction can broadly be split into three areas: fundamental problems with the idea itself, common inconsistencies in the arguments of historicists, and the negative practical effects of implementing historicist ideas. Popper identified the following fundamental problems with historicist theory:

- A description of the whole of society is impossible because the list of characteristics making up such a description would be infinite. If we cannot know the whole of the present state of mankind it follows that we cannot know the future of mankind. "If we wish to study a thing, we are bound to select certain aspects of it. It is not possible for us to observe or to describe a whole piece of the world, or a whole piece of nature; in fact, not even the smallest whole piece may be so described, since all description is necessarily selective."

- Human history is a single unique event. Knowledge of the past therefore does not necessarily help one to know the future. Popper argues:

  > The evolution of life on earth, or of human society, is a unique historical process… Its description, however, is not a law, but only a singular historical statement."

  Study of history may reveal trends. However there is no guarantee that these trends will continue. In other words: they are not laws; "a statement asserting the existence of a trend at a certain time and place would be a singular historical statement and not a universal law." In addition, given that historians are interested in the uniqueness of past events, it may be said that future events will possess a uniqueness that cannot be known in advance.

- Individual human action or reaction can never be predicted with certainty, therefore neither can the future: "the human factor is the ultimately uncertain and wayward element in social life and in all social institutions. Indeed this is the

element which ultimately cannot be completely controlled by institutions; for every attempt at controlling it completely must lead to tyranny; which means, to the omnipotence of the human factor – the whims of a few men, or even one." Popper asserts that psychology cannot lead to a complete understanding of "the human factor". Because according to him 'human nature' varies considerably with the social institutions, and its study therefore presupposes an understanding of these institutions.

- A law, natural/scientific or social, may enable us to exclude the possibility of certain events but it does not allow us to narrow down the range of possible outcomes to only one. This follows from Popper's theory of science: a hypothesis is proposed and is then subjected to rigorous tests which aim to disprove the hypothesis. If no tests disprove the hypothesis it may become known as a law but in fact remains simply a so-far-unfalsified hypothesis. Equally, examples of where theories are correct are useless in proving the validity of the theory.
- It is logically impossible to know the future course of history when that course depends in part on the future growth of scientific knowledge which is unknowable in advance.

Popper has also identified the common inconsistencies in the arguments of historicists which are given as below:

- Historicists often require the remodeling of man to become fit for the future society or hasten the arrival of this society. Given that society is composed of mankind, remaking man for a particular society can lead to any type of society. Also, a need to remodel man suggests that without this remodeling, the new society may not come about, and is therefore not inevitable.
- Historicists are bad at imagining conditions under which an identified trend ceases. Historical generalizations may be reduced to a set of laws of higher generality i.e. one could say that history depends upon psychology. However in order to form predictions from these generalizations we also need specific initial conditions. To the extent that conditions change or are changing, any 'law' may apply differently and trends may disappear.

- Historicism tends to mistake historical interpretations for theories. When studying history we can only examine a limited aspect of the past. In other words we must apply a 'historical interpretation'. It is necessary to appreciate a plurality of valid of interpretations although some may be more fertile than others.
- Confusing ends with aims: historicism tends to foster the idea that the aims of society are discernible in the trends of history, or what will inevitably come to pass becomes that which should come to pass. The aims of society may be more usefully thought as a matter of choice for that society.

Popper argues that following negative practical effects can be seen as a result of the implementing historicist ideas:

- Unintended consequences: The implementation of historicist programmes such as Marxism often means a fundamental change to society. Due to the complexity of social interaction this results in lots of unintended consequences. Equally it becomes impossible to tease out the cause of any given effect so nothing is learnt from the experiment / revolution.
- Lack of information: Large scale social experiments cannot increase our knowledge of the social process because as power is centralized to enable theories to put into practice, dissent must be repressed, and so it is harder and harder to find out what people really think, and so whether the utopian experiment is working properly. This assumes that a dictator in such a position could be benevolent and not corrupted by the accumulation of power, which may be doubted.

Besides above, Popper rejects the notion that history cannot be subject to experiment and that any 'laws of history' can only apply to a particular historical period. Both of these ideas are treated as typical of the anti-naturalistic Historicist approaches by Popper. However, he concedes that historicism has an appeal as an antidote to the idea that history is shaped by the actions of 'great men'. As an alternative to historicism Popper puts forward his own preference for "piecemeal social engineering" whereby small and reversible changes are made to society in order to be best able to learn from the changes made. The unpredictability of the future makes the effect of any larger changes random

and untraceable. Small changes enable one to make limited, but testable and therefore falsifiable statements about the effect of social actions.

In brief, Popper uses the term 'historicism' as a label for a variety of theories which are in some respects quite different. As Richard Hudelson observes, Popper divides historicist theories into two main camps: anti-naturalistic theories which stress the inapplicability of the methods of the natural sciences to social systems and pro-naturalistic theories which stress the unity of scientific method. Historicist sets out to emulate the methods of the natural sciences. However, given the nature of subject matter, popper argues that he cannot formulate laws that are as precise as those of the natural sciences. Popper argues that there cannot be developmental laws of the kind the historicist claims to discover; that id there were such laws we could never know them and; that the historicist confuses mere empirical trends with genuine laws. Thus he has objected to Historicism on the grounds that it leads to an inevitable and deterministic pattern to history, and therefore abrogates the democratic responsibility of each one of us to make our own free contributions to the evolution of society, and hence leads to totalitarianism.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 2

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

9. How Karl Popper defines Historicism?

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10. What are major arguments advanced by Karl Popper in his book *The Poverty of Historicism*?

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3. State some of the fundamental problems identified by Popper with historicist theory.

4. Popper has identified the common inconsistencies in the arguments of historicists. What are they?

5. How do you understand the "piecemeal social engineering" that Popper advocated as an alternative to Historicism.

1.3.6 POSITIVISM: AUGUST COMTE'S IDEA, LOGICAL POSITIVISM AND CRITIQUE OF POSITIVISM

Positivism is a way of thinking which based on the assumption that it is possible to observe social life and establish reliable, valid knowledge about how it works. This knowledge can then be used to affect the course of change and improve the human condition. Positivism also stresses only to deal with what can be observed with the senses. Moreover, it suggests that theories of social life should be built in a rigid, linear, and methodical way on a base of verifiable fact. Positivism had emerged as a philosophical paradigm in the 19th century with Auguste Comte's rejection of metaphysics and his assertion that only scientific knowledge can reveal the truth about reality.

1.3.6.1 DEFINING THE TERM "POSITIVISM"

According to Anthony Giddens, positivism "… is a form of the methodological tenet of the unity of science and the axiological tenet of neutrality but not a form of phenomenalism." G. Jakobsen argues that "Positivism in general refers to philosophical positions that emphasize empirical data and scientific methods. This tradition holds that

the world consists of regularities, that these regularities are detectable, and, thus, that the researcher can infer knowledge about the real world by observing it."

Thus, in brief, it can be argued that positivism asserts that real events can be observed empirically and explained with logical analysis. The criterion for evaluating the validity of a scientific theory is whether our knowledge claims are consistent with the information we are able to obtain using our senses. In other words, it argues that all authentic knowledge allows verification and that all authentic knowledge assumes that the only valid knowledge is scientific.

1.3.7 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There are distinct anticipations of positivism even in ancient philosophy. It is part of a more general ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry, notably laid out by Plato. Later it was reformulated as a quarrel between the sciences and the humanities, Plato elaborates a critique of poetry from the point of view of philosophy in his dialogues Phaedrus 245a, Symposium 209a, Republic 398a, Laws 817 and Ion. Wilhelm Dilthey popularized the distinction between humanities and natural science. The medieval nominalist William of Ockham had clear affinities with modern positivism.

Positivism clearly has its proximate roots, however, in the French Enlightenment, which stressed the clear light of reason, and in the 18th century British empiricism, particularly that of Hume and of Bishop George Berkeley, which stressed the role of sense experience. Comte was influenced specifically by the Enlightenment Encyclopaedists such as Denis Diderot, and Jean d'Alembert, in his social thinking. Its tradition can also be traced in the work of Galileo Galilei (1564–1642). Galilei in his work Siderius Nuncius (The Starry Messenger) (1610) had made systematic observations of the Moon, the stars, and the moons of Jupiter. His methods stood in contrast to the prevailing approach of that time, which had been advocated by Aristotle and the Church. In the same century Francis Bacon introduced a combination of induction and experiment into science as he wished to combine experience with record keeping, and thus rejected the deductive method of the time.

Along with Francis Bacon, David Hume also provided the basic framework for the modern naturalist tradition. Positivism adopted David Hume's theory of the nature of reality. Hume believed that reality consists of atomistic and independent events. He believed in the use of the senses to generate knowledge about reality and thus stressed on the scientific method. He thought that philosophical and logical reasoning could lead us to "see" non-existing links between events occurring simultaneously. Based on their works theorists have found fuel to their claim that there exists a real world independent of our senses. Modern scientists following the naturalist tradition argue that the regularities of this real world can be experienced through systematic sense perceptions. Enlightenment thinkers such as Saint-Simon (1760–1825), Pierre-Simon Laplace(1749–1827) and August Comte (1798–1857) believed the scientific method, the circular dependence of theory and observation, must replace metaphysics in the history of thought. Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) reformulated positivism as a foundation of social research.

However, French scholar August Comte (1798–1857) who is also regarded as the "Father of Sociology", has coined the term "Positivism". Comte's epistemological argument was consistent with that of his naturalist predecessors. According to Comte, scientific knowledge about the real world comes from empirical observation. He also drew a distinction between empirical and normative knowledge. Information or knowledge that was not empirical was not considered by Comte to be knowledge about the real world, and thus fell outside the scope of science.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 3

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

11. How do you understand positivism with the definitions you have gone through?

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12. Trace historical influences on the growth of positivism?

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3. Positivism adopted David Hume's theory of the nature of reality. Elaborate.

1.3.8 AUGUST COMTE AND POSITIVISM

The French philosopher August Comte (1798-1857) developed a system of positive philosophy. He tried to create a new science of society, which would not only explain the past of mankind but also predict its future course. He held that science and history culminate in a new science of humanity, to which he gave the name "sociology." Comte was a scientific thinker, in the sense of systematically reviewing all available data, with a conviction that only after science was reorganized in its totality could men hope to resolve their social problems. He produced his major work, the six volumes ***The Course of Positive Philosophy*** which were published between 1830 and 1842. The first three volumes dealt chiefly with the physical sciences such as mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology already in existence. The latter three emphasized the inevitable coming of social science.

Observing the circular dependence of theory and observation in science, and classifying the sciences in this way, Comte may be regarded as the first philosopher of science in the modern sense of the term. For him, the physical sciences had necessarily to arrive first, before humanity could adequately channel its efforts into the most challenging and complex human society itself. His View of Positivism therefore set-out to define the empirical goals of sociological method. For Comte, additionally, the methodology is a product of a systematic reclassification of the sciences and a general conception of the development of man in history: the law of the three stages.

August Comte was the first person to proclaim "Law of Three Stages", which became the corner stone of his thought. Comte had been borrowed these famous laws from R. J. Turgot, Y. B.Vico and Saint-Simon. The law states that human thought has

undergone three separate stages in its evolution and development. According to him human thought as well as social progress pass through three important stages. These three stages are the universal law of human progress. These are common in case of the development of human knowledge as well as social evolution. Human individual is a staunch believer during childhood, then becomes a critical metaphysician in adolescence and becomes a natural philosopher during manhood. A similar case of development takes place in case of human society. Law of Three Stages not only talks about the progressive transformation of society but also explain the transformation in minds of the people. The evolution of human mind goes hand in hand with a typical form of organisation of society. The period of growth and development in society is has been explained by Comte through three different theoretical states is given below:

1. Theological/ Fictitious Stage: During the primitive stage, the early man believed that all phenomena of nature are the creation of the divine or supernatural. The primitive man and children do not have the scientific outlook, therefore it is characterised by unscientific outlook. They failed to discover the natural causes of various phenomena and hence attributed them to supernatural or divine power. For example, primitive men saw God everywhere in nature. They supposed that excess or deficiency of rain due to Godly wrath; such a casual explanation would be in terms of theological or fictitious explanation.

2. Metaphysical /Abstract Stage: Metaphysical stage is an extension of theological stage. During this period, reason and rationality was growing. Reason replaced imagination. People tried to believe that God is an abstract being. Soul is the spark of divine power i.e. inform of abstract forces. It is believed that an abstract force guides and determines the events in the world. Metaphysical thinking discards belief in concrete God. The nature of enquiry was legal and rational in nature. For instance Classical Hindu Indian society where the principle of transmigration of soul, the conception of rebirth, notions of pursuant has were largely governed by metaphysical uphill.

3. Positive/Scientific Stage: This positive stage is also known a scientific stage. The dawn of 19th century marked the beginning of this stage. It is characterised by scientific knowledge. In this stage, human mind gave up the taken for granted approach. At this

stage, human mind tried to establish cause and affect relationship. Scientific knowledge is based on facts. Facts are collected by observation and classification of phenomena.

Thus, positivism is a purely intellectual way of looking at the world. Positivism emphasizes on observation and classification of data and facts. One can observe uniformities or laws about natural as well as social phenomena. Positivistic thinking is best suited to the need of industrial society. Comte stated that each succeeding stage is superior to the earlier stage.

Comte has termed these three phases as the universal rule in relation to society and its development. Neither the second nor the third phase can be reached without the completion and understanding of the preceding stage. All stages must be completed in progress. Comte, however, was conscious of the fact that the three stages of thinking may or do exist in the same society or in the same mind and may not always be successive. Comte proposed a hierarchy of the sciences based on historical sequence, with areas of knowledge passing through these stages in order of complexity. The simplest and most remote areas of knowledge — mechanical or physical — are the first to become scientific. These are followed by the more complex sciences, those considered closest to the human beings. The sciences, then, according to Comte's law, developed in this order: Mathematics; Astronomy; Physics; Chemistry; Biology; Sociology. A science of society is thus the “Queen Science” in Comte's hierarchy. Because he argued that fundamentally it would be the most complex science. Comte believed that through social science, all human social ills could be remedied.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 4

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. August Comte views of Positivism set-out to define the empirical goals of sociological method. Comment?

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2. How do you understand Comte’s Law of Three Stages?

3. Briefly state the important attributes that Comte mentioned about Scientific stage.

4. Comte proposed a hierarchy of the sciences based on historical sequence. Comment.

1.3.9 LOGICAL POSITIVISM

Logical positivism is a school of philosophy that combines empiricism. It represented an important advance over early positivism because it recognized the importance of abstract theoretical objects in scientific method. This is based on the idea that observational evidence is indispensable for knowledge of the world. Logical positivism grew from the discussions of a group called the "First Vienna Circle". A first generation of 20th century Viennese positivists began their activities, strongly influenced by Ernst Mach, around 1907. Notable among them were Philip Frank, Hans Hahn, Richard von Mises and Otto Neurath. This small group was also active during the 1920s in the Vienna Circle of logical positivists. This was a seminal discussion group of scientists and philosophers that met regularly in Vienna and in the related Berlin Society for Empirical Philosophy. This school of thought were built on the empiricism of Hume, on the positivism of Comte, and on the philosophy of science of Ernst Mach. Equally important influences came from several eminent figures such as G.F. Bernhard Riemann, Hermann von Helmholtz, Heinrich Hertz, Ludwig Boltzmann, Henri Poincare and David Hilbert. Most significant, however, was the impact of Einstein, as well as that of the three great mathematical logicians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries – Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead. The influence of ideas from these sources and the impressions

that they made upon the Vienna and Berlin groups in the 1920s gave rise to the philosophical outlook of logical positivism. The term “Logical Positivism” was used by A.E. Blumberg and the Herbert Feigl in 1931.

Most early logical positivists asserted that all knowledge is based on logical inference from simple protocol sentences grounded in observable facts. They supported forms of Materialism, Naturalism and Empiricism. Moreover, they strongly supported the verifiability criterion of meaning (Verificationism), the doctrine that a proposition is only cognitively meaningful if it can be definitively and conclusively determined to be either true or false.

Logical Positivism was also committed to the idea of “Unified Science”, or the development of a common language in which all scientific propositions can be expressed, usually by means of various reductions or explications of the terms of one science to the terms of another one. The main tenets of the Logical positivism as discussed by the Luke Mastin are given below:

- The opposition to all Metaphysics, especially ontology (the study of reality and the nature of being), not as necessarily wrong but as having no meaning.
- The rejection of synthetic a priori propositions (e.g. “All bachelors are happy”), which are, by their nature, unverifiable (as opposed to analytic statements, which are true simply by virtue of their meanings e.g. “All bachelors are unmarried”).
- A criterion of meaning based on Ludwig Wittgenstein's early work which essentially means that the meaning of a word is its use in the language and; that thoughts and the language used to express those thoughts, are pictures or representations of how things are in the world.
- The idea that all knowledge should be codifiable in a single standard language of science, and the associated ongoing project of “rational reconstruction”, in which ordinary language concepts were gradually to be replaced by more precise equivalents in that standard language.

1.3.10 CRITIQUE OF POSITIVISM

Positivism has been criticized for its reductionism. Because it contends that all "processes are reducible to physiological, physical or chemical events," "social processes are reducible to relationships between and actions of individuals," and that "biological organisms are reducible to physical systems." Max Horkheimer criticized the classic formulation of positivism. He argued that that positivism falsely represented human social action. But it has systematically failed to appreciate the extent to which the so-called social facts it yielded did not exist 'out there', in the objective world, but were themselves a product of socially and historically mediated human consciousness. Moreover, positivism ignored the role of the 'observer' in the constitution of social reality and thereby failed to consider the historical and social conditions affecting the representation of social ideas. Positivism falsely represented the object of study by reifying social reality as existing objectively and independently and labor actually produced those conditions. Secondly, he argued, representation of social reality produced by positivism was inherently and artificially conservative, helping to support the status quo, rather than challenging it. This character may also explain the popularity of positivism in certain political circles. Horkheimer argued, in contrast, that critical theory possessed a reflexive element lacking in the positivistic traditional theory.

Positivism has also been criticised on religious and philosophical grounds, whose proponents state that truth begins in sense experience, but does not end there. Positivism fails to prove that there are not abstract ideas, laws, and principles, beyond particular observable facts and relationships and necessary principles or that human beings cannot know them. It does also not prove that material and corporeal things constitute the whole order of existing beings, and that knowledge of mankind is limited to them.

Critics of logical positivism have argued that logical positivism's firmness on the strict adoption of the verifiability criterion is problematic. They argued that the criterion itself is unverifiable, especially for negative existential claims and positive universal claims. Karl Popper disagreed with the logical positivist position that metaphysical statements must be meaningless. Popper had argued that a metaphysical statement can

change its unfalsifiable status over time - what may be “unfalsifiable” in one century may become “falsifiable”.

Positivists attempted answer to some of their critiques. A. J. Ayer responded to the charge of unverifiability by claiming that, although almost any statement, except logical truth, is unverifiable in the strong sense, there is a weak sense of verifiability in which a proposition is verifiable if it is possible for experience to render it probable. This defence, however, was controversial among Logical Positivists, some of whom stuck to strong verification, and insisted that general propositions were indeed nonsense.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 5

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

3. Briefly state the contribution of “First Vienna Circle” in the development of Logical Positivism.

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4. The Logical Positivists strongly supported the verifiability criterion of meaning. Elaborate.

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3. State the main tenets of the Logical positivism as discussed by the Luke Mastin.

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4. Of the many criticisms on Logical Positivism, which one you considered an important one? Give the reasons.

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Positivism is the name of a social and intellectual movement which emphasises empiricism and scientific validity for knowledge. While it has been customary to distinguish between the quasi political movement called ‘‘positivism’’ originated by Auguste Comte in the 1830s and the more strictly philosophical movement called ‘‘logical positivism’’ associated with the Vienna Circle of the 1930s, both shared a common sensibility, namely, that the unchecked exercise of reason can have disastrous practical consequences. Thus, both held that reason needs ‘‘foundations’’ to structure its subsequent development so as not to fall prey to a self destructive skepticism.

In sum, the influence of positivism has been on form rather than substance—on methodology rather than on content. It has given new vigour to the ideals of clarity and precision of thinking, in a perspective in which the emphasis on theory is conjoined with an equal emphasis on empirical data. But too much self-consciousness as to methodology may have a repressive effect on the conduct of scientific inquiry. Unintentionally, and even contrary to its own purposes, modern positivism may have contributed to a "myth of methodology". As a result, many criticised the limitations positivism imposed on intellectual inquiry.

1.3.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

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3. Dwight E. Lee and Robert N. Beck, “The Meaning of "Historicism", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 59, No. 3, 1954, pp. 568-577.
4. Richard Hudelson, “Popper's Critique of Marx”, *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, Vol. 37, No. 3, 1980), pp. 259-270.
5. ***Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy***

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1.4 HERMENEUTICS: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF INTERPRETATION OF TEXT, PHENOMENOLOGY: THEORY OF STRUCTURES OF SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE AND CONSCIOUSNESS

- Dr. Suneel Kumar

STRUCTURE

1.4.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- Meaning and history of hermeneutics
- Philosophical contributions various scholars to the evolution of hermeneutics
- Important characteristics of hermeneutics
- Origin, meaning and main attributes of phenomenology

- Types and assumptions of phenomenology
- Philosophical foundations of phenomenology provided by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger

1.4.1 INTRODUCTION

"Hermeneutics" means the theory of interpretation, that is the theory of achieving an understanding of texts, utterances, and so on. Hermeneutics in this sense has a long history, reaching back at least as far as ancient Greece. In the course of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, hermeneutics emerges as a crucial branch of Biblical studies. Later on, it comes to include the study of ancient and classic cultures. However, new focus was brought to bear on it in the modern period, in the wake of the Reformation with its displacement of responsibility for interpreting the Bible from the Church to individual Christians generally. This new focus on hermeneutics occurred especially in Germany. With the emergence of German romanticism and idealism the status of hermeneutics changed. Hermeneutics turns philosophical. The question “How to read?” is replaced by the question, “How do we communicate at all?” Now hermeneutics is not only about symbolic communication. Its area is even more fundamental: that of human life and existence as such. It is in this form, as an interrogation into the deepest conditions for symbolic interaction and culture in general, that hermeneutics has provided the critical horizon for many of the most intriguing discussions of contemporary philosophy, both within an Anglo-American context (Rorty, McDowell, Davidson) and within a more Continental discourse (Habermas, Apel, Ricoeur, and Derrida).

1.4.2 HISTORY OF HERMENEUTICS

The term hermeneutics, a Latinized version of the Greek hermeneutice, has been part of common language from the beginning of the 17th century. Nevertheless, its history stretches back to ancient philosophy. Addressing the understanding of religious intuitions, Plato used this term in a number of dialogues, contrasting hermeneutic knowledge to that of sophia. Religious knowledge is a knowledge of what has been revealed or said and does not, like sophia, involve knowledge of the truth-value of the utterance. Aristotle

carried this use of the term a step further, naming his work on logic and semantics. Only with the Stoics, and their reflections on the interpretation of myth, do we encounter something like a methodological awareness of the problems of textual understanding.

The Stoics, however, never developed a systematic theory of interpretation. Such a theory is only to be found in Philo of Alexandria, whose reflections on the meaning of the Old Testament anticipate the idea that the literal meaning of a text may conceal a deeper non-literal meaning that may only be uncovered through systematic interpretatory work. About 150 years later, Origenes expounds on this view by claiming that the Scripture has three levels of meaning, corresponding to the triangle of body, soul, and spirit, each of which reflects a progressively more advanced stage of religious understanding.

With Augustine we encounter a thinker whose influence on modern hermeneutics has been profoundly acknowledged by Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer. According to Gadamer, it is Augustine who first introduces the universality-claim of hermeneutics. This claim arises from the connection Augustine establishes between language and interpretation, but also from his claim that interpretation of Scripture involves a deeper, existential level of self-understanding. The work of Thomas Aquinas, to which the young Heidegger paid a great deal of attention, has also had an impact on the development of modern hermeneutics. Heidegger, however, was mainly interested in Aquinas's notion of Being, and not in his engagement with specifically hermeneutic issues such as the proper authorship of certain pseudo-Aristotelian texts. Presupposing the relative unity of an author's work, Aquinas questions the authenticity of these texts by comparing them to the existing Aristotelian corpus. This, however, is not the only point of contact between medieval philosophy and modern hermeneutics. Another such junction is the way in which medieval interpretations of Sacred texts, emphasizing their nature rather than their historical roots.

In spite of these and similar points of dialogue, it is in the wake of Martin Luther's *sola scriptura* that we see the dawn of a genuinely modern hermeneutics. Following Luther's emphasis on faith and inwardness, it was possible to question the authority of traditional interpretations of the Bible in order to emphasize the way in which each and

every reader faces the challenge of making the truths of the text her own. Our understanding of a text does not consist in a faithful adoption of the predominant or authorized readings of the time. It is up to the individual reader to stake out her own path to the potential meaning and truth of the text. Reading now becomes a problem in a new way.

Coming from a very different tradition, Giambattista Vico is another central figure in the development of early modern hermeneutics. Vico argues that thinking is always rooted in a given cultural context. This context is historically developed, and, moreover, intrinsically related to ordinary language, evolving from the stage of myth and poetry to the later phases of theoretical abstraction and technical vocabularies. To understand oneself is thus to understand the genealogy (evolution) of one's own intellectual horizon.

Another philosopher who came to influence the early stages of modern hermeneutics is Benedict de Spinoza. Spinoza proposes that in order to understand the most dense and difficult sections of the Holy Scriptures, one must keep in mind the historical horizon in which these texts were written, as well as the mind by which they were produced. There is an analogy, Spinoza claims, between our understanding of nature and our understanding of the Scriptures. In both cases, our understanding of the parts hinges on our understanding of a larger whole, which, again, can only be understood on the basis of the parts.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

5. With the emergence of German romanticism and idealism hermeneutics turns philosophical. Elaborate.

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6. According to Gadamer, it is Augustine who first introduces the universality-claim of hermeneutics. Explain.

3. The modern hermeneutics genuinely began with Martin Luther's *sola scriptura*. Comment.

1.4.3 MODERN HERMENEUTICS

There are the two pillars on which modern hermeneutics is built. On the one hand, there is an interest in the human sciences and a willingness to defend the integrity of these sciences as distinct from the natural sciences. On the other hand, there is a deep concern with the problem of making sense of the texts handed over to us from the past. For, strictly speaking, it is only at the point where these two orientations merge and mutually inform one another that we encounter the first attempts at articulating a genuinely philosophical hermeneutics. This happens in the period of German romanticism and idealism. Herder, the Schlegel brothers, and Novalis are all important in this context. So, too, is the philosophical background provided by Kant and Hegel. Yet it is Friedrich Schleiermacher who first manages to pull together the intellectual currents of the time so as to articulate a coherent conception of a universal hermeneutics, a hermeneutics that does not relate to one particular kind of textual material (such as the Bible or ancient texts), but to linguistic meaning in general.

1.4.3.1 SCHLEIERMACHER CONTRIBUTION

Schleiermacher taught hermeneutics from 1805 onwards at the universities of Halle and Berlin. According to Schleiermacher, understanding other cultures is not something we can take for granted. Understanding others involves an openness towards the fact that what seems rational, true, or coherent may cover something deeply unfamiliar. This openness is only possible in so far as we systematically scrutinize our own hermeneutic

prejudices. Schleiermacher speaks of this as a stricter, as opposed to a laxer hermeneutic practice. Yet a strict hermeneutic practice, Schleiermacher repeatedly emphasizes, cannot guarantee a just or fully adequate understanding. Nevertheless, it is an indispensable aid. It is something that may help the hermeneutician not to fall prey to the tendency to filter another's speech or writing through one's own cultural, theological, or philosophical frame of mind.

In order to grasp the meaning of another person's speech or texts, one ought to focus on both aspects of her language-use, the shared resources or grammar and syntax as well as individual application. Schleiermacher addresses this as the task of combining grammatical and technical interpretation. There is, however, no rule for this combination. Instead one must compare the text with other texts from the same period, from the same writer even, while continuously keeping in sight the uniqueness of the particular work. Schleiermacher speaks of this as the capacity for divination: the ability to move from the particular to the universal without the aid of general rules or doctrines. Only by combining a comparative approach may a better understanding be obtained.

It is precisely the idea of a critical turn in hermeneutics combined with the focus on the individuality of language-use that made Schleiermacher such an important figure for the next generation of hermeneuticians.

1.4.3.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF DILTHEY

With Dilthey, the search for a philosophical legitimation of the human sciences is brought a significant step further. Dilthey responds to the questions raised by fellow philosophers, Droysen and Ranke, by retrieving the resources of romantic hermeneutics. Scientific explanation of nature, Dilthey argues, must be completed with a theory of how the world is given to us through symbolically mediated practices. To provide such a theory is the aim of the humanities, or rather the aim of the philosophy of the humanities, the area to which Dilthey dedicated his entire academic career.

The concepts of lived experience and understanding play a crucial role within Dilthey's endeavors to liberate the methodology of the humanities from that of the natural sciences. According to Dilthey Lived Experience is connected with the process of self-

understanding, whereas Understanding relates to our knowing of others. Turning to the level of historical research, the hermeneutically oriented scientist must respond to this situation by combining a more intuitive hypothesis-formation (aiming at the lived experience at stake) and a comparative method that would revise and secure the objectivity of this process.

Dilthey's most important contribution to hermeneutics might be said to rest in the fact that he is the first to ground hermeneutics in a general theory of human life and existence.

1.4.3.3 MARTIN HEIDEGGER'S HERMENEUTICS

Martin Heidegger completely transformed the discipline of hermeneutics. In Heidegger's view, hermeneutics is not a matter of understanding linguistic communication. Nor is it about providing a methodological basis for the human sciences. As far as Heidegger is concerned, hermeneutics is ontology; it is about the most fundamental conditions of man's being in the world.

Heidegger's explained hermeneutics by defining the terms such as understanding, interpretation, and assertion. Understanding, in Heidegger's account, is neither a method of reading nor the outcome of a willed and carefully conducted procedure of critical reflection. It is not something we consciously do or fail to do, but something we are. Understanding is a mode of being, and as such it is characteristic of human being. Our understanding of the world presupposes a kind of pragmatic know-how that is revealed through the way in which we, without theoretical considerations, orient ourselves in the world. We open the door without objectifying or conceptually determining the nature of the door-handle or the doorframe. The world is familiar to us in a basic, intuitive way. Most originally, Heidegger argues, we do not understand the world by gathering a collection of neutral facts by which we may reach a set of universal propositions, laws, or judgments that, to a greater or lesser extent, corresponds to the world as it is. The world is tacitly intelligible to us.

The fundamental familiarity with the world is brought to reflective consciousness through the work of interpretation. Interpretation makes things, objects, the fabric of the world, appear as something.

Only through assertion is the synthesizing activity of understanding and interpretation brought to language. In disclosing the as-structure of a thing, the hammer as a hammer, interpretation discloses its meaning. Assertion, then, pins this meaning down linguistically. The linguistic identification of a thing is determined by understanding and interpretation. This also applies with regard to the truth-value of the assertion.

1.4.3.4 GADAMER'S CONTRIBUTION

According to Gadamer, human being is a being in language. It is through language that the world is opened up for us. We learn to know the world by learning to master a language. Hence we cannot really understand ourselves unless we understand ourselves as situated in a linguistically mediated, historical culture. Language is our second nature. This has consequences for our understanding of art, culture, and historical texts—i.e., on the subject area of the human sciences. Being a part of our own tradition, historical works do not primarily present themselves to us as neutral and value-free objects of scientific investigation. They are part of the horizon in which we live and through which our world-view gets shaped. We are, in other words, formed by these great works before we get the chance to approach them objectively..

Gadamer claims, it is not really we who address the texts of tradition, but the canonic texts that address us. Having traveled through decades and centuries, the classic works of art, literature, science, and philosophy question us and our way of life. Our prejudices, whatever aspects of our cultural horizon that we take for granted, are brought into the open in the encounter with the past. As a part of the tradition in which we stand, historical texts have an authority that precedes our own. Yet this authority is kept alive only to the extent that it is recognized by the present. We recognize the authority of a text (or a work of art) by engaging with it in textual explication and interpretation, by entering into a dialogical relationship with the past. It is this movement of understanding that

Gadamer refers to as the fusion of horizons. As we come, through the work of interpretation, to understand what at first appears alien, we participate in the production of a richer, more encompassing context of meaning—we gain a better and more profound understanding not only of the text but also of ourselves.

This co-determination of text and reader is Gadamer's version of the hermeneutic circle. As important as the interplay between the parts and the whole of a text is the way in which our reading contributes to its effective history, adding to the complexity and depth of its meaning. The meaning of the text is not something we can grasp once and for all. It is something that exists in the complex dialogical interplay between past and present. Just as we can never master the texts of the past, so do we fail—necessarily and constitutively—to obtain conclusive self-knowledge. Gaining knowledge of tradition and knowing ourselves are both endless processes; they are tasks without determinate end-points.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 2

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. There are the two pillars on which modern hermeneutics is built. Elaborate.

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2. Schleiermacher speaks of this as a stricter, as opposed to a laxer hermeneutic practice. How do you understand this?

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3. The concepts of lived experience and understanding play a crucial role in Dilthey's hermeneutics. Comment.

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4. Heidegger's explained hermeneutics by defining the terms such as understanding, interpretation, and assertion. How do you understand this?

5. For Gadamer, the meaning of the text exists in the complex dialogical interplay between past and present. Comment.

1.4.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF A HERMENEUTIC APPROACH

Given the conceptually elusive nature of hermeneutics, there are few introductory overviews that invite into a dialogue about this subject. The following section attempts to outline the important characteristics of a hermeneutic approach. This overview highlights introductory ideas, illuminating that a hermeneutic approach (a) seeks understanding rather than explanation; (b) acknowledges the situated location of interpretation; (c) recognizes the role of language and historicity in interpretation; (d) views inquiry as conversation; and (e) is comfortable with ambiguity.

1.4.4.1 SEEKS UNDERSTANDING

The goal of a hermeneutic approach is to seek understanding, rather than to offer explanation or to provide an authoritative reading or conceptual analysis of a text. As Jardine states: “Hermeneutic inquiry has as its goal to produce understanding, to bring forth the presuppositions in which we already live. Its task, therefore, is not to methodically achieve a relationship to some matter and to secure understanding in such a method. Rather, its task is to recollect the contours and textures of the life we are already living, a life that is not secured by the methods we can wield to render such a life our

object". According to Gadamer, the task of hermeneutics is not to develop a procedure of understanding, but rather to clarify the interpretive conditions in which understanding takes place.

1.4.4.2 SITUATED LOCATION OF INTERPRETATION

Hermeneutics acknowledges that all interpretation is situated, located, a—view from somewhere. Gardiner eloquently summarizes the active role of the interpreter in critical hermeneutic interpretation: "The hermeneutic approach stresses the creative interpretation of words and texts and the active role played by the knower. The goal is not objective explanation or neutral description, but rather a sympathetic engagement with the author of a text, utterance or action and the wider socio-cultural context within which these phenomena occur". The social networks and practices, and the traditions they represent, also influence interpretive perspectives and ways of constructing meaning. Smith highlights the influence of social groups and practices, noting that all inquiry begins from a particular social location, in which every knower is located. In this light, texts are considered through the historically and culturally situated lens of the researcher's perception and experience. A complete explication of such is impossible and all interpretations, although potentially rigorous, are also necessarily partial.

1.4.4.3 THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AND HISTORY

Hermeneutical thinkers argue that language and history are always both conditions and limitations of understanding. As Wachterhauser writes: "Hermeneutical theories of understanding argue that all human understanding is never 'without words' and never 'outside of time'. On the contrary, what is distinctive about human understanding is that it is always in terms of some evolving linguistic framework that has been worked out over time in terms of some historically conditioned set of concerns and practices". This emphasis on historicity, and on the significance of language as a vehicle for interpretive endeavours, are key dimensions of many hermeneutics thinking. Recognition of the influence of prejudice, conditioned by historical circumstances on interpretive stances, foregrounds the necessity of critical analysis of such prejudices. As Greene points out,

whoever we are, we engage the traditions made available to us against the background of our lived lives and the prejudgments we have made over time. Recognizing the influence of prejudgments and historical traditions on the manner in which we engage with the world around us and on those "Others" that we encounter and the texts that we read, has important implications for interpretive work. Furthermore, according to Gadamer "language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs. Understanding occurs in interpreting". He suggests that "in order to be able to express a text's meaning and subject matter, we must translate it into our own language".

1.4.4.4 INQUIRY AS CONVERSATION

Gadamer describes hermeneutics "as the skill to let things speak which come to us in a fixed, petrified form, that of the text". The interpreter has to modulate, use intonation. He compares the interpretation of a text to the art of translation, pointing out that in both instances if we as interpreter want to emphasize a feature that is important to us, then we can do so only by playing down or entirely suppressing other features. Gadamer states further that "Translation like all interpretation is a highlighting. A translator must understand that highlighting is part of his [or her] task". A hermeneutic conversation between texts are central to hermeneutic study. The task is to find a common language through which the various texts can be given a voice to participate in conversation and speak to one another. A second challenge is to acknowledge the role of the interpreter in a manner akin to a translator, as one who highlights relevant features of the texts, who gives intonation to the texts involved in the conversation.

1.4.4.5 COMFORTABLE WITH AMBIGUITY

Hermeneutics embraces ambiguity. According to Gadamer hermeneutics "is entrusted with all that is unfamiliar and strikes us as significant". Indeed, Jardine states that it is the task of hermeneutics to restore life to its original difficulty. A hermeneutic view resists the idea that there can be one single authoritative reading of a text and recognizes the complexity of the interpretive endeavor. There cannot be any single interpretation that is correct in itself, as the historical life of tradition depends on being constantly assimilated

and interpreted. Thus, a hermeneutic approach is open to the ambiguous nature of textual analysis, and resists the urge to offer authoritative readings and neat reconciliations. Rather, it recognizes the uniquely situated nature, historically and linguistically influenced, and the ambiguous nature of interpretation, and offers such for readers to engage with, or not, as they wish.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 3

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

3. The goal of hermeneutics is not objective explanation but rather a sympathetic engagement with the author of a text, and the wider socio-cultural context within which the phenomena occur". How do you understand this?

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4. According to Gadamer "language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs. Understanding occurs in interpreting". Elaborate.

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3. Hermeneutics embraces ambiguity. Comment.

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1.4.5 SUMMING UP HERMENEUTICS

The scholarship and practice of hermeneutics has a long history. Originally an approach used for the interpretation of ancient and biblical texts, hermeneutics has over time been applied to the human sciences more generally, and is now seen by many to cover all interpretive acts in the human sciences. Indeed, the leitmotif of hermeneutics is the

mediated processes of human understanding and interpretation. While hermeneutics has a long history and influence in Europe and particularly German language contexts, the influence in North America has generally been more limited.

Hermeneutics questions the limitations of positivist approaches to knowledge, Gadamer writes "And yet, over against the whole of our civilization that is founded on modern science, we must ask repeatedly if something has not been omitted …" This "omitted" something, is what both the project of hermeneutic thought and the project of qualitative research set their attention toward. It follows that hermeneutics may offer an implicit conceptual underpinning to research in the qualitative tradition, and that understanding hermeneutics and critical hermeneutics can potentially enrich and deepen the conceptual foundations of research undertaken from a qualitative perspective.

1.4.6 PHENOMENOLOGY: THEORY OF STRUCTURES OF SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Phenomenology is a broad discipline and method of inquiry in philosophy. This was developed largely by the German philosophers Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. This is based on the premise that reality consists of objects and events as they are perceived and understood in the human consciousness and not of anything independent of human consciousness. Phenomenology is the study of structures of experience and consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. As per Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning that which represents the object together with appropriate enabling conditions. In common parlance, phenomenology is a disciplinary field in philosophy. It is also viewed as “a movement in the history of philosophy.”

1.4.7 ORIGIN AND CHIEF EXPONENTS

The term “phenomenology” is derived from the Greek word “phainomenon”, meaning “appearance”. Hence it is the study of appearances as opposed to reality. It has its roots

back in Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* and his theory of Platonic Idealism, or arguably even further back in Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. To differing extents, the methodological scepticism of Rene Descartes, the British Empiricism of Locke, Hume, Berkeley and Mill, and the Idealism of Immanuel Kant and the German Idealists all had contributed to the early development of the theory. The term was first officially introduced by Johann Heinrich Lambert in the 18th Century. Subsequently, this was used by Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte and especially by G. W. F. Hegel in his "Phenomenology of Spirit" of 1807.

At present, Phenomenology is essentially the vision of one man, Edmund Husserl that he had launched in his "Logical Investigations" of 1901. Edmund Husserl formulated his classical Phenomenology first as a kind of descriptive psychology which is sometimes referred to as Realist Phenomenology and later as a transcendental and eidetic science of consciousness. In his "Ideas" of 1913, he established the key distinction between the act of consciousness and the phenomena at which it is directed. In his later transcendental period, Husserl concentrated more on the ideal, essential structures of consciousness, and introduced the method of phenomenological reduction specifically to eliminate any hypothesis on the existence of external objects.

Martin Heidegger criticized and expanded Husserl's phenomenological enquiry to encompass our understanding and experience of being itself, and developed his original theory of "*Dasein*". According to Heidegger, philosophy is not at all a scientific discipline, but is more fundamental than science itself which to him is just one way among many of knowing the world, with no specialized access to truth. Heidegger, then, took Phenomenology as a metaphysical ontology rather than as the foundational discipline Husserl believed it to be. Heidegger's development of Existential Phenomenology greatly influenced the subsequent French Existentialism movement. Other than Husserl and Heidegger, the most famous of the classical Phenomenologists were Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Max Scheler, Edith Stein, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Alfred Schutz, Hannah Arendt and Emmanuel Levinas.

1.4.7.1 EXPLAINING THE TERM "PHENOMENOLOGY"

The term "phenomenology" as Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy defines is "… the study of structures of experience, or consciousness." According to Patton:

> "…a phenomenological study…is one that focused on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience. One can employ a general phenomenological perspective to elucidate the importance of using methods that capture people's experience of the world without conducting a phenomenological study that focuses on the essence of shared experience."

Dermot Moran opines that "Phenomenology is best understood as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophising, which emphasises the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer." Further, Rossman and Rallis argue that "Phenomenology is a tradition in German philosophy with a focus on the essence of lived experience." In other words, phenomenology is the study of "phenomena", appearances of things, or things as they appear in the human experience and the ways human beings experience things. Phenomenology "…studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view." This field of philosophy is then to be distinguished from, and related to, the other main fields of philosophy: ontology, epistemology, logic and ethics.

Phenomenology should not be considered as a unitary movement. Although different scholars share a common family resemblance, yet they have also many significant differences. Accordingly, "A unique and final definition of phenomenology is dangerous and perhaps even paradoxical. Reason being it lacks a thematic focus. Moreover it is neither a doctrine nor a philosophical school. Rather it is a style of thought, a method, an open and ever-renewed experience having different results. This may disorient anyone wishing to define the meaning of phenomenology."

1.4.8 TYPOLOGY OF PHENOMENOLOGY

Many people have pursued phenomenology in multiple ways. This resulted in multiple types of phenomenology. Some of these have been explained below:

1. **Realist Phenomenology:** This is early formulation of Husserl. This is based on the first edition of his "Logical Investigations", which had as its goal the analysis of the intentional structures of mental acts as they are directed at both real and ideal objects. This was the preferred version of the Munich Group at the University of Munich in the early 20th Century led by Johanes Daubert, Adolf Reinach, Alexander Pfander, Max Scheler, Roman Ingarden, Nicolai Hartmann and Hans Kochler.
2. **Transcendental Phenomenology:** This is also known as Constitutive Phenomenology. This was Husserl's later formulation. This takes the intuitive experience of phenomena as its starting point and tries to extract from it the generalized essential features of experiences and the essence of what we experience setting aside questions of any relation to the natural world around us. Transcendental Phenomenologists include Oskar Becker, Aron Gurwitsch and Alfred Schutz.
3. **Existential Phenomenology:** This is the expanded formulation of Heidegger. This was expounded by him in "Being and Time" in 1927. This assumes that the observer cannot separate himself from the world. It is therefore a combination of the phenomenological method with the importance of understanding man in his existential world. Existential Phenomenologists include Jean-Paul Sartre, Hannah Arendt, Emmanuel Levinas, Gabriel Marcel, Paul Ricoeur and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

1.4.9 PHENOMENOLOGY: MAIN ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions behind phenomenology that help to explain its foundations are given as following:

1. Phenomenology rejects the concept of objective research. Phenomenologists prefer grouping assumptions through a process called phenomenological epoch.
2. It believes that analyzing daily human behavior can provide one with a greater understanding of nature.

3. It assumes that persons, not individuals, should be explored. This is because persons can be understood through the unique ways they reflect the society they live in.
4. Phenomenologists prefer to gather conscious experience rather than traditional data.
5. Finally, phenomenology is considered to be oriented on discovery, and therefore phenomenologists gather research using methods that are far less restricting than in other sciences.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 4

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. How do you understand the concept of Phenomenology.

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2. A unique and final definition of phenomenology is dangerous and perhaps even paradoxical. Elaborate.

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3. Briefly state the three types of phenomenology and the basic difference between them.

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1.4.10 PHENOMENOLOGY: PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

Many philosophers contributed to the growth of phenomenology as explained earlier. However, of all those two are standing tall, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Both are identified with opposite sides to the phenomenology. The following section throw some light on these scholars' views.

1.4.10.1 EDMUND HUSSERL'S VIEWS

Edmund Husserl is known as the "Father of Phenomenology". He defines phenomenology as "a kind of descriptive psychology and an epistemological, foundational eidetic discipline to study essences". The central doctrine of Husserl's phenomenology is that consciousness is intentional. He had borrowed this doctrine from Franz Brentano. That is, every act of consciousness is directed at some object or other, perhaps a material object, perhaps an "ideal" object – as in mathematics. Thus, the phenomenologist can distinguish and describe the nature of the intentional acts of consciousness and the intentional objects of consciousness, which are defined through the content of consciousness. It is important to note that one can describe the content of consciousness and, accordingly, the object of consciousness without any particular commitment to the actuality or existence of that object. Thus, one can describe the content of a dream in much the same terms that one describes the view from a window or a scene from a novel.

Husserl has made a distinction between the natural standpoint and the phenomenological standpoint. The natural standpoint for Husserl is our ordinary everyday viewpoint and the ordinary stance of the natural sciences describing things and states-of-affairs. On the other hand, the phenomenological standpoint is the special viewpoint achieved by the phenomenologist as he or she focuses not on things but on our consciousness of things. One arrives at the phenomenological standpoint by way of a series of phenomenological "reductions," that eliminate certain aspects of our experience from consideration. Husserl formulates several of these, and their nature shifts throughout his career, but two of them deserve special mention. The first is the "suspension" that he describes in his book "Ideas" in which the phenomenologist brackets all questions of

truth or reality and simply describes the contents of consciousness. The second reduction eliminates the merely empirical content of consciousness and focuses instead on the essential features, the meanings of consciousness. Therefore, Husserl defends a notion of "intuition" that differs from and is more specialized than the ordinary notion of "experience." We have intuitions that are eidetic, meaning that we recognize meanings and necessary truths in them, and not merely the contingent things of the natural world.

Earlier Husserl defends a strong realist position. He assumes that the things that are perceived by consciousness are assumed to be not only objects of consciousness but also the things themselves. Later on he made a shift in his emphasis from the intentionality of the objects to the nature of consciousness. His phenomenology became increasingly and self-consciously Cartesian as his philosophy moved to the study of the ego and its essential structures. This reflects the strong idealist tendency in the philosophy of Husserl. In 1930, again Husserl reinvented phenomenology and made a shift toward the practical or "existential" dimension of human knowledge. In brief, Husserl's continued to see the inadequacies of his own method and correct them to get phenomenology right.

1.4.10.2 MARTIN HEIDEGGER' VIEWS

Martin Heidegger (1889-1971) was a student of Edmund Husserl. He was also a theology student. Therefore, he had interest in much more concrete matters of human existence than Husserl and his questions concerned how to live and how to live with integrity in the modern complex world. His use of phenomenology was subservient to this quest. This quest was itself soon transcended the phenomenological method. Heidegger's phenomenology is most evident his book ***Sein und Zeit*** which was published in1927 and was translated into English in1962 as ***Being and Time***. Like Husserl, Heidegger also argued that philosophical investigation begin without presuppositions. But Husserl, he says, still embraced Descartes's basic picture of the world by assuming that consciousness was the arena in which phenomenological investigation took place. Such a philosophy could not possibly be presuppositionless. Thus, Heidegger abandoned the language of

mind, consciousness, experience, and the like. Nevertheless, he pursues phenomenology with a new openness, a new receptivity, and a sense of oneness with the world.

Heidegger suggests a new term "*Dasein*" to ensure that mankind does not fall into Cartesian language. (Cartesian is a philosophy of relating to or derived from Descartes' philosophy, especially his contentions that personal identity consists in the continued existence of a unique mind and that the mind and body are connected causally.) Laterally "*Dasein*" means "being-there" is the name of this being from whose perspective the world is being described. *Dasein* is not a consciousness or a mind. It is also not a person. It is not distinguished from the world of which it is aware. It is inseparable from that world. *Dasein* is, simply, "Being-in-the-World". According to Heidegger, it is a "unitary phenomenon". Thus, phenomenology becomes ontology as well.

The concept of "*Dasein*" does not allow for the dualism of mind and body. This also does not allow making a distinction between subject and object. All such distinctions presuppose the language of "consciousness." However, Heidegger defends an uncompromising holism in which the self cannot be, as it was for Descartes, "a thinking thing," distinct from any bodily existence. But, then, what is the self? It is, at first, merely the roles that other people cast for me, as their son, their daughter, their student, their sullen playmate, their clever friend. That self, the Das Man self, is a social construction. There is nothing authentic, nothing that is my own, about it. The authentic self, by contrast, is discovered in profound moments of unique self-recognition. Therefore Heidegger's phenomenology opens up the profoundly personal arena of existentialist phenomenology.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 5

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Why Edmund Husserl is considered as the "Father of Phenomenology?

2. How do you understand Heidegger's concept of *Dasein?*

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3. Heidegger defends an uncompromising holism in which the self cannot be, as it was for Descartes, "a thinking thing," distinct from any bodily existence. Comment.

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1.4.11 LET'S SUM UP

In nutshell, it can be argued that Phenomenology is the study of structures of experience and consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. Many Analytic Philosophers including Daniel Dennett have criticized Phenomenology on the basis that its explicitly first-person approach is incompatible with the scientific third-person approach, although Phenomenologists would counter-argue that natural science can make sense only as a human activity which presupposes the fundamental structures of the first-person perspective. John Searle has called "Phenomenological Illusion" arguing that what is not phenomenologically present is not real. Further he says that what is phenomenologically present is in fact an adequate description of how things really are.

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2.1 SCIENTIFIC METHOD: EVOLUTION, NATURE, AND THOMAS KUHN'S IDEAS ON SCIENCE

- Dr. Nirmal Singh

STRUCTURE

2.1.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to:

- Know the origins of Scientific Method
- Comprehend Thomas Kuhn's contribution to Scientific method
- Understand Kuhn's concepts of paradigm and incommensurability
- Know major criticism against Kuhn's scientific philosophy

2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The scientific method is the process by which scientists, collectively and over time, endeavour to construct an accurate, that is, reliable, consistent and non-arbitrary, representation of the world. Greeks were the first to develop what we recognize as the scientific method. Initially, the Ancient Greek philosophers did not believe in empiricism, and saw measurements, such as geometry, as the domain of craftsmen and artisans. Philosophers, such as Plato, believed that all knowledge could be obtained through pure reasoning, and that there was no need to actually go out and measure anything. Measurement and observation, the foundations upon which science is built, were Aristotle's contribution. He proposed the idea of induction as a tool for gaining knowledge, and understood that abstract thought and reasoning must be supported by real world findings. Aristotle applied his methods to almost everything, from poetry and politics to astronomy and natural history. The Greeks were the first to subdivide and name branches of science in a recognizable way, including physics, biology, politics, and zoology. The renaissance was another turning point for the scientific method, where European scholars took the knowledge of the Greeks and the Muslims, and added to it. The scientific method, as developed by Bacon and Newton, continued to be the main driver of scientific discovery for three centuries.

2.1.2 ORIGIN OF SCIENTIFIC METHODS

Science has been said to be concerned with observation, description, definition, classification, measurement, experimentation, generalization, explanation, prediction, evaluation, and control of the world. This list is of course much too comprehensive; to be at all useful it has to be narrowed down in the course of examining individual scientific activities.

In case of humanities, the sociology of science is primarily interested in the construction of a set of highly generalized, systematic, and relatively exhaustive concepts and propositions of relationship. In this enterprise it uses data from all historical periods and all cultures, since its main concern is not with history as such, but with establishing sociological concepts and propositions.

However, as science began to split into chemistry, physics, biology and the proto-scientific psychology, the history of the scientific method became much more complex. As a result, the twentieth century saw a huge change in the scientific method as philosophers of science attempted to address this. As a result, the twentieth century saw a huge change in the scientific method as philosophers of science attempted to address this. Probably the most famous of these was Karl Popper, who understood the limitations of the old scientific ways. Popper's main point of attack was establishing that science was not infallible. Well-established scientific disciplines often followed the wrong path and generated incorrect theories. This led him to question the very definition of science itself, and so he tried to develop a scientific method that addressed the limitations. Previously, the definition between science and non-science revolved around empirical techniques and the inductive method. This definition did not address the development of new disciplines, and did not properly unite the increasing complexity of theoretical science with practical science. If the theory could not be properly tested by science, then it could not be scientific.

2.1.3 CONTRIBUTION OF KUHN: PARADIGM IN SCIENCE

Thomas Samuel Kuhn was one of the most influential philosophers of science of the twentieth century. His 1962 book ***The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*** is one of the most cited academic books of all time. His account of the development of science held that science enjoys periods of stable growth punctuated by revisionary revolutions. To this thesis, Kuhn added the controversial ‘incommensurability thesis’, that theories from differing periods suffer from certain deep kinds of failure of comparability.

Thomas Kuhn was the most important figures of the twentieth century to add to the history of the scientific method by introducing the idea of paradigms. This particular idea was built around the idea that science developed conflicting theories about how everything worked. Experimentation would lead to one of these theories becoming dominant and accepted by the scientific community. Kuhn christened this a 'scientific paradigm.' This particular idea was built around the idea that science developed conflicting theories about how everything worked. Experimentation would lead to one of

these theories becoming dominant and accepted by the scientific community. Kuhn christened this as 'scientific paradigm.' He believed that a group of scientists would hold to a particular paradigm, often very stubbornly, until the body of evidence became so great that a 'paradigm shift' became unavoidable. Scientists would then adopt the new paradigm and begin working within its constraints, although two paradigms were not necessarily mutually exclusive. The new paradigm overturns the old by displacing it as no longer a competent guide to future research. Kuhn claims that the change is typically so radical that the two paradigms can no longer be compared against the same goals and methodological standards and values.

Kuhn says that the typical paradigm change does not involve a large infusion of new results. Rather, it is a conceptual reorganization of otherwise familiar materias. A paradigm change typically changes goals, standards, linguistic meaning, key scientific practices, the way both the technical content and the relevant specialist community are organized, and the way scientists perceive the world. Nor can we retain the old, linear, cumulative conception of scientific progress characteristic of Enlightenment thinking, for attempts to show that the new paradigm contains the old, either logically or in some limit or under some approximation, are guilty of a fallacy of equivocation. Rarely does the new paradigm solve all of the problems that its predecessor apparently solved. So even in this sense the new paradigm fails completely to enclose the old. Kuhn claimed that the two competing paradigms are incommensurable. Traditional appeals to empirical results and logical argument are insufficient to resolve the debate. The consequence, according to Kuhn, is that attempts to defend continuous, cumulative scientific progress by means of theory reduction or even a correspondence relationship between a theory and its predecessor must fail. Revolutions produce discontinuities.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

5. Greeks were the first to develop what we recognize as the scientific method. Elaborate.

6. How do you understand the concept of paradigm?

3. The typical paradigm change does not involve a large infusion of new results. Comment.

2.1.4 SCIENTIFIC METHOD AND REVOLUTION

The Structure of Scientific Revolution first aroused interest among social scientists, although it did in due course create the interest among philosophers that Kuhn had intended. Kuhn drew an analogy between the development of science and evolutionary biology. This was surprising, since 'evolution' is commonly employed as a contrast term to 'revolution'. Kuhn's main point was that evolution ramifies rather than progressing toward a final goal, yet its degree of specialization through speciation can be regarded as a sort of progress, a progress from a historically existing benchmark rather than a progress toward a preordained, speculative goal. According to Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, there will be no end to scientific revolutions as long as systematic scientific investigation continues, for they are a necessary vehicle of ongoing scientific progress. Philosophically oriented writers attempted to find unity and progress in terms of the discovery of a new, special scientific method. Today even most philosophers of science dismiss the claim that there exists a powerful, general, scientific method the discovery of which explains the Scientific Revolution and the success of modern science. Quite the contrary: effective scientific methods are themselves the product of painstaking work at the frontier-scientific results methodized-and are hence typically laden with the technical content of the specialty in question. There is no content neutral method that magically explains how those results were achieved. Kuhn dismissed Popper's notion of revolution

in perpetuity as a contradiction in terms, on the ground that a revolution is something that overthrows an established order, in violation of the rules of that order. Kuhn also vehemently rejected Popper's doctrine of falsification, which implied that a theory could be rejected in isolation, without anything to replace it. According to Popper, at any time there may be several competing theories being proposed and subsequently refuted by failed empirical tests-rather like balloons being launched and then shot down, one by one.

According to Kuhn in Structure, a loosely characterized group of activities, often consisting of competing schools, becomes a mature science when one or more concrete problem solutions provide models for what good research is in that domain. Kuhn's attempt to revolutionize the epistemology of science has had a wider social impact than many scientific revolutions themselves. While some of Kuhn's doctrines step into the postmodern era, he still had a foot in the Enlightenment, which helps to explain his dismay at the critical reaction to his work and to radical developments in the new wave sociology of science. Popper had excluded discovery issues from philosophy of science in favour of theory of confirmation or corroboration, Kuhn was critical of confirmation theory and supportive of historical and philosophical work on discovery. He argued that discoveries are temporally and cognitively structured and that they are an essential component of an epistemology of science.

Science develops by the addition of new truths to the stock of old truths, or the increasing approximation of theories to the truth, and in the odd case, the correction of past errors. Such progress might accelerate in the hands of a particularly great scientist, but progress itself is guaranteed by the scientific method. Kuhn's emphasis on scientific practices, relative to the philosophical state of play in the 1960s, takes up some of the slack left by the rejection of strong realism. Kuhn compared revolutionary transitions, rather than normal scientific developments, with evolutionary change. It seems clear that he did not consider revolution and evolution to be mutually incompatible. He retains his old parallel to biological evolution, that science progresses or evolves away from its previous forms rather than toward a final truth about the world; but he now extends the biological analogy by regarding scientific specialties themselves as akin to biological species that carve out research and teaching niches for themselves. In the process he significantly modifies his conception of scientific revolutions and attendant claims

concerning crises and incommensurable breaks. Most revolutions, he tells us, are not major discontinuities in which a successor theory overturns and replaces its predecessor. Rather, they are like biological speciation, in which a group of organisms becomes reproductively isolated from the main population.

2.1.5 INCOMMENSURABILITY IN SCIENCE THEORIES

Kuhn's notion of scientific progress rested upon his concept of a paradigm: the common terminology and basic theories of a scientific community and that community's fundamental assumptions about methodology and what questions a scientist can legitimately ask. Scientific research necessarily takes place within a paradigm, for the world is too huge and complex to be explored randomly. Within a paradigm, a scientist knows what facts are relevant and can build on past research. Those who deviate from the dominant paradigm are not scientists at all; the scientific community considers them to be chasing superstitions. The scientist's research is like solving a puzzle because the scientist, guided by the paradigm, asks questions that can be answered and that have an easily recognizable solution. The paradigm thus shapes both the questions and the answers.

Kuhn makes distinction between normal science and revolutionary change. Normal science, as defined by Kuhn, is cumulative. New knowledge fills a gap of ignorance. But normal science does not permit for advancement by means of revolutionary theories. However, normal science does contain a mechanism that uncovers anomaly, inconsistencies within the paradigm. Because normal science has precision as its goal, it focuses on details; eventually, details arise that are inconsistent with the current paradigm. In most cases, these inconsistencies are eventually resolved or are ignored. However, if the inconsistent details significantly threaten a paradigm, perhaps because they concern a topic of central importance, a crisis occurs and normal science comes to a halt. Such a crisis requires that the scientists reexamine the foundations of their science that they had been taking for granted. During a crisis, alternate paradigms are proposed, usually by scientists who are young or new to the field and thus more open-minded. Slowly, one of the alternate paradigms triumphs over the competing paradigms for several possible reasons: it resolves the crisis better than the others, it offers promise

for future research, and it is more aesthetic than its competitors. The reasons for converting to a new paradigm are never completely rational. Because different paradigms justify themselves with their own terms, one must actually step into a paradigm to understand it. Kuhn departed from traditional evolutionary views with his argument that a new paradigm with its new foundation is "incommensurable" with the old paradigm.

Kuhn's incommensurability thesis presented a challenge not only to positivist conceptions of scientific change but also to realist ones. For a realist conception of scientific progress also wishes to assert that, by and large, later science improves on earlier science, in particular by approaching closer to the truth. A standard realist response from the late 1960s was to reject the antirealism and anti-referentialism shared by both Kuhn's picture and the preceding double language model. If we do take theories to be potential descriptions of the world, involving reference to worldly entities, kind, and properties, then the problems raised by incommensurability largely evaporate. For truth and nearness to the truth depend only on reference and not on sense. Two terms can differ in sense yet share the same reference, and correspondingly two sentences may relate to one another as regards truth without their sharing terms with the same sense.

Kuhn also maintained that, contrary to popular conception, typical scientists are not objective and independent thinkers. Rather, they are conservative individuals who accept what they have been taught and apply their knowledge to solving the problems that their theories dictate. Most scientists, in essence, are puzzle solvers who aim to discover what they already know in advance. During periods of normal science, the primary task of scientists is to bring the accepted theory and fact into closer agreement. As a consequence, scientists tend to ignore research findings that might threaten the existing paradigm and trigger the development of a new and competing paradigm. Instead, the developmental process of science is one of evolution from primitive beginnings through successive stages that are characterized by an increasingly detailed and refined understanding of nature. Kuhn argued that this is not a process of evolution toward anything, and he questioned whether it really helps to imagine that there is one, full, objective, true account of nature. He likened his conception of the evolution of scientific ideas to Darwin's conception of the evolution of organisms. Kuhn suggested that questions about whether a discipline is or is not a science can be answered only when

members of a scholarly community who doubt their status achieve consensus about their past and present accomplishments.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 2

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

7. Kuhn drew an analogy between the development of science and evolutionary biology. Explain.

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8. Kuhn did not consider revolution and evolution to be mutually incompatible How do you understand this?

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3. According Kuhn Inconsistencies and anomalies leads paradigm shift. Comment.

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4. A new paradigm with its new foundation is "incommensurable" with the old paradigm. How do you understand this?

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5. Why Kuhn's incommensurability thesis presented a challenge not only to positivist conceptions of scientific change but also to realist ones?

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2.1.6 KUHN'S VIEW ON SCIENCE

Kuhn's influence outside of professional philosophy of science may have been even greater than it was within it. The social sciences in particular took up Kuhn with enthusiasm. There are primarily two reasons for this. First, Kuhn's picture of science appeared to permit a more liberal conception of what science is than hitherto, one that could be taken to include disciplines such as sociology and psychoanalysis. Secondly, Kuhn's rejection of rules as determining scientific outcomes appeared to permit appeal to other factors, external to science, in explaining why a scientific revolution took the course that it did. Natural sciences involve interpretation just as human and social sciences do, one difference is that hermeneutic reinterpretation, the search for new and deeper interpretations, is the essence of many social scientific enterprises. This contrasts with the natural sciences where an established and unchanging interpretation is a precondition of normal science. Reinterpretation is the result of a scientific revolution and is typically resisted rather than actively sought.

Another reason why regular reinterpretation is part of the human sciences and not the natural sciences is that social and political systems are themselves changing in ways that call for new interpretations, whereas the subject matter of the natural sciences is constant in the relevant respects, permitting a puzzle solving tradition as well as a standing source of revolution generating anomalies. A rather different influence on social science was Kuhn's influence on the development of social studies of science itself, in particular the 'Sociology of Scientific Knowledge'. A central claim of Kuhn's work is that scientists do not make their judgments as the result of consciously or unconsciously following rules. Their judgments are nonetheless tightly constrained during normal science by the example of the guiding paradigm. During a revolution they are released from these constraints though not completely. Consequently there is a gap left for other factors to explain scientific judgments. Social and political factors external to science influence the outcome of scientific debates.

2.1.7 CRITIQUE OF KUHN

Kuhn had to acknowledge that he had no idea how the scientists in extraordinary research contexts manage to come up with brilliant new ideas and techniques. This failure exacerbated his problem of explaining what sort of continuity underlies the revolutionary break that enables us to identify the event as a revolution within an ongoing field of inquiry. Early critics took him to deny scientific progress, because he rejected the traditional correspondence theory of truth and the related idea of cumulative progress toward a representational truth waiting out there for science to find it. Kuhn regarded revolutions as the most progressive components of his model of science. But, he was not able to articulate fully in what that progress consists, given the issues of truth, incommensurability and Kuhn loss, a problem that those who reject convergent realism still face. Kuhn compared revolutionary transitions, rather than normal scientific developments, with evolutionary change. It seems clear that he did not consider revolution and evolution to be mutually incompatible. It has been argued that Kuhn's account of the development of science is not entirely accurate. Critics have also attacked Kuhn's notion of incommensurability, arguing that either it does not exist or, if it does exist, it is not a significant problem. By making revisionary change a necessary condition of revolutionary science, Kuhn ignores important discoveries and developments that are widely regarded as revolutionary, such as the discovery of the structure of DNA and the revolution in molecular biology. Kuhn's view is that discoveries and revolutions come about only as a consequence of the appearance of anomalies.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 3

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

9. Why the social sciences took up Kuhn’s Scientific Theory with more enthusiasm?

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10. Kuhn did not consider revolution and evolution to be mutually incompatible How do you understand this?

3. According Kuhn Inconsistencies and anomalies leads paradigm shift. Comment.

4. What is the main proposition advanced by Kuhn in his 'Sociology of Scientific Knowledge'?

5. Briefly state the main criticisms against Kuhn's concept of Scientific Revolution?

2.1.8 LET'S SUM UP

Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* was published almost 50 years ago. It is one of the most influential books of the 20th century. Ever since, many social scientists were influenced by his ideas. The term "paradigm shift", is probably the most used – and abused – term in contemporary discussions of organisational change and intellectual progress. A Google search for it returns more than 10 million hits, for example. It is also one of the most cited academic books of all time.

The real measure of Kuhn's importance, however, lies not in the infectiousness of one of his concepts but in the fact that he singlehandedly changed the way we think about

mankind's most organised attempt to understand the world. Before Kuhn, our view of science was dominated by philosophical ideas about how it ought to develop ("the scientific method"), together with a heroic narrative of scientific progress as "the addition of new truths to the stock of old truths, or the increasing approximation of theories to the truth, and in the odd case, the correction of past errors", as the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy puts it. Before Kuhn, in other words, we had what amounted to the Whig interpretation of scientific history, in which past researchers, theorists and experimenters had engaged in a long march, if not towards "truth", then at least towards greater and greater understanding of the natural world.

Kuhn's version of how science develops differed dramatically from the Whig version. Where the standard account saw steady, cumulative "progress", he saw discontinuities – a set of alternating "normal" and "revolutionary" phases in which communities of specialists in particular fields are plunged into periods of turmoil, uncertainty and angst. These revolutionary phases – for example the transition from Newtonian mechanics to quantum physics – correspond to great conceptual breakthroughs and lay the basis for a succeeding phase of business as usual. The fact that his version seems unremarkable now is, in a way, the greatest measure of his success. But in 1962 almost everything about it was controversial because of the challenge it posed to powerful, entrenched philosophical assumptions about how science did – and should – work.

Kuhn's central claim is that a careful study of the history of science reveals that development in any scientific field happens via a series of phases. The first he christened "normal science" – business as usual, if you like. In this phase, a community of researchers who share a common intellectual framework – called a paradigm or a "disciplinary matrix" – engage in solving puzzles thrown up by discrepancies (anomalies) between what the paradigm predicts and what is revealed by observation or experiment. Most of the time, the anomalies are resolved either by incremental changes to the paradigm or by uncovering observational or experimental error. As philosopher Ian Hacking puts it in his terrific preface to the new edition of Structure: "Normal science does not aim at novelty but at clearing up the status quo. It tends to discover what it expects to discover."

The trouble is that over longer periods unresolved anomalies accumulate and eventually get to the point where some scientists begin to question the paradigm itself. At this point, the discipline enters a period of crisis characterised by, in Kuhn's words, "a proliferation of compelling articulations, the willingness to try anything, the expression of explicit discontent, the recourse to philosophy and to debate over fundamentals". In the end, the crisis is resolved by a revolutionary change in world-view in which the now-deficient paradigm is replaced by a newer one. This is the paradigm shift of modern parlance and after it has happened the scientific field returns to normal science, based on the new framework. And so it goes on.

Kuhn's book spawned a whole industry of commentary, interpretation and exegesis. His emphasis on the importance of communities of scientists clustered round a shared paradigm essentially triggered the growth of a new academic discipline – the sociology of science – in which researchers began to examine scientific disciplines much as anthropologists studied exotic tribes, and in which science was regarded not as a sacred, untouchable product of the Enlightenment but as just another subculture.

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2.2 IDEOLOGY: LIBERAL AND MARXIST UNDERSTANDING OF IDEOLOGY

- **V. Nagendra Rao**

STRUCTURE

2.2.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to understand:

- The historical evolution of the concept of ideology
- Definition and meaning and functions of Ideology
- The Marxist understanding of ideology including Gramsci, Althusser and Neo-Marxists
- The Liberal understanding of ideology, that is classical, modern and neoliberal

2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Ideas and ideologies influence political life in a number of ways. In the first place, they provide perspective through which the world is understood and explained. People do not see the world as it is, but only as they expect it to be; in other words, they see it through a veil of ingrained beliefs, opinions, and assumptions. Whether consciously or unconsciously, everyone subscribes to a set of political beliefs and values that guide their behaviour and influence their conduct. Political ideas and ideologies thus set goals that inspire political activity. Political ideas also help to shape the nature of political systems. Systems of government vary considerably throughout the world and are always associated with particular values or principles. Political ideas and ideologies also act as a form of social cement, providing social groups and societies with a set of unifying beliefs and values.

In short, ideologies are systems of ideas that shape people's thoughts and actions with regard to many things, including nationality, race, the role and function of government, property and class divisions, the relations between men and women, human responsibility for the natural environment, and more. These systems of ideas have proven to be potent, and often lethal, political forces. Political ideologies are potent and persistent, in short, and well worth understanding. Such an understanding begins with the history of the concept.

2.2.2 THE HISTORY OF IDEOLOGY

The word *ideologie* was coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836), who hoped to found a systematic study of the origins of ideas in the revolutionary decade of the 1790s, when entire world is influenced by French Revolution. As Eagleton has put it, 'the notion of ideology was thus brought to birth in thoroughly ideological conditions'. For de Tracy the aim of ideology was to establish a solid and unquestionable method by which correct ideas could be scientifically identified so as to foster the use of reason in the governance of human affairs for the betterment of society as a whole. In other words, the father of ideology shared the ultimate goal of the Enlightenment movement, to shed light on the dark corners of thought and life for the good of all. True to this revolutionary spirit, his

grand science of ideas was thus conceived as the final and only real measure of human intellectual capacity. If Isaac Newton had discovered the laws of gravity, thought de Tracy, why would it not be possible to discover the laws that govern human thought?

As de Tracy conceived it, this science was to serve the revolutionary purpose of remaking society. If ideas are the result of experience, he reasoned, it must be possible to discover their sources and explain how people come to have the ideas that they have—including the false and misleading ideas that stand in the way of freedom and progress. Among these were religious ideas, which he regarded as mere superstitions. With the aid of the new science of ideologie, however, de Tracy thought it would be possible not only to remove these and other misleading ideas from people's minds but to replace them with ideas that would lead to a rational and happy society. From the beginning, then, the concept of ideology has been associated with the attempt to shape how people think to move them to act in certain ways.

Not surprisingly, the Catholic Church, the nobility, and powerful political elites viewed ideologie and the "ideologues," as de Tracy's followers were called, with alarm. With its emphasis on rationality and science, ideologie posed a threat to traditional authority in politics and society as in religion. In conservative circles, the word *ideologie* quickly acquired negative connotations as something false, seductive, and dangerous. But it was Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) who quashed de Tracy's attempt to found a reforming science of ideas. Once a supporter of the ideologues, Napoleon changed positions in the early 1800s when, as self-proclaimed emperor of France, he needed the support of the church and the nobility. Denouncing ideologie as "sinister metaphysics," he declared the new science to be nothing but a mask to cover the subversive plans of his opponents and critics.

This sense of ideology as hiding or masking something is also evident in the way that Karl Marx (1818–1883) used the concept some forty years later. In Marx's hands, however, ideology referred to a set or system of ideas that served to justify and legitimize the rule of a dominant social class. As Marx and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) argued in *The German Ideology*, the task of the revolutionary philosopher is to unmask and expose "the illusion of the epoch"—an illusion shared by rulers and ruled alike but working to

the advantage of the rulers at the expense of those they ruled. Once the class or classes at the bottom of society begin to see that the ruling class has no legitimate claim to its dominant position—that is, once the oppressed people see through the ideology that supports their oppressors—then revolution becomes a real possibility.

Marx's conception of ideology was not politically neutral. It was, as he acknowledged, a "weapon" in the "class struggle." But Marx thought it was a particularly powerful weapon because it revealed that the prevailing ways of thinking about social relations throughout history were merely complex and subtle defences of the power and privileges of the dominant classes. Yet his own theory, he maintained, was not biased or ideological in this way, but "scientific." The theory did promote the interests of the oppressed and exploited, but Marx held that the interests of the exploited class in his day, the proletariat, were the interests of all humanity. To expose "the illusion of the epoch" as mere ideology thus was to speak the truth in a way that opened the possibility of a classless society in which ideology and illusion will disappear.

2.2.3 IDEOLOGY: DEFINITION AND MEANING

Defining ideology in general terms is a relatively straight forward matter: ideology is a system for making sense of the world, through ideas, images, beliefs and representations. What is more difficult is its analysis, which is approached differently in each discipline and current of thought. This is not attributable to the difficulty of defining ideology, but to the pluralism of thought. Hence, one needs to identify a generally acceptable definition of ideology that provides a useful basis for identifying, comparing, and contrasting various ideologies. "an ideology is a more or less coherent and comprehensive set of ideas that explains and evaluates social conditions, helps people understand their place in society, and provides a program for social and political action". In other words, an ideology performs four functions for people who hold it: the explanatory, evaluative, orientative, and programmatic functions.

> ***Explanation***. An ideology explains why social, political, and economic conditions are as they are, particularly in times of crisis. Why are there wars? Why do depressions occur? Why are some people rich and others poor? Why are relations

between races so often strained and difficult? To these and many other questions each ideology supplies—or at least hints at—its own answers. A Marxist might explain wars as an outgrowth of capitalists' competition for foreign markets, for instance, while a Fascist is apt to explain them as tests of one nation's will against another's. Their explanations are sometimes quite different, as these examples indicate, but all ideologies offer a way of looking at complex events and conditions that tries to make sense of them. Moreover, those who are firmly committed to a particular ideology—ideologues—typically will offer simple or even simplistic explanations as they try to convert as many people as possible to their side.

Evaluation. The second function of ideologies is to supply standards for evaluating social conditions. Are all wars evils to be avoided, or are some morally justifiable? Are depressions a normal part of the business cycle or a symptom of a sick economic system? Are vast disparities of wealth desirable or undesirable? Are racial tensions inevitable or avoidable? Again, an ideology supplies its followers with the criteria required for answering these and similar questions. Those who adhere to one ideology may evaluate favourably something that the followers of a different one greatly dislike—communists look at class struggle as a necessary step on the way to communism, for example, while Fascists regard it as an outright evil. Whatever the position may be, however, all ideologies provide standards or cues that help people assess, judge, and appraise social policies and conditions.

Orientation. Ideologies also supply their adherents with an orientation and a sense of identity—of who the individual is, the group (race, nation, gender, class, and so on) to which he or she belongs, and how he or she is related to the rest of the world. Like a compass, ideologies help people to locate themselves in a complicated world. Communists stress the importance of social-economic classes, for example, with the working class being the victim of exploitation by its capitalist oppressors; Nazis think that racial identity is all important; and feminists maintain that one's gender is fundamental to personal and political identity in a world marked by sexual oppression and exploitation. Other ideologies lead their

adherents to perceive their social situation or position in still other ways, but all perform the function of orientation.

Political Programme. Finally, an ideology performs a programmatic or prescriptive function by setting out a general program of social and political action. The Russian Marxist Vladimir Illich Lenin (1870–1924) made this point in the title of one of his revolutionary tracts, What Is To Be Done? As he saw it, part of the answer is that the Communist Party must take the lead in seizing state power, overthrowing capitalism, and eventually creating a cooperative, communist society. Other ideologies, of course, advance very different programs: Nazis try to rouse the master race to take action against Jews and other supposedly inferior peoples, libertarians advocate policies that will reduce or eliminate government interference in the free market, and a social or religious conservative will call for the state or government to promote morality or traditional values.

2.2.3.1 MEANING OF IDEOLOGY

The concept of ideology has not been able to stand apart from the ongoing struggle between and amongst political ideologies. For much of its history the term ideology has been used as a political weapon, a device with which to condemn or criticize rival sets of ideas or belief systems. Not until the second half of the twentieth century was a neutral and apparently objective concept of ideology widely employed, and even then disagreements persist over the social role and political significance of ideology. Andrew Heywood listed the following meanings attached to the ideology:

- A political belief system.
- An action-oriented set of political ideas.
- The ideas of the ruling class.
- The world-view of a particular social class or social group.
- Political ideas that embody or articulate class or social interests.
- Ideas that propagate false consciousness amongst the exploited or oppressed.
- Ideas that propagate false consciousness amongst the exploited or oppressed.

- Ideas that situate the individual within a social context and generate a sense of collective belonging.
- An officially sanctioned set of ideas used to legitimate a political system or regime.
- An all-embracing political doctrine that claims a monopoly of truth.
- An abstract and highly systematic set of political idioms.

Apart from this, Terry Eagleton, in his book *Ideology: An Introduction* also listed various meanings attached to the concept of ideology. These are:

- the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life;
- a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class;
- ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political po.wer;
- false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power;
- systematically distorted communication;
- that which offers a position for a subject;
- forms of thought motivated by Social interests;
- identity thinking;
- socially necessary illusion;
- the conjuncture of discourse and power;
- the medium in which conscious social actors make sense of their world;
- action-oriented sets of beliefs;
- the confusion of linguistic and phenomenal reality;
- semiotic closure;
- the indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations to a social structure;
- the process whereby social life is converted to a natural reality.

Eagleton further says that not all of the formulations noted above are compatible with one another. If, for example, ideology means any set of beliefs motivated by social interests, then it cannot simply signify the dominant forms of thought in a society. Others of these

definitions may be mutually compatible but with some interesting implications: if ideology is both illusion and the medium in which social actors make sense of their world, then this tells us something rather depressing about our routine modes of sense-making. Secondly, we may note that some of these formulations are pejorative, others ambiguously so, and some not pejorative at all. On several of these definitions, nobody would claim that their own thinking was ideological, just as nobody would habitually refer to themselves as Fatso. Ideology, like halitosis, is in this sense what the other person has. It is part of what we mean by claiming that human beings are somewhat rational that we would be puzzled to encounter someone who held convictions which they acknowledged to be illusory. Some of these definitions, however, are neutral in this respect - 'a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class', for example - and to this extent one might well term one's own views ideological without any implication that they were false or chimerical.

2.2.4 THE FUNCTIONS OF IDEOLOGY

Materialism holds that ideology increases the cohesiveness of social groups. Many believe that it serves the interests of the dominant groups, distorting and legitimating social relations. They also believe that ideology establishes the hegemony of the rulers through consent to class power.

Disagreement centres on how this hegemony is achieved within Capitalism. Some say that ideology imposes the ideas of the ruling class in conjunction with conservative elements. Others consider that it expresses ideals of the ruled which it incorporates into a system of legitimation of the existent.

Only concrete analysis can reveal the functioning of a particular ideological system (for example, naturalizing history of presenting the existent as justified, rationalizing social data or expressing them in a irrational way). In general, ideology simplifies reality, presenting it as a contraposition of good and bad, and tending to efface the historicity of institutions, that is, the vested interests linked to them.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What are the views of Antoine Destutt de Tracy, who first introduced ideology to the world?

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2. How do you define ideology?

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3. What are four functions of Ideology that were stated by Andrew Heywood?

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4. Ideology contains plural meaning. Elaborate.

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5. Briefly state the functions of Ideology.

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2.2.5 MARXIST UNDERSTANDING OF IDEOLOGY

The career of ideology as a key political term stems from the use made of it in the writings of Karl Marx. Marx's use of the term, and the interest shown in it by later

generations of Marxist thinkers, largely explains the prominence ideology enjoys in modern social and political thought. Yet the meaning Marx ascribed to the concept is very different from the one usually accorded it in mainstream political analysis. Marx used the term in the title of his early work *The German Ideology*. This also contains Marx's clearest description of his views on ideology:

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time the ruling *intellectual* force. The class which ahs the means of *material* production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.

Marx's concept of ideology has a number of crucial features. First, ideology is about delusion and mystification; it perpetrates a false or mistaken view of the world, what Engels later referred to as 'false consciousness'. Marx used ideology as a critical concept, whose purpose is to unmask a process of systematic mystification. His own ideas he classified as scientific, because they were designed accurately to uncover the workings of history and society. The contrast between ideology and science, however, falsehood and truth, is thus vital to Marx's use of the term. Second, ideology is linked to the class system. Marx believed that the distortion implicit in ideology stems from the fact that it reflects the interests and perspective on society of the ruling class. The ruling class is unwilling to recognize itself as an oppressor and, equally, is anxious to reconcile the oppressed to their oppression. The class system is thus presented upside down, a notion Marx conveyed through the image of the *camera obscura*, the inverted picture that is produced by a camera lens or the human eye. Liberalism, which portrays rights that can only be exercised by the propertied and privileged as universal entitlements, is therefore the class example of ideology.

Third, ideology is a manifestation of power. In concealing the contradictions upon which capitalism, in common with all class societies, is based, ideology serves to disguise from the exploited proletariat the fact of its own exploitation, thereby upholding a system of unequal class power. Ideology literally constitutes the 'ruling' ideas of the age. Finally,

Marx treated ideology as a temporary phenomenon. Ideology will only continue so long as the class system that generates it survives. The proletariat, in Marx's view the 'grave digger' of capitalism, is destined not to establish another form of class society, but rather to abolish class inequality altogether by bringing about the collective ownership of wealth. The interests of the proletariat thus coincide with those of society as a whole. The proletariat, in short, does not need ideology because it is the only class that needs no illusion.

Later generations of Marxists have shown greater interest in ideology than Marx did himself. However, important shifts in the meaning of the term also took place. Most, importantly, all classes came to be seen to possess ideologies. In *What is to be Done* Lenin described the ideas of the proletariat as 'socialist ideology' or 'Marxist ideology', phrases that would have been absurd for Marx. For Lenin and most twentieth-century Marxists, ideology referred to the distinctive ideas of a particular social class, ideas that advance its interests regardless of its class position. However, all classes, the proletariat as well as the bourgeoisie, have an ideology, the term was robbed of its negative or pejorative connotations. Ideology is no longer implied necessary falsehood and mystification, and no longer implied necessary for stood in contrast to science; indeed 'scientific socialism ', was recognised as form of proletarian ideology. Nevertheless, although Lenin's concept of ideology was essentially neutral, he was well aware of the role ideology played in upholding the capitalist system. Enslaved by 'bourgeoisie ideology', the proletariat, Lenin argued, would never achieve class consciousness on its own, hence he pointed to the need for a 'vanguard' party to guide the working masses towards the realization of their revolutionary potential.

2.2.5.1 GRAMSCI'S CONTRIBUTION TO MARXIST NOTION OF IDEOLOGY

In many ways, it was the work of the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci that made it possible to think about how ideologies can cut across different classes and how, also, the same class can hold many, even contradictory, ideologies. Gramsci questioned the primacy of the economic (conceptualised as 'base' in classical Marxist thought) over the ideological (conceived of as 'superstructure') because he was trying to understand the

failure of the revolution in Western Europe, despite the economic conditions being ripe for the same. This does not mean that Gramsci ignored the role of economic changes. But he did not believe that they alone create historic events; rather, they can only create conditions which are favourable for certain kinds of ideologies to flourish.

Gramsci makes a crucial distinction between 'philosophy' and 'common sense'—two floors or levels on which ideology operates. The former is a specialised elaboration of a specific position. 'Common sense', on the other hand, is the practical, everyday, popular consciousness of human beings. Most of us think about 'common sense' as that which is obviously true, common to everybody, or normative. Gramsci analyses how such 'common sense' is formed. According to him, common sense is an amalgam of ideas 'on which the practical consciousness of the masses of the people is actually formed'.

While exploring nuances of ideology, Gramsci formulated his concept of 'hegemony'. Hegemony is power achieved through a combination of coercion and consent. Playing upon Machiavelli's suggestion that power can be achieved through both force and fraud, Gramsci argued that the ruling classes achieve domination not by force or coercion alone, but also by creating subjects who 'willingly' submit to being ruled. Ideology is crucial in creating consent, it is the medium through which certain ideas are transmitted and, more important, held to be true. Hegemony is achieved not only by direct manipulation or indoctrination, but by playing upon the common sense of people.

2.2.5.2 ALTHUSSER AND IDEOLOGY

The work of the French communist theorist Louis Althusser on ideology has been central in this regard. Althusser opened up certain important and new areas of inquiry such as how ideologies are internalised, how human beings make dominant ideas 'their own', how they express socially determined views 'spontaneously'.

Althusser tried to explore further Gramsci's suggestion that ideas are transmitted via certain social institutions. Gramsci had suggested that hegemony is achieved via a combination of 'force' and 'consent'—Althusser argued that in modern capitalist societies, the former is achieved by 'Repressive State Apparatuses' such as the army and

the police, but the latter is enforced via 'Ideological State Apparatuses' such as schools, the Church, the family, media and political systems. These ideological apparatuses assist in the reproduction of the dominant system by creating subjects who are ideologically conditioned to accept the values of the system.

In pursuing Gramsci's suggestion that ideas can mould material reality Althusser argued that ideology has a 'relative autonomy' from the material base. He then expanded this idea and suggested that ideology 'has a material existence' in the sense that 'an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices'.

2.2.5.3 NEO-MARXISTS AND IDEOLOGY

After Marx, Gramsci and Althusser, the Neo-Marxists, particularly the Frankfurt school, also significantly expanded the meaning of ideology. The capacity of capitalism to achieve stability by manufacturing legitimacy was a particular concern of the Frankfurt School. Its most widely known member, Herbert Marcuse, argued in *One Dimensional Man* that advanced industrial society has developed a 'totalitarian' character in the capacity of its ideology to manipulate thought and deny expression to oppositional views.

By manufacturing false needs and turning human into voracious consumers, modern societies are able to paralyse criticism through the spread of widespread affluence. According to Marcuse, even the apparent tolerance of liberal capitalism serves a repressive purpose in that it creates the impression of free debate and argument, thereby concealing the extent to which indoctrination and ideological control take place.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 2

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

5. How Marx defined ideology in his work *The German Ideology*?

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6. Marx's concept of ideology has a number of crucial features. What are they?

7. For Lenin and most twentieth-century Marxists, ideology referred to the distinctive ideas of a particular social class. Elaborate.

8. According to Gramsci, Hegemony is power achieved through a combination of coercion and consent. How do you understand this?

5. What are the views expressed by Herbert Marcuse in *One Dimensional Man*?

2.2.6 LIBERAL UNDERSTANDING OF IDEOLOGY

Liberalism as an intellectual movement of ideas has been a pre-eminent force in the history of political thought, establishing itself since its conception in the early nineteenth century as 'the outstanding doctrine of Western civilization'. Liberalism, though, should not be identified with a single tradition; it does not constitute a clear-cut body of either doctrine or practice but comprises a number of conflicting historical forms.

Liberalism as a complex and pluralistic political ideology therefore has to be unpacked and clarified from within; it has to be understood as a number of internal variants in the form of traditions or phases. These traditions are composed of competing

beliefs and practices, which form a part of the larger narrative that is history. These varied beliefs, languages and customs, which may be contradictory and often permeate into rival ideologies, stay within the boundaries of liberalism through the 'family resemblances' they share with those core concepts, expressions and values that can be labelled as fundamentally 'liberal'.

The core ideas of liberalism included those of individual choice, individual rights, the limiting of state power and the crucial role of the market. The basis of liberalism however can be seen in a deeper light. Historically it involved a belief in progress and in the emancipation of individuals from all fetters or restraints impeding their autonomy, whether those restraints originated from the state or from the wider society. The absence of constraint is an essential value of liberalism, defining the way in which liberals have envisaged what it is to be free, as stated in the opening lines of Hayek's *The Constitution of Liberty*. Hayek wrote that his concern was with the condition 'in which coercion of some by others is reduced as much as is possible in society', and that such was the situation which he described 'as a state of liberty or freedom'. But is this freedom, absence of constraint, valued for its own sake? In the liberal mindset, the absence of tyranny, whether 'the tyranny of the majority', in the classic words of de Tocqueville, or that stemming from arbitrary political power, is seen as the essential prerequisite for the autonomy and free self-development of individuals and of their capacities.

The implication of these ideas is that the freedom valued by liberals was classically valued as a means to an end, the unfolding of individuals' capacities and the revelation of their faculty of autonomy and self-determination. The intrusion of the state or of a conformist society was to be resisted because both forces would hamper the ability of individuals to seek their own way of life and develop their faculties in ways appropriate to themselves, and to no one else. These ideas were classically expounded by John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty*, where he wrote most eloquently of the importance of avoiding a situation of 'ape-like imitation', and of pursuing one's own good in one's own way. The implications of this stance are clear. Liberalism is in many respects an uncomfortable doctrine in that it places responsibility for individuals' lives and fates primarily on the individuals themselves. On the whole, liberal thinkers have been inclined to diminish the responsibility of any collective association or organic unit for individual

fate or development. It is the self development of individuals that is seen as the chief and over-riding value, the aim which is to be fostered in a free society. This is one of the dimensions on which liberals have disagreed with each other, namely the balance between the 'self' or the individual on the one hand and collective or communal organisations on the other. The so-called 'New Liberalism' or 'Modern Liberalism' of the end of the 19th century, as represented by theorists like L.T. Hobhouse, argued that the intervention of the state was necessary in order to make possible an equal starting point from which individuals could each develop their capacities, providing them with the basic prerequisites needed for personal development and the unfolding of their distinct nature.

Intellectually, the liberal tradition was a product of both classical liberalism and utilitarianism, and it is these movements that set the ideological foundations of the Victorian period. Richard Bellamy places the growth of liberalism in the context of the historical development of British capitalism and of the moral order that it fostered. British industrial predominance, he writes, was attributed to a strong and coherent liberal tradition, endorsed by the middle and industrious classes. Although the principal originators of British liberalism – Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer – held conflicting views over the exact interpretation of liberty, all tended to emphasise the self-creating power of the individual. Central to British liberal philosophy at the time was the idea of an economic and moral revolution that would free the individual from the constraints of the aristocratic order. Liberalism became more ideologically demanding as it took on new ideas and represented different interests, in particular those of the middle class.

However, seriously criticising the social or welfare turn the liberalism has taken during the second half of the 20th century, neoliberalism emerged to restored the classical traditions back on the liberal agenda. Neo-liberals like Hayek, Milton Friedman and Lionel Robins successfully set up a false dichotomy in their thought between collectivism and liberalism, which later became the cornerstone of neo-liberal ideology. The rise of neo-liberalism was not simply a revival of classical liberal ideas on free trade and the minimal state; rather, neo-liberalism originated as a counter-movement, in reaction to the various forms of collectivism that it saw sweeping throughout the Western world. These

various formulations of collectivism not only formed the context in which neoliberalism arose, but also provided one of its key distinguishing arguments: that all forms of collectivism, even milder rationalist liberal forms, lead to dictatorship and economic catastrophe.

The efforts made by neo-liberals to revive liberalism as an intellectual force during this period culminated in the meetings of the Mont Pelerin Society in 1947. These meetings of liberally minded academics generated and disseminated a wide range of liberal ideas through a vast network of international members. Whilst Mont Pelerians made it explicit that it was not their intention to create a new political orthodoxy, the society's network became an important source of ideas and inspiration in the construction of neo-liberal policy programmes in Germany, Britain and the United States in the years that followed.

To sum up, the above section traced the history of the liberal ideologies that have evolved ever since renaissance period. It has shown that liberalism is not an ideology with a secure and consistent internal structure; it is a cluster of related and sometimes contradictory beliefs and notions, which prioritises different ideas at different times. As it has indicated, what underpins these different liberal variants is the broad acceptance of several core conceptual components, which form an integrated and mutually supportive value structure. Liberalism as a series of traditions has followed established patterns of thought stemming from thinkers such as Locke, Kant and Mill. It has affirmed the moral sovereignty of individuals, highlighted the rational basis of self-determination leading to self-development, and stressed the importance of responsible power as the main institutional corollary of liberty. Throughout its history liberalism has reconstructed these core beliefs in response to changing circumstances, taking on new or revised ideological forms. As a multifaceted ideology, liberalism has steered its course somewhere in that vast uncharted area between the radical left on the one hand and the conservatism of the right on the other. By the early twentieth century, liberalism in Western societies had moved towards neoliberal. For neo-liberals, the welfare or social liberalism incorporated not just the new or progressive liberalism of Britain and the United States, but also the fascism of Nazi Germany. Their clear-cut ideological confrontation between 'true' liberalism and collectivist socialism makes little or no distinction between socialism and

social democracy, communism and fascism. It demonstrates, however, that old liberal ideas did not disappear completely from the conceptual map. Neo-liberalism as a new political phenomenon arose during the second half of the twentieth century from the liberal traditions of the past, born out of frustrations of political exile since the beginning of the century.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 3

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Liberalism has to be understood as a number of internal variants in the form of traditions or phases. How do you understand this?

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2. What are the core ideas of liberalism?

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3. Liberalism is an uncomfortable doctrine in that it places responsibility for individuals' lives and fates primarily on the individuals themselves. Elaborate.

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4. Briefly state the ideas of neoliberals.

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2.2.7 LET US SUM UP

In this lesson, you have studied the concept of ideology in both Marxist and Liberal perspective. An ideology is a system of ideas which attempts to explain reality. Ideologies are developed because reality is often too complex to be understood. They also, almost always, reflect a bias and serve the interests of a particular group. Some ideologies are well grounded in reality, while others are completely divorced from reality and can only be explained in terms of the motivations of its adherents. Ideologies tend either to over-simplify reality or to completely distort it. Nevertheless, it is sometimes useful to speak generally in ideological terms in order to make a point. On balance, it is probably true that the use of ideology has created more difficulties than it has solved.

2.3 LIBERALISM: CLASSICAL, MODERN, NEOLIBERALISM

- Nirmal Singh

STRUCTURE

2.3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to:

- Know the historical development of Liberalism
- Understand ideology and philosophy of Classical Liberalism
- Comprehend Modern Liberalism and its core principles
- Know what is neoliberlism and its relation to classical liberalism

2.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Liberalism, as an 'ism', is an approach to all forms of human organisation, whether of a political or economic nature, and it contains within it a social theory, philosophy and ideology. The result is that liberalism has something to say about all aspects of human life. In terms of liberal philosophy, liberalism is based upon a belief in the inherently good nature of all humans, the ultimate value of individual liberty and the possibility of human progress. Liberalism speaks the language of rationality, moral autonomy, human rights, democracy, opportunity and choice and is founded upon a commitment to principles of liberty and equality, justified in the name of individuality and rationality. Politically this translates into support for limited government and political pluralism. We will study the main assumptions of liberalism below. First, we need to consider further the historical and intellectual origins of liberal thought.

2.3.2 LIBERALISM: PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

The term liberal began to be used in the fourteenth century. It takes its origin from Latin word *liber* that means free people who are not slaves to any individual or authority. In everyday use, it means generous and open minded, as well as free from restraint and from prejudice. Its use as a political term, however, only dates back to the early nineteenth century.

Liberalism is one of the most important political ideologies and it seeks to establish relationship between individual and society in which former takes precedence over the latter. The Encyclopedia Britannica says that liberalism is the political doctrine that not only ensures protection of freedom of individuals but it also increases it. Liberals believe that on one hand police and judicial courts provide protection to life and freedoms of individuals but on other hand they also possess coercive powers to harm individuals through these institutions.

Although most liberals would claim that a government is necessary to protect rights, however, different forms of liberalism may propose very different policies with regard to functions and powers of government. They are, however, generally united by

their support for a number of principles, including extensive freedom of thought and freedom of speech, limitations on the power of governments, the application of the rule of law, a market economy or a mixed economy and a transparent and democratic system of government. According to Andrew Heywood, liberal ideas started coming into being mainly with the growth of market capitalist society after the collapse of feudalism in Europe. The main thinkers associated with the liberalism are John Locke, John Stuart Mill, T.H. Green, Isaiah Berlin and John Rawls.

Liberalism lays emphasis on following elements:

- The individual takes priority over society.
- Individuals have the right to make choices for themselves. This freedom is not absolute, and some behaviours, such as murder, are prohibited. Freedom of religion is a particularly important freedom to come out of liberalism because so many governments at the time were very closely tied to a particular religious creed.
- No person is morally or politically superior to others. Hierarchies are rejected.
- Humans are capable of thinking logically and rationally. Logic and reason help us solve problems.
- Traditions should not be kept unless they have value. New ideas are helpful because they can lead to progress in the sciences, the economy, and society.
- Liberalism and capitalism go hand in hand. Liberals like the free market because it more easily creates wealth, as opposed to traditional economies, which often have extensive regulations and limits on which occupations people can hold.

These basic characteristics of liberalism have led liberals to argue in favour of a limited government, which draws its power from the people. In practice, this has meant favouring a democratic government. Although its fundamental claims are universalist, liberalism must be understood first of all as a doctrine and movement that grew out of a distinctive culture and particular historical circumstances. That culture was the West, the Europe that had been in unity with the church. The historical circumstances were the confrontation of the free institutions and values inherited from the Middle Ages with the

pretensions of the absolutist state of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From the struggle of the Dutch against the absolutism of the Spanish Hapsburgs issued a polity that manifested basically liberal traits: the rule of law, including especially a firm adherence to property rights; de facto religious toleration; considerable freedom of expression; and a central government with very limited powers.

2.3.3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERALISM

The modern ideology of liberalism can be traced back to the Humanism which challenged the authority of the established church during Renaissance in Europe, and more particularly to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in British and French Enlightenment thinkers, and the movement towards self-government in colonial America. John Locke's in 1689 established two fundamental liberal ideas of economic liberty which means right to posses and use property and intellectual liberty which implies freedom of conscience). His natural rights theory (Locke rights of life, liberty and property as natural rights) was the distant forerunner of the modern conception of human rights, although he saw the right to property as more important than the right to participate in government and public decision making, and he did not endorse democracy, fearing that giving power to the people would erode the sanctity of private property.

Gradually, the idea of liberal democracy (in its typical form of multiparty political pluralism) gathered strength and influence over much of the western world, although it should be noted that, for liberals, democracy was not an end in itself, but an essential means to securing liberty, individuality and diversity. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, though, splits were developing within liberalism between those who accepted some government intervention in the economy, and those who opposed government. In the twentieth century, in the face of the growing relative inequality of wealth, a theory of modern liberalism (or new liberalism or social liberalism) was developed to describe how a government could intervene in the economy to protect liberty while still avoiding socialism. Among others, John Dewey, John Maynard Keynes, Franklin D. Roosevelt and John Kenneth Galbraith can be singled out as instrumental in this respect. Other liberals, including Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and Ludwig von Mises argued that

phenomena such as the Great Depression of the 1930's and the rise of Totalitarian dictatorships were not a result of 'laissezfaire' capitalism at all, but a result of too much government intervention and regulation on the market. Nevertheless, the idea of natural rights played a key role in providing the ideological justification for the American and the French revolutions, and in the further development of liberalism.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

3 Liberalism imposes limitation on power of Government. Comment.

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4 Write the basic elements are propositions of liberalism?

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5 The modern ideology of liberalism can be traced back to the Humanism. Elaborate.

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2.3.4 CLASSICAL LIBERALISM

Classical liberalism originated in Great Britain and had an immediate impact on its society. Very quickly, however, the principles, beliefs, and values of classical liberalism affected many countries and peoples around the globe. Its impact is still seen today, and its principles continue to shape economic and political decisions in many countries around the world. Classical liberalism is a political ideology that values the freedom of individuals including the freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and markets as well as limited government. It developed in eighteenth century Europe and drew on the

economic writings of Adam Smith and the growing notion of social progress. Liberalism was also influenced by the writings of Thomas Hobbes, who argued that governments exist to protect individuals from each other. In nineteenth and twentieth century America, the values of classical liberalism became dominant in both major political parties. The term is sometimes used broadly to refer to all forms of liberalism prior to the twentieth century. Conservatives and libertarians often invoke classical liberalism to mean a fundamental belief in minimal government. Classical liberalism is a political philosophy committed to limited government, the rule of law, individual liberties and free markets.

Classical liberalism is a philosophy committed to the ideals of limited government, constitutionalism, rule of law, due process, and liberty of individuals. These liberties include freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and free markets. Classical liberalism stresses the importance of human rationality. Classical liberalism developed over the course of the 1800s in the United States and Britain, and drew upon Enlightenment sources from the 1700s and1800s. It was an intellectual response to the Industrial Revolution and the problems associated with urbanization.

2.3.4.1 CORE PRINCIPLES OF CLASSICAL LIBERALISM

Human nature, government and world peace are considered three main principles of the classic liberalism. Classical liberalism places a particular emphasis on the sovereignty of the individual, and considers property rights an essential component of individual liberty. In nineteenth century political theory, this encouraged 'laissezfaire' public policy that did not heavily interfere in commerce or industry. Most classical liberals argued that humans were calculating, egoistic creatures, motivated solely by pain and pleasure, and that they made decisions intended to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. But while in the absence of pain or pleasure, humans became inert. Hence, classical liberals believed that individuals should be free to pursue their self interest without societal control or restraint. It determined that individuals should be free to obtain work from the highest paying employers. In a free market, labor and capital would therefore receive the greatest possible reward, while production would be organized efficiently to meet consumer

demand. Classical liberals also saw poor urban conditions as inevitable, and therefore opposed any income or wealth redistribution.

Liberals believe that a harmony of self-interest between individuals can be achieved when state repression minimised. The key mechanism for any liberal is the market. Taking part in market activities is seen as a positive-sum game in which every participant gains. Such notions found their beginning in the work of Adam Smith (1723-90) and his theory of the 'invisible hand'. Smith held that society was such that, although individuals did indeed take action that would secure them advantage, the greatest benefit to society as a whole would be achieved by allowing them to do so.

Classical liberals agreed with Adam Smith that government had only three essential functions: protection against foreign invaders, protection of citizens from wrongs committed against them by other citizens, and building and maintaining public institutions and public works that the private sector could not profitably provide. Classical liberals extended protection of the country to protection of overseas markets through armed intervention. Protection of individuals against wrongs normally meant protection of private property. Public works included a stable currency, standard weights and measures, support of roads, canals, harbours, and railways, and postal and other communications services that facilitated urban and industrial development. Additionally, classical liberals believed that unfettered commerce with other nations would eventually eliminate war and imperial conflicts. Through peaceful, harmonious trade relationships, established by private merchants and companies without government interference, mutual national interest and prosperity would derive from commercial exchange rather than imperial territorial acquisition (which liberals saw as the root of all wars). World peace, for classical liberals, was a real possibility if national governments would allow interdependent global commercial relationships to form.

Classical liberalism is typically considered to encourage the following principles:

- The primacy of individual rights and freedoms, to be exercised in the individual's self-interest.
- The belief that humans are reasonable and can make rational decisions that will benefit both themselves and society as a whole.

- Economic freedom, involving the ownership of private property and free markets (markets with limited government intervention).
- The protection of civil liberties.
- Constitutional limitations on the government.

Hence, the historical tradition of liberalism views politics as the rational management of a naturally harmonious community. This shapes liberal notion of war and international relations. Nineteenth century liberals argued that war is 'the natural state of men ignorant of the laws of political economy'. In other words, if free trade were encouraged, the likelihood of political conflict and war would diminish. Because war undermines productive capacity and saps national wealth and power, peace is logically in the interest of every state. They also objected to armed peace because armaments, with the consequences of increased taxation and an ever-growing public debt, would also harm national welfare. In liberal opinion, peace should therefore be secured not through militarism but by free trade. For liberals, war is not an outgrowth of conflicting national interests, but arises from 'national interest ill understood.

2.3.5 MODERN LIBERALISM

Classical liberalism is seen as an answer to absolute powers of monarchy and similarly, modern liberalism is considered as a response to problems aroused due to classical liberalism. The modern ideas of liberalism developed towards the end of the nineteenth century mainly in Britain. Freedoms were not available to all the people in just manner due to shortcomings in the ideas and policies of classic liberalism. The key points of the modern liberalism are equality of opportunity, positive freedom, enabling state, developmental individual and qualified welfare. It developed in twentieth century and it is recognised as Twentieth Century Liberalism. It is related to growth in industrialisation. Industrialisation promoted economic growth, market competition, mass production of goods, increased employment opportunities as also incomes which all contributed towards ushering prosperity and enhancing freedoms. However, towards the end of nineteenth century, this idea suffered setback in the UK and in the USA during the great depression of 1930s. Modern liberals advocated the state that intervenes or enables to

provide justice in the market economy thus moving away from the minimal state of classical liberal tradition.

Modern liberalism is understood through perspectives of both classical as well as modern liberals. The former argues that the modern liberalism adopted collectivism in place of individualism and it has snapped links with principles and doctrines that used to define it. However, modern liberals put forward counter argument that modern liberalism has not done any damage to classical liberalism rather it has developed it further. According to Andrew Haywood, modern liberalism delves mainly on four distinct ideas of individuality, positive freedom, social liberalism and economic management. John Stuart Mill considered individuality to be 'heart of liberalism.' According to Mill, the liberty is not a negative force rather it is positive and productive force. Each individual is distinct and liberty enables individuals to gain skills and knowledge. He advocated expansion of education so that each individual can have access to it. With education, individuals can develop themselves and public education is best as every individual would be able to share the same views and beliefs in this system.

T.H. Green emphasised positive side of the freedom and human nature that individuals are not essentially self-seeking and utility maximising creatures rather they show sympathy for one another and possess altruistic sensibilities. According to Green, the excessive powers of government may have constituted the greatest obstacles to freedom in an earlier day, but by the middle of the 19th century these powers had been greatly reduced or mitigated. The time had come, therefore, to recognize hindrances of another kind—such as poverty, disease, discrimination, and ignorance—which individuals could overcome only with the positive assistance of government. The new liberal program was thus to enlist the powers of government in the cause of individual freedom. Society, acting through government, was to establish public schools and hospitals, aid the needy, and regulate working conditions to promote workers' health and well-being, for only through public support could the poor and powerless members of society truly become free. This aspect is known as 'social liberalism.'

According to modern liberals, economic freedom of some individuals may lead to exploitation of large number of individuals for instance for fear of poverty and starvation.

Working class is bound to work even if working conditions and wages are unsuitable and unsatisfactory. Negative freedom deprives individuals while positive help them in their empowerment. In case, market does not act justly and hamper liberty of the people, then the state steps in to secure justice and freedom to individuals as the state is guarantor of it. The state has social responsibility of the citizens. As a result, twentieth century witnessed enhanced intervention of state in many western and other countries thus transformation of minimal state into welfare state. Modern liberals favour the role of state in social welfare to ensure equality of opportunity in market society. Modern liberals believe that the state is socially bound to remove all the bottlenecks that obstruct development of individuals and in this way individual freedom is not curtailed rather it is enhanced and promoted.

Some of the issues and policies that the modern liberals advocated are given below.

2.3.5.1 LIMITED INTERVENTION IN THE MARKET

While acknowledging the achievements of the market, however, modern liberals sought to modify and control it to undermine the negative tendencies of uncontrolled market. They saw no reason for a fixed line eternally dividing the private and public sectors of the economy; the division, they contended, must be made by reference to what works. The Modern liberals says that the operation of the market needed to be supplemented and corrected. The new liberals asserted, first, that the rewards dispensed by the market were too crude a measure of the contribution most people made to society and, second, that the market ignored the needs of those who lacked opportunity or who were economically exploited. They contended that the enormous social costs incurred in production were not reflected in market prices and that resources were often used wastefully. Not least, liberals perceived that the market biased the allocation of human and physical resources toward the satisfaction of consumer appetites—e.g., for automobiles, home appliances, or fashionable clothing—while basic needs—for schools, housing, public transit, and sewage systems, among other things—went unmet.

2.3.5.2 GREATER EQUALITY OF WEALTH AND INCOME

To achieve what they took to be a more just distribution of wealth and income, modern liberals relied on two major strategies. First, they promoted the organization of workers into trade unions in order to improve their power to bargain with employers. Such a redistribution of power had political as well as economic consequences, making possible a multiparty system in which at least one party was responsive to the interests of wage earners.

Second, with the political support of the economically deprived, liberals introduced a variety of government-funded social services. Beginning with free public education and workmen's accident insurance, these services later came to include programs of old-age, unemployment, and health insurance; minimum-wage laws; and support for the physically and mentally handicapped. Meeting these objectives required a redistribution of wealth that was to be achieved by a graduated income tax and inheritance tax, which affected the wealthy more than they did the poor.

2.3.6 NEO-LIBERALISM

Known also as neoclassical liberalism, neoliberalism is the most popular contemporary ideology followed by many governments in the world. It began mainly in 1970s as a result of the developments in Western countries, particularly slow growth rate in economy and crisis faced by these countries.

The three decades of unprecedented general prosperity that the Western world experienced after World War II marked the high tide of modern liberalism. But the slowing of economic growth that gripped most Western countries beginning in the mid-1970s presented a serious challenge to modern liberalism. By the end of that decade economic stagnation, combined with the cost of maintaining the social benefits of the welfare state, pushed governments increasingly toward politically untenable levels of taxation and mounting debt.

As modern liberals struggled to meet the challenge of stagnating living standards in mature industrial economies, others saw an opportunity for a revival of classical liberalism. The intellectual foundations of this revival were primarily the work of the Austrian-born British economist Friedrich von Hayek and the American economist

Milton Friedman. One of Hayek's greatest achievements was to demonstrate, on purely logical grounds, that a centrally planned economy is impossible. He also famously argued, in *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), that interventionist measures aimed at the redistribution of wealth lead inevitably to totalitarianism. Friedman, as one of the founders of the modern monetarist school of economics, held that the business cycle is determined mainly by the supply of money and by interest rates, rather than by government fiscal policy—contrary to the long-prevailing view of Keynes and his followers.

The arguments of these two scholars were enthusiastically embraced by the major conservative political parties in Britain and the United States, which had never abandoned the classical liberal conviction that the market, for all its faults, guides economic policy better than governments do. Revitalized conservatives achieved power with the lengthy administrations of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1979–90) in Britain and Pres. Ronald Reagan (1981–89) in the United States. Their ideology and policies, which properly belong to the history of conservatism rather than liberalism, became increasingly influential, as illustrated by the British Labour Party's official abandonment of its commitment to the "common ownership of the means of production" in 1995 and by the cautiously pragmatic policies of President Bill Clinton in the 1990s. The clearest sign, however, of the importance of this "neoclassical" version of liberalism was the emergence of libertarianism as a political force—as evidenced by the increasing prominence of the Libertarian Party in the United States and by the creation of assorted think tanks in various countries, which sought to promote the libertarian ideal of markets and sharply limited governments.

2.3.6.1 NEOLIBERALISM: DEFINITION AND CONCEPT

Many scholars attempted to conceptualize neoliberalism. To Cros, neoliberalism is the political ideology which resulted from a few efforts at reinvigorating classical liberalism in the period immediately before and during World War II, by political theorists such as Wilhelm Röpke and Friedrich von Hayek. Cros main argument is that neoliberals have sought to redefine liberalism by reverting to a more right-wing or laissez-faire stance on economic policy issues.

David Harvey stands out as being one of the few who tries, in his ***A Brief History of Neoliberalism*** **(2005),** to give the concept a wide-ranging definition). His definition does shed a ray of light on the issue of what kind of phenomenon neoliberalism is:

> Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defence, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit.

Harvey's suggested definition of neoliberalism is, it might be said, well suited to accommodate his overall analysis, which includes the firmly held belief that the world has experienced "an emphatic turn towards neoliberalism in political-economic practices and thinking since the 1970s". Harvey proposes with his definition to view neoliberalism, not as the rejuvenation of liberalism in general, but as a distinctive economic theory which in recent times has replaced a more mild-mannered embedded liberalism.

2.3.6.2 NEOLIBERAL PHILOSOPHY

Neoliberalism tried to blend laissez faire economics and conservative social philosophy under the force of economic globalisation. It started expanding in all directions affecting political parties in different countries. Under neoliberalism, market is seen to be morally and practically superior to government and any form of political constraints. The system

of government has many defects which may be rectified only through market economy. The government should not interfere in the economic matters of the individuals and it should also not indulge in planning.

Neoliberals argue that under the garb of state intervention, the government imposes restrictions on freedom of individuals and it starts controlling different aspects of human life leading to totalitarianism. Neoliberals believe that the public servants like the common individuals are self-interested so they will always promote their own interests using their position of authority in the name of public interest. For this, public servants push for large size governments with ever-increasing powers and functions. Neoliberals take very strong position with regard to merits of market system. They believe market has self-regulating mechanism and it aims for long term stability through the system of price regulation of different goods and services. Market is inherently characterised by efficiency and productivity as it consumes resources for generating profits. In this system, equality prevails as both rich and poor individuals are at equal advantage to work. There is striking contrast in this system that private businesses are concerned about minimising costs of productions in order to maximising profits while in the government systems focus remains on ever-mounting losses incurred by public sector corporations. Neoliberals consider market from democratic perspective as private companies produces only those commodities which the consumers want to buy and they can easily afford with their purchasing powers. The market dispenses justice on the basis of one's hard work and talent. The inequality in the market system is nothing but the manifestation of natural differences that exist amongst the individuals. Due to economic globalisation, the choices available to individuals increase owing to competition in the market. Globalisation and neoliberalisation led to large scale restructuring of economies in countries of eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia.

To sum up, Neoliberalism is, as we see it, a loosely demarcated set of political beliefs which most prominently and prototypically include the conviction that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard individual, especially commercial, liberty, as well as strong private property rights. This conviction usually issues, in turn, in a belief that the state ought to be minimal or at least drastically reduced in strength and size, and

that any transgression by the state beyond its sole legitimate purpose is unacceptable. These beliefs could apply to the international level as well, where a system of free markets and free trade ought to be implemented as well; the only acceptable reason for regulating international trade is to safeguard the same kind of commercial liberty and the same kinds of strong property rights which ought to be realised on a national level.

Neoliberalism could also include a perspective on moral virtue: the good and virtuous person is one who is able to access the relevant markets and function as a competent actor in these markets. He or she is willing to accept the risks associated with participating in free markets, and to adapt to rapid changes arising from such participation. Individuals are also seen as being solely responsible for the consequences of the choices and decisions they freely make: instances of inequality and glaring social injustice are morally acceptable, at least to the degree in which they could be seen as the result of freely made decisions. If a person demands that the state should regulate the market or make reparations to the unfortunate who has been caught at the losing end of a freely initiated market transaction, this is viewed as an indication that the person in question is morally depraved and underdeveloped, and scarcely different from a proponent of a totalitarian state.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 2

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What are the core principles of Classical Liberalism?

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2. Briefly state T. H. Green contribution to ideas of Modern Liberalism.

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3. What are the two strategies advocated by Modern Liberals for just distribution of wealth?

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4. Write Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman contribution to Neoliberal ideas.

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5. How do you relate Classical Liberalism with Neoliberalism?

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2.3.7 LET US SUM UP

Liberalism first became a distinct political movement during the Age of Enlightenment, when it became popular among philosophers and economists in the western world. Liberalism rejected the notions of hereditary privilege, state religion, absolute monarchy, and the Divine Right of Kings. Liberals opposed traditional conservatism and sought to replace absolutism in government with representative democracy and the rule of law. The nineteenth century saw liberal governments established in nations across Europe, South America, and North America. In this period, the dominant ideological opponent of classical liberalism was conservatism, but liberalism later survived major ideological challenges from new opponents, such as fascism and communism. The beliefs of classical liberalism arose in Europe following the Renaissance and Reformation from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. The Renaissance sparked a belief in the importance of the individual in society, and the Reformation reflected the belief that reason was as significant as faith for the believer in Christianity. These trends helped to promote the rise of the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason, beginning in the late seventeenth century and continuing through the eighteenth century. In turn, the Enlightenment helped

promote the beliefs of classical liberalism that turned into the liberal ideology of the nineteenth century. During the twentieth century, liberal ideas spread even further as liberal democracies found themselves on the winning side in both world wars. In Europe and North America, the establishment of social liberalism, popularly known as modern liberalism, became a key component in the expansion of the welfare state. Today, liberal parties continue to wield power and influence throughout the world. However, from 1970s onwards, the classical liberalism resurfaced in a new shape due to changes in socio-economic context, particularly slow growth rate and economic crisis. Popularly known as neoliberlism, this shade of liberalism again brought back market and underplaying the state and market.

2.3.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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2.4 CONSERVATISM, NEO CONSERVATISM: OAKESHOTT

- **Dr. Nirmal Singh**

STRUCTURE

2.4.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- History of Conservatism
- Values and Ideology of Conservatism
- Michael Oakeshott's role in conservative ideology
- Political Philosophy of Neoconservatism
- Major criticisms against Neoconservatism

2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Conservatism is any political philosophy that favours tradition (in the sense of various religious, cultural, or nationally-defined beliefs and customs) in the face of external forces for change, and is critical of proposals for radical social change. Some Conservatives seek to preserve the status quo or to reform society slowly, while others seek to return to the values of an earlier time.

Classical Conservatism does not reject change per se, but insists that changes be organic, rather than revolutionary, arguing that any attempt to modify the complex web of human interactions that form human society purely for the sake of some doctrine or theory runs the risk of running afoul of the law of unintended consequences and/or of moral hazards. As a general ideology, Conservatism is opposed to the ideals of Liberalism and Socialism.

Conservatism generally refers to right-wing politics which advocate the preservation of personal wealth and private ownership (Capitalism) and emphasize self-reliance and Individualism. Conservatives in general are more punitive toward criminals, tend to hold more orthodox religious views, and are often ethnocentric and hostile toward homosexuals and other minority groups.

Different cultures have different established values and, in consequence, Conservatives in different cultures have differing goals. Many forms of Conservatism incorporate elements of other ideologies and philosophies, and in turn, Conservatism has influence upon them.

The term "conservatism" is derived from the Latin "conservare" (meaning to "protect" or "preserve") and from the French derivative "conservateur". Its usage in a political sense began to appear only after the French Revolution of 1789.

2.4.2 HISTORY OF CONSERVATISM

Conservatism is one of the bunch of political ideologies that originated in the western world particularly Europe. It was in reaction to French Revolution, although it can be

argued the 16th Century Anglican theologian Richard Hooker (1554 - 1600) was proposing something very similar two centuries earlier.

The Anglo-Irish philosopher Edmund Burke is often considered the father of Conservatism in Anglo-American circles. He argued forcefully against the French Revolution, especially in his "Reflections on the Revolution in France" of 1790, (although he sympathized with some of the aims of the American Revolution of 1776 - 1783), and was troubled in general by the Rationalist turn of the Enlightenment. He argued instead for the value of inherited institutions and customs, including the time-honoured development of the state (built on the wisdom of many generations), piecemeal progress through experience, and the continuation of other important societal institutions such as the family and the Church, rather than what he called "metaphysical abstractions". Burke also claimed that man is unable to understand the many ways in which inherited behaviours influence their thinking, and so trying to judge society objectively is futile.

The old established form of British Conservatism since the late 17th Century was the Tory Party, which generally reflected the attitudes of a rural land-owning class. In the 19th Century, a new coalition of traditional landowners and sympathetic industrialists constituted the new British Conservative Party. Benjamin Disraeli (1804 - 1881) gave the new party a political ideology, advocating a return to an idealised view of a corporate or organic society, in which everyone had duties and responsibilities towards other people or groups ("One Nation" Conservatism). The conversion of the British Conservative Party into a modern mass organization in the 20th Century was accelerated by the concept of "Tory Democracy", attributed to Winston Churchill's son Lord Randolph Churchill (1911 - 1968). In the 1980s, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher (1925 - 2013), there was a dramatic shift in the ideological direction of British Conservatism, with a strong movement towards free-market economic policies, although many saw Thatcherism as more consistent with a radical classical Liberalism than classical Conservatism.

In other parts of Europe, mainstream Conservatism is often represented by the Christian Democratic parties, which had their origins largely in Catholic parties of the late 19th and early 20th Century. They generally support market-oriented policies, the

European Union and a strong defence, and usually gain support from the business community and white-collar professionals. However, their views on social issues tend to be more liberal than American Conservatives, for example.

Modern American Conservatism was largely born out of alliance between classical Liberals and Social Conservatives in the late 19th and early 20th Century. It comprises a constellation of political ideologies including Fiscal Conservatism, free market or economic Liberalism, Social Conservatism, Libertarianism, Bio-Conservatism and Religious Conservatism, as well as support for a strong military, small government and states' rights. It is mainly represented by the U.S. Republican Party, exemplified by Ronald Reagan (1911 - 2004) and George W. Bush (1946 -), and much of the conservative attitude is focused in the nation's heartland (rural areas with low population density), as contrasted with the more Liberal cities and college towns.

2.4.3 CONSERVATISM: VALUES AND IDEOLOGY

Conservatism was considered a counter ideology to liberalism. Conservatism is disposition to preserve or restore what is established and traditional and to limit change. It is also related to the principles and practices of political conservatives. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, conservatism is a political doctrine that emphasizes the value of traditional institutions and practices. Conservatism is a preference for the historically inherited rather than the abstract and ideal. This preference has traditionally rested on an organic conception of society, that is, on the belief that society is not merely a loose collection of individuals but a living organism comprising closely connected, interdependent members. Conservatives thus favour institutions and practices that have evolved gradually and are manifestations of continuity and stability. Government's responsibility is to be the servant, not the master, of existing ways of life, and politicians must therefore resist the temptation to transform society and politics.

Rules and their stability are important, and apparently they may be adopted in the sense of a premeditated goal. For the conservative, government is limited in that it provides general rules of conduct or regulation, and people are permitted the enjoyment of making their own choices. Government should not be an instrument to inflame the

passions of men; rather it must strive for moderation-not because moderation is a virtue or a truth about men-but because, pragmatically speaking, moderation is essential if men are to escape being locked in an encounter of mutual frustration. Government moderation provides for us the scepticism for which we do not have the time or inclination. The educated man is thus more than a manipulator of tools; he is one who understands them and appreciates their stubborn resistance to change.

Modern conservatism took form about the beginning of the French Revolution, when farseeing men in England and America perceived that if humanity is to conserve the elements in civilization that make life worth living, some coherent body of ideas must resist the levelling and destructive impulse of fanatic revolutionaries. Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* turned the tide of British opinion and influenced incalculably the leaders of society in the Continent and in America. Conservatism, then, is not simply the concern of the people who have much property and influence; it is not simply the defence of privilege and status. Most conservatives are neither rich nor powerful, but they do, even the most humble of them, derive great benefits from established Republic. They have seriously concerned with some of the values and traditions such as liberty, security of person and home, equal protection of the laws, the right to the fruits of their industry, and opportunity to do the best that is in them. They have a right to personality in life, and a right to consolation in death.

But the true conservative does stoutly defend private property and a free economy, both for their own sake and because these are means to great ends. Those great ends are more than economic and more than political. They involve human dignity, human personality, human happiness. They involve even the relationship between God and man. For the radical collectivism of our age is fiercely hostile to any other authority: modern radicalism detests religious faith, private virtue, traditional personality, and the life of simple satisfactions. Everything worth conserving is menaced in our generation. Mere unthinking negative opposition to the current of events, clutching in despair at what we still retain, will not suffice in this age. A conservatism of instinct must be reinforced by a conservatism of thought and imagination.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Conservatism is a political doctrine that emphasizes the value of traditional institutions and practices. Comment.

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2. Edmund Burke is often considered the father of Conservatism. Elaborate.

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3. Briefly state the value or ideologies supported by American conservatives.

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4. For the conservative, government is limited. Expand.

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5. For Conservatives, the great ends are more than economic and more than political. What are they?

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2.4.4 CONSERVATISM: MICHAEL OAKESHOTT

Robert Schuettinger in *The Individualist* (1963), refers to Oakeshott as a disciple of Burke, who knows that most social issues are moral and not susceptible of solution at the hands of the new breed of social engineers. For Oakeshott, conservatism is not a credo, a body of principles, or an ideology. It is disposition to enjoy what is available rather than to look for something else.

Oakeshott explained what he regarded as the conservative disposition: "To be conservative ... is to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant, the sufficient to the superabundant, the convenient to the perfect, present laughter to utopian bliss." Oakeshott suggests that there had been two major modes or understandings of human social organization. In the first, which he calls "enterprise association" (or *universitas*), the state is understood as imposing some universal purpose (profit, salvation, progress, racial domination) on its subjects. By contrast, "civil association" (or *societas*) is primarily a legal relationship in which laws impose obligatory conditions of action but do not require choosing one action rather than another.

Oakeshott did not consider conservatism as an ideology. He says that conservatism is preference for “the familiar to the unknown…the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant, the sufficient to the superabundant, the convenient to the perfect, present laughter to utopian bliss.” In other words, it means exhibiting a certain kind of *disposition* in manners of thought and behaviour. The problem with ideologies, according to Oakeshott is that they can never include the whole, or even the best part of our knowledge about politics, as part of that knowledge is of a *practical* nature, that is of a kind that can’t be formalized (set in rules, put into books). In fact all human knowledge has two distinct elements: *technical* and *practical*. Of these two, only the former is available to the rationalist mind, as it is the kind that is susceptible to formalization. The difference between these two kinds of knowledge is well illustrated by Oakeshott’s famous examples of one not being able to learn how to cook, or drive a car, from a book. So Oakeshott considers political ideologies only a poor extract, a crude abridgement of

political knowledge, and the ideological manner of political conduct an impoverishment of politics. The fullness of political knowledge can only be found in the practice of a given political community, in tradition.

The main elements of the Oakeshott's views on conservatism include his views on human imperfection, tradition, property, organic society, and authority. On his writings on tradition and on human imperfection, Oakeshott also talks about history; and prejudice and reason. Similarly, he also takes into account issues related to equality and liberty when he delves on organic society.

2.4.4.1 TRADITION

In 1933 Oakeshott published his first book, *Experience and Its Modes.* He developed this idea of philosophy by examining the forms of experience of science, history, and practice and showing them to be abstract and incomplete in comparison with the concrete standpoint of philosophy. That philosophy was superior to these abstract modes of experience, however, did not mean that it could dictate to them. Oakeshott argued that, within its own sphere, every mode is autonomous and immune from the authority of other forms of experience. History is independent of science and the practical attitude, and practice has nothing to learn or fear from history or science. Most important, philosophy has nothing to contribute to practical or political life. Oakeshott frankly acknowledged in the introduction to *Experience and Its Modes* that his argument was heavily indebted to the idealism of G. W. F. Hegel and F. H. Bradley, but this did not do justice to what was fresh and distinctive about it.

2.4.4.2 HUMAN IMPERFECTION

Human beings are morally imperfect. Crime is not a product of inequality but bad character. Logical conclusion is to use the law and prison as a deterrent. People fear instability. They are drawn psychologically to the safe and familiar, and seek the security of 'knowing their place'. Conservatives thus stress emphasize social order. Conservatives ground their ideas in tradition, empiricism and history, adopting a cautious, moderate and pragmatic approach – avoid dogmatic beliefs. Oakeshott directly challenges

the doctrines of modernity, even critiquing the efficacy of its central tenet, 'progress'. In his criticism one detects a religious component-a component that accedes to the idea of man as a material and spiritual creature capable of knowing a transcendent God. He also acknowledges the pre-political societies of family, church, and community and also the yearning for a political society "established by a determination of the noble, the good, and the just, which is expressed and then desired in reason." Oakeshott wrote frequently on religion in the 1920s, and in his first major publication *Experience and Its Modes* (1933). According to C.E. Corey, Oakeshott defined the practical life as one of the modes of human experience, along with history, science, and later he added poetry. It is a life of action, always doing something, and always looking to the future. It is the mode we exist in when engaged in business, family, and moral activity; it is "the world of cause and effect." And while this modal experience occurs now, in the present, "it always looks to a future." Oakeshott's most brilliant insight was that "the practical world can never be wholly transformed", that human existence is transitory, fleeting, a moment in eternity where man is imprisoned within the practical and its on-going demands.

According to C.E. Corey, it is within this context that he developed his realization of religious consciousness that allows the possibility of 'losing ourselves in God'. Presentness gives man the choice to reject modernity and accept the opportunity to "cultivate a personal sensibility" that may (or may not) place him in a proper relationship with God. The moment of the heart and Oakeshott's sensibilities of the present, while they are not the same experience, manage both to provide a nexus between reason and revelation. This is the 'movement towards truth', and ultimately can lift man out of the miasma of modernity and allow him to become an 'agent of truth'.

According to Paul Franco and Leslie Marsh, Oakeshott published the masterpiece of political philosophy *On Human Conduct* in 1975. Oakeshott anatomized the modern European political consciousness as a divided consciousness, composed of two opposing moral dispositions and two divergent understandings of the office of government. On the one hand, there was the morality of individuality, to which corresponded a juridical understanding of government as essentially an umpire or referee. On the other, there was the morality of collectivism, formed in reaction to the morality of individuality by those unable to bear its burdens, to which corresponded an understanding of government as a

manager of an enterprise, a leader, a promoter of substantive purposes, and a provider of substantive benefits.

In *On Human Conduct*, Oakeshott used the Latin expressions *societas* and *universitas* to designate these two poles of the divided European political consciousness. The former designated an understanding of the state as a nonpurposive association in which members are related solely in terms of legal rules. The latter designated an understanding of the state as an enterprise association in which the members are related in terms of a common, substantive purpose, whether it be religious salvation, moral virtue, or economic productivity or redistribution.

2.4.4.3 PROPERTY

In his writing *Political Economy of Freedom*, Oakeshott argues that the right to private property is a form of economic organization that is compatible with the political freedoms that we enjoy. The freedom he discusses is not a developed theoretical construct but a 'way of living.' Freedom begins not with an abstract definition but with what is already there. That is, Oakeshott is not concerned to outline an ideological point of view but merely try and explain philosophically what it is we take as our political freedom. The most notable feature of this he finds as the absence of large concentrations of power. That is maintained by the rule of law. It is this character of our political system that Oakeshott says private property upholds. The idea of private property put forward is one that neither tolerates monopolies nor is merely laissez-faire. Rather, it is one that is maintained by the rule of law in order to promote 'effective competition.'

Oakeshott's point of view about private property is that "property is a form of power, and an institution of property is a particular way of organizing the exercise of this form of power in a society." But this viewpoint, he says, does not make distinction about different forms of property i.e. 'personal and real property, chattels, property of man's own physical and mental capacities and property in the so-called means of production, are all, in different degrees, forms of power, and incidentally spring from the same sources, investment, inheritance and luck." The institution of property is unavoidable in every society says Oakeshott. This institution "allows every adult member of the society

an equal right to enjoy the ownership of his personal capacities and of anything else obtained by the methods of acquisition recognized in the society." The right to property like all other right is 'self-limiting.' He says that anything which does not belong to any individual in the society surely belongs to government in direct or indirect manner.

2.4.4.4 ORGANIC SOCIETY

The viewpoint of conservatives about nature of the society is very different from liberals. According to conservatives like Oakshott, humans are dependent and security-seeking creatures. Individuals cannot be separated from society and they cannot live outside the society. They are rooted in the society. There are certain groups in the society with which individual is essentially associated throughout his life such as family, friends, fellow workers, community etc. All these groups play important role in the life of an individual from birth to death. For this reason, conservatives try to understand freedom not from negative connotation rather they understand it as positive one. Andrew Heywood maintains "freedom is rather a willing acceptance of social obligations and ties by individuals who recognise their value. Freedom involves 'doing one's duty'." Conservative holds the belief that society is or will become rootless and atomistic if it people living in it only recognise their rights but not duties. Ties of responsibilities and duty bind together the society. Conservatives equate society with living things such as human organs such as heart, liver and lungs etc. Like human body, organic society is shaped by natural factors and is controlled by natural necessity. "Organic ideas are evident in conservative arguments in favour of the family, established values and the nation. Conservatives regard the family as the most basic institution of society and, in many ways, a model for all other social institutions" says Andrew Heywood.

2.4.4.5 AUTHORITY

Authority and power are used very commonly in conservatism writings, particularly in the writings of Oakshott. If power is exercised by someone who possesses authority to use it, authority makes power legitimate act whereby individual using power can act according to his own will. Power plays very important role in the organic society to

maintain order. As society develops naturally, similarly authority develops naturally in the natural society. The conservatives believe in the necessity of the authority as human beings require support, guidance and security as well. Individuals are born with different talents, skills, wealth and social status which is basis for natural inequality that exists among individuals in the society. Therefore, genuine and real equality cannot be expected in the society and it is just a myth because naturally unequal human beings should not be treated equally in the views of the conservatives. In the interest of order, the conservatives favour powerful as well as authoritarian type of state.

According to Andrew Heywood, "conservatives have traditionally believed the society is naturally hierarchical, characterized by fixed or established social gradations. Social equality is therefore rejected as undesirable and unachievable; power, status and property are always unequally distributed." Inequality is deep-rooted in the organic society as people have differences of different nature like livings standards, economic resources and social position. Conservatives give special place to leadership and discipline. They believe that the leadership is necessary to provide direction and guidance while discipline is willing and healthy respect for authority. Conservatives believe that authority should not be unbridled and it should be used with appropriate limitations imposed by natural responsibilities that authority entails. Authority should not be abused even by parents who posses natural authority on their children.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 2

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Oakeshott suggests that there had been two major modes or understandings of human social organization. What are they?

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2. Why Oakeshott considers political ideologies a crude abridgement of political knowledge?

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3. Briefly state Oakshott views on human imperfections.

4. Oakeshott argues that the right to private property is a form of economic organization that is compatible with the political freedoms that we enjoy. How do you understand this?

5. For Conservatives, humans are dependent and security-seeking creatures. Comment.

2.4.5 NEOCONSERVATISM

Neoconservatism, variant of the political ideology of conservatism that combines features of traditional conservatism with political individualism and a qualified endorsement of free markets. Neoconservatism arose in the United States in the 1970s among intellectuals who shared a dislike of communism and a disdain for the counterculture of the 1960s, especially its political radicalism and its animus against authority, custom, and tradition.

2.4.5.1 INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCES

Among their intellectual ancestors neoconservatives count the ancient Greek historian Thucydides for his unblinking realism in military matters and his skepticism toward

democracy, as well as Alexis de Tocqueville, the French author of Democracy in America (1835–40), who described and analyzed both the bright and the bad sides of democracy in the United States. More recent influences include the German-born American political philosopher Leo Strauss and several of his students, such as Allan Bloom; Bloom's student Francis Fukuyama; and a small band of intellectuals who in their youth were anti-Stalinist communists (specifically Trotskyites) before becoming liberals disillusioned with liberalism. The latter include Irving Kristol, Nathan Glazer, and Norman Podhoretz, among others.

2.4.6 POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF NEOCONSERVATIVES

Neoconservatism, or what popularly known as 'new right', is generally defined by its fear of social fragmentation or breakdown. Neoconservatism is much more, however, than just pragmatic political thinking. It is a systematic philosophy with deep philosophical roots. Social fragmentation is seen as a consequence of liberal reforms and progressive ideas. Conservatives consider authority as an answer to societal breakdown because authority acts as binding force in the society. There are three main concerns of the neoconservatives i.e. law and order, public morality and national identity. In its respect for established institutions and practices, neoconservatism resembles the traditional conservatism of the 18th-century Irish statesman Edmund Burke. Neoconservatives, however, tend to pay more attention than traditional conservatives to cultural matters and the mass media-to music, art, literature, theatre, film, and, more recently, television and the Internet, because they believe that a society defines itself and expresses its values through these means. Western (and particularly American) society, they charge, has become amoral, adrift, and degenerate. As evidence of the moral corruption of Western culture, they cite violent and sexually explicit films, television programs, and video games, and they point to popular music that is rife with obscenities that have lost their capacity to shock and disgust. Actions once regarded as shameful are now accepted as normal. For example, most people in the West now consider it perfectly acceptable for unmarried men and women to live together and even to have children. Such degenerate behaviour, say neoconservatives, indicates a broader and deeper cultural crisis afflicting Western civilization.

2.4.6.1 RELIGIOUS DECLINE AND SOCIAL DEGENERATION

Neoconservatives agree with religious conservatives that the current crisis is due in part to the declining influence of religion in people's lives. People without a sense of something larger than themselves, something transcendent and eternal, are apt to turn to mindless entertainment—including drugs and alcohol—and to act selfishly and irresponsibly. Religion at its best is a kind of social cement, holding families, communities, and countries together. At its worst, however, religion can be fanatical, intolerant, and divisive, tearing communities apart instead of uniting them. Most neoconservatives thus believe that the principle of the separation of church and state, as enshrined in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, is a good idea. They also believe, however, that it has been pursued to extremes by adherents of modern liberalism, who are bent on banishing religion from public life, resulting in a backlash from religious-right conservatives.

2.4.6.2 NEOCONSERVATIVES AND LIBERALISM

Neoconservatives also hold that the modern liberal ideal of cultural diversity, or multiculturalism—the principle of not only tolerating but also respecting different religions and cultures and encouraging them to coexist harmoniously—tends to undermine the traditional culture of any country that tries to put it into practice. It also encourages the excesses of "political correctness"—that is, an overly acute sensitivity to offending people of other backgrounds, outlooks, and cultures. These trends, they believe, are likely to produce a conservative backlash, such as those that took place in Denmark and the Netherlands, where anti-immigrant political parties became increasingly popular in the 1990s and early 2000s. Neoconservatives believe that markets are an efficient means of allocating goods and services. They are not, however, wholehearted advocates of free-market capitalism. Unregulated capitalism, moreover, creates great wealth alongside dire poverty; it richly rewards some people while leaving others behind. And since great disparities of wealth make the wealthy contemptuous of the poor and the poor envious of the rich, capitalism can create conditions that cause class conflict, labour unrest, and political instability. To reduce, though certainly not to eliminate, such

disparities, neoconservatives support the graduated income tax, the inheritance tax, the modern welfare state, and other means by which a social "safety net" might be placed underneath society's less-fortunate members.

At the same time, however, neoconservatives warn that well-intentioned government programmes can produce unintended and unfortunate consequences for the people they are meant to help. More particularly, neoconservatives argue that social welfare programs can and often do create dependency and undermine individual initiative, ambition, and responsibility. Such programs should therefore aim to provide only temporary or short-term assistance. Nor should the goal of social programs and tax policy be to level the differences between individuals and classes. Neoconservatives claim to favour equality of opportunity, not equality of outcome. While favouring the existence of the welfare state, they also believe that it should be scaled back, because it has become, in their view, too large, too bureaucratic and unwieldy, and too generous. In the mid-1990s, neoconservatives approved of "workfare" programs designed to move people off the welfare rolls and into the workforce. In domestic policy theirs has been an insistent and influential voice.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 3

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. How do you define Neoconservatism?

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2. Briefly state the intellectual influences on Neoconservatives.

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3. Neoconservatives charge that Western (and particularly American) society has become amoral, adrift, and degenerate. Elaborate.

4. Neoconservatives holds that religious decline leads to social degeneration. Do you agree with this?

5. Briefly state Neoconservatives critique on welfare state or welfare programmes.

2.4.7 CRITICISM ON NEOCONSERVATISM

Critics contend that, for all their purported idealism and their talk about democracy, neoconservatives have been all too willing to prop up pro-American but deeply undemocratic regimes throughout the world. Jeane Kirkpatrick's essay ""Dictatorships and Double Standards"" (1979), which made the neoconservative case for supporting pro-American dictatorships, was simply and unapologetically cynical, according to this perspective.

Critics also take note of an apparent contradiction between neoconservatives' views on domestic and foreign policy. With respect to domestic policy, neoconservatives are acutely aware of the possible unintended consequences of well-intended programs. But with respect to foreign policy, such skeptical awareness, according to critics, is almost entirely absent. In the months leading up to the Iraq War, for example, neoconservative planners seemed completely unaware that the invasion and occupation of Iraq might produce horrific consequences, such as large-scale sectarian violence and civil war.

Such criticism has led some neoconservatives, such as Fukuyama and Michael Lind, to renounce neoconservatism and to become ardent and outspoken critics. Such criticisms notwithstanding, neoconservatism remains an influential ideology.

2.4.8 LET'S SUM UP

Conservatism is a preference for the historically inherited rather than the abstract and ideal. This preference has traditionally rested on an organic conception of society, that is, on the belief that society is not merely a loose collection of individuals but a living organism comprising closely connected, interdependent members. Conservatives thus favour institutions and practices that have evolved gradually and are manifestations of continuity and stability. For Oakeshott, conservatism is not a credo, a body of principles, or an ideology. It is disposition to enjoy what is available rather than to look for something else. Classical Conservatism does not reject change per se, but insists that changes be organic, rather than revolutionary, arguing that any attempt to modify the complex web of human interactions that form human society purely for the sake of some doctrine or theory runs the risk of running afoul of the law of unintended consequences and/or of moral hazards. As a general ideology, Conservatism is opposed to the ideals of Liberalism and Socialism. Some Conservatives seek to preserve the status quo or to reform society slowly, while others seek to return to the values of an earlier time.

In the present context, division, not unity, marked conservatism around the world during the first decade of the 21st century—this despite the defeat of conservatism's chief nemesis of the previous 50 years, Soviet communism. But perhaps this fissure is not surprising. Anticommunism was the glue that held the conservative movement together, and without this common enemy the many differences between conservatives became all too painfully clear. In Europe, for example, conservatives split over issues such as the desirability of a united Europe, the advantages of a single European currency (the euro, introduced in the countries of the European Union in 2002), and the region's proper role in policing troubled areas such as the Balkans and the Middle East.

Conservatism was even more divided in the United States. Abortion, immigration, national sovereignty, "family values," and the "war on terror," both at home and abroad, were among the issues that rallied supporters but divided adherents into various camps, from neoconservatives and "paleoconservatives" (descendants of the Old Right, who regarded neoconservatives as socially liberal and imperialistic in foreign affairs) to cultural traditionalists among "religious right" groups such as the Christian Coalition and Focus on the Family. The camps battled one another as well as their perceived enemies in the so-called "culture wars" from the 1990s through the first decade of the 21st century. And the global economic crisis that began in 2007–08, during the final year of the Bush administration, turned Americans' attention away from cultural issues such as same-sex marriage and toward more material concerns. The "new New Deal" introduced by Democratic President Barack Obama's administration in 2009 angered and upset many conservatives, whose ranks nevertheless remained divided.

2.4.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

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3.1 MARXISM AND NEO-MARXISM: GRAMSCI AND ALTHUSSER

- **V. Nagendra Rao**

STRUCTURE

3.1.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to understand:

- The basic propositions of Marxism
- Understand what is neo-Marxism and its revision to Marxist Thought

- The contribution of Gramsci to the Marxist praxis, including his concept of Hegemony, Common Sense and Revolutionary practices
- The Significance of Althusser to Marxist theory

3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Karl Marx (1818-1883) was truly the last of the great critics in the Western intellectual tradition. His ideas exerted a decisive influence on all aspects of human endeavour, and transformed the study of history and society. By developing a theory of praxis, i.e. unity of thought and action, Marx brought about a sea change in the entire methodology of the social sciences. He was a brilliant agitator and polemist, a profound economist, a great sociologist, an incomparable historian. Marx was the first thinker to bring together the various strands of socialist thought into both a coherent world view and an impassioned doctrine of struggle.

Coming to Marx's writings, from its very inception Marxism was faced with a variety of criticism and critical acclaim. Scholars spoke of two Marxs: the young and the old. The young Marx was concerned with alienation, human nature and morality; the old was more deterministic, with his in-depth study of the working of capitalism. The link between the two was the ***Grundrisse*** and the ***Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy***. Another crucial fact was that four of Marx's writings were written in collaboration with Engels. After Marx's death, Engels edited and published some of his works as Marx's disciple raising questions about how much was Marx's original, and what were Engels' interpretations.

Marx interpreted liberalism and classical economics as articulating and defending the interests of the bourgeoisie. He created a social philosophy that was in tune with the aspirations of the rising proletariat (working class). Having studied the laws of development and of capitalism, he sought to prove that the destruction of capitalism was inevitable, for it had given rise to its own "grave diggers". Marx was the first spokesman for socialism to remove the earlier utopian fantasies and eccentricities, the first to present the socialist ideal not as a mere pleasing dream but as a historically realizable goal, indeed as a goal that history had brought to the very threshold of possibility.

Marx inherited and integrated three legacies—German philosophy, French political thought and English economics—in his theoretical construct. He stated that historical movement took place according to laws that were similar to the ones found in the natural world. The emphasis on action and revolution made Marx a philosopher, a social scientist and a revolutionary. He was a believer in the uninterrupted progress of human civilization and hopeful of the liberating and progressive role of science and human rationality.

Marx's genius lay not merely in his ability to predict, but in the new mode of thinking abut economic and political issues. As Berlin says, "The doctrine which has survived and grown, and which has had a greater and more lasting influence both on opinion and on action than any other view put forward in modern times, is his theory of the evolution and structure of capitalist society, of which he nowhere gave a detailed exposition. This theory, by asserting that the important question to be asked with regard to any phenomenon is concerned with the relation which bears to the economic structure has created new tools of criticism and research whose use has altered the direction and emphasis of the social sciences in our generation".

3.1.2 MARXISM

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels produced the body of works that were to provide the basis for the Marxist movement and ideology. In his writings Marx outlined what became known as his theory of historical materialism, an approach to the study of history and society that focuses on the productive or economic sphere of society as the key to understanding the nature, development and trajectory of the society as a whole. According to orthodox interpretations of Marx's theory, the manner of production in a society shapes the character of the political and legal institutions, the morality and the prevailing ideas. Production, in this reading of Marx's model, is basic to society, and changes in the way a society produces alter the nature of that society. For example, the change from manual labour and simple tools as the means of production to the use of machinery and steam power saw society transform from feudalism to capitalism. This in turn saw a change in the political and legal institutions, and the religious, moral and

social attitudes of society. Hence, religion no longer insisted on the divine right of kings, and all the ideas of classical liberalism concerning liberty of the individual, freedom of conscience, freedom of contract, the free market and competition came to dominate society as feudalism gave way to capitalism.

The subject matter of historical materialism is the study of society and the laws of its development. These laws are as objective, i.e., independent of man's consciousness, as the laws of nature's development. In contrast to the concrete social sciences, historical materialism studies the most general laws of social development. As an integral part of the Marxist world outlook, historical materialism furnishes a scientific, dialectical-materialist interpretation of phenomena of social life. It solves such important general problems of historical development as the connection between social being and social consciousness, the importance of material production in people's lives, the origin and role of social ideas and of their corresponding institutions. Historical materialism enables us to understand what role the people and individuals play in history, how classes and the class struggle arose, how the state appeared, why social revolutions occur and what is their significance in the historical process, and a number of other general problems of social development.

According to Marx, the history of antagonistic class societies is the history of the class struggle. Marx in Communist Manifesto categorically declares, "The history of hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". He explains this further by saying that "Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes".

The existence of two opposing classes, the exploiters and exploiters, is the main driving force for this class struggle. In *Poverty of Philosophy* Marx explains the nature of class societies and inherent source for struggle between contradictory classes. The struggle of antagonistic classes is irreconcilable because of the basic differences in their economic and political status in society.

Marx also gave a trenchant analysis of the society of his time, capitalism, which he characterized in terms of commodity production, private ownership of the means of production, and the free market. Marx identified contradictory tendencies within capitalism that would inevitably lead to its collapse. The pursuit of profit that drove capitalism forwards would also ultimately destroy it by making the rate of profit steadily decline over time, with economic crises recurring, each time more acute, until a catastrophic collapse brought the entire capitalist structure crashing down. At the same time as these underlying economic forces were at work a struggle between rulers and ruled was taking place. Capitalists, the ruling class, and workers, the oppressed masses, were in constant conflict, their interests irreconcilable. Ultimately, Marx expected the victory of the workers over the capitalists and of socialism over capitalism in a process of revolutionary change.

According to Marx the suppression of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a revolution. He felt that at a certain stage of their development the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production. Thus Marx called the revolution as the driving force of the history. Marx says that all the previous revolutions, including French Revolution, were partial revolutions because they entirely failed to cure social evils and in particular to achieve a redistribution of the wealth of society. Proletarian revolution, on the contrary, achieves a general emancipation by penetrating to the real life of man—his socio-economic life. This would be the first revolution to involve the whole of society. So, Marx states, while all previous movements were in the interest of minorities, the proletarian movement is the movement of the majority, in the interests of the immense majority.

Having aligned himself with the oppressed class, the proletariat, Marx created a philosophy which became its spiritual weapon in the struggle against capitalism and a powerful means of remaking life. This basically altered and tremendously increased the role of philosophy in social development. It gripped the minds of the masses and turned into a great material force. Describing this crucial feature of dialectical and historical materialism Marx wrote: “The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it”. Marxist philosophy owes its strength to its

organic bonds with life, to the fact that it serves the struggle waged by the working class against capitalism, for socialism and communism.

In the course of and alongside the development of his theory of historical materialism and his analysis of capitalism, Marx, in a profound but unsystematic way, developed distinctive conceptions and theories of the state, class, revolution, human nature, alienation and ideology. He mounted penetrating critiques of capitalism, classical economics, liberalism, anarchism, non-Marxian socialism, religion and the thought of contemporary European philosophers, notably the Hegelian idealists.

This very brief, and, hence, necessarily simplified, account of the main thrust and themes of Marx's thought indicates early philosophical foundations on which Marxism stood. However, as context changes with socio-economic and technological developments, many aspects of Marx's thought needs to be revised to the changing context. Inspired by Marx, many activists, particularly the leaders of Communist Parties, and Marxist influenced scholars in twentieth century had paid attention to shed light on the contemporary developments such as imperialism, hegemony, culture, etc. As result, Marxism has been substantially revised by twentieth century activists and scholars. Even the most central of Marx's ideas, such as historical materialism and class, have not been immune to the efforts of twentieth-century Marxists to update them, revise them and improve them. The next section will throw light on these developments of twentieth century, particularly on the contributions of Gramsci, Althusser and neo-Marxists.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. How do you differentiate the writings of young Marx with Old Marx?

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2. What are the three legacies on which Marx developed his philosophy?

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3. The manner of production in a society shapes the character of the political and legal institutions, the morality and the prevailing ideas. How do you understand this?

4. Marx identified contradictory tendencies within capitalism that would inevitably lead to its collapse. What are they?

5. How proletarian revolution is different from all other revolutions?

3.1.3 NEO-MARXISM

Neo-Marxism, as the name suggests is an extension or a sort of an amendment to the Marxist theory, which has gained prominence in the second half of the 20th century. The term does not refer to a single theory or approach, but rather is a colloquial reference to the combination of various 20th century schools of thought and approaches that amend or extend Marxism and Marxist theory. The neo-Marxist school of thought adds elements of other intellectual traditions to the classical Marxist theory. It is a loose term with no fixed definition as per say and finds application in various fields.

Basically, the theories originally designated as 'neo-' Marxist are "concerned in particular with culture and ideology, and with the role of capitalist states' welfare institutions in retarding rather than advancing socialism". The neo-Marxist ideology

states that changes and amendments need to be made to the classical Marxist theory in order to make it relevant and useful to the current times. It incorporates those changes keeping in mind the changes in social conditions from Marx's time to ours.

3.1.3.1 THE ADVENT OF NEO-MARXISM

The neo-Marxist school of thought developed after the First World War when the neo-Marxists saw the failure of working-class revolutions in Western Europe. They interpreted these failures as an inherent lack of adherence to the true Marxist theory, along with a lack of understanding of the prevailing social conditions. They believed that class divisions under capitalism are more important than sex-based divisions or any issues of race and ethnicity. In order to account for the change in social conditions since Marx's times, these neo-Marxists chose the parts of Marx's thought that might clarify social conditions that were not present when Marx was alive. They filled in what they perceived to be omissions in Marxism with ideas from other schools of thought.

Initially, like Marxism, neo-Marxism too began as a European phenomenon with a strong presence in Germany through the Frankfurt School. However, it was the rise of the Nazi regime under Adolf Hitler that caused the spread of this ideology to the United States, albeit unintentionally. The Nazi authorities suppressed all forms of political ideologies and their advocates were hunted down. As a result, during the Nazi regime, the members of the (Frankfurt) school fled first to Geneva, Switzerland and then to the United States.

3.1.3.2 THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL

The term 'Frankfurt School' denotes a school of Marxist (or neo-Marxist) thinkers associated with the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, an academic centre founded in 1923. The abundant output of the Institute covered many areas of humanistic studies: philosophy, empirical sociology, musicology, social psychology, law, economics. Its approach to Marxism was far from dogmatic, especially in the early years. In 1930, Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) became Director of the Institute and set about using the appointments procedure to create a 'school' of humanistic Marxism, whose reflections

came to be known as ‘critical theory’. The most impressive of the young intellectuals who joined the institute around this time were Herbert Marcuse and Theodor Adorno (1903–69). The former had only loose ties with the organised workers’ movement; the latter, like Horkheimer himself, had no personal links whatsoever to socialist political life. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, the Institute could no longer function in Germany. Horkheimer managed to arrange its formal transfer to the United States in 1934, where it was affiliated to Columbia University in New York. Enticed by the promise of chairs for its leading members, the Institute returned to Frankfurt in 1949–50, though some of its key thinkers, including Marcuse, remained in America, taking up prestigious posts in a succession of eminent universities.

The prominent thinkers of the Frankfurt School showed little interest in the idea of historical materialism as a ‘science’. Marx was, in their opinion, essentially a philosopher of human freedom, condemning the alienation and reification of bourgeois society. They injected into Marxism a strong dose of negativity on modern civilisation, with its reliance on science and technology and its addiction to ‘mass’ forms of production and communication. Although they did not deny the existence of capitalist exploitation, neither did they dwell on it or regard it as the source of all evil. Their main theme was the threat posed by technological progress and its indifference to spiritual needs. The pervasive moralism of these writings encouraged the critical theorists to develop a new dimension of Marxist critique. Whereas conventional Marxists condemned capitalism for producing poverty, the principal grievance of Horkheimer and his colleagues was that capitalism engendered abundance and satisfied a multiplicity of artificial needs. In contradistinction to orthodox Marxism, with its stress on efficient material production, the Frankfurt thinkers gave pride of place to the quality of life, to the liberation of our distinctively human potentialities. They were convinced that ‘man’ possesses a hidden ‘essence’ which tells us not only what he empirically is but also what he would be if he fully realised his own nature. It is, then, not surprise that these thinkers refused to identify with the proletarian movement and generally eschewed class analysis altogether, instead concentrating on a sweeping indictment of modern culture as a betrayal of reason. If this was Marxism at all, it was Marxism without the proletariat.

3.1.4 GRAMSCI

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) is leader of Italian Communist Party. He is revered as one of the key contributors to the Marxist tradition in the 20th century. His contribution entailed a revision of predominant interpretations of Marx's writings during his time, in order to address the flurry of criticisms levelled at Marxist theory (both from within and outside the Marxist tradition). More specifically, Gramsci's ideas can be described as truly political and revolutionary. He sought to formulate a variant of Marxism that would make sense of existing power relations and the political currents within Italian society; at the same time, he advocated a distinct course of action for his country's socialist movements.

Two main trends should be understood in Gramsci's thought. Firstly, Gramsci fundamentally rejects interpretations of Marx which trade on a crude materialism (and economism) – to this end, he accords a greater role to the "superstructure" and emphasizes the importance of culture, civil society, political practice, and social action. Secondly, Gramsci consistently resists mechanistic (or deterministic) readings of Marx's theory of history; instead he stresses the logic of *contingency* in place of a logic of *necessity* with regards to social change – this is evidenced in his prescriptions for political (and revolutionary) practice. While examining these two discernible aspects of Gramsci's thought, concepts such as "civil society", "common sense", "hegemony", the "historical bloc", and "wars of manoeuvre/position" can be understood.

3.1.4.1 GRAMSCI'S REJECTION OF CRUDE MATERIALISM

Gramsci attempted to rehabilitate and adequately theorize the role of the "superstructure", immediately coming into conflict with orthodox Marxist thinkers that emphasized the primacy of the material "base". For him, "the claim, presented as an essential postulate of historical [dialectical] materialism, that every fluctuation of politics and ideology can be presented as an immediate expression of the structure, must be contested in theory as infantilism, and combated in practice". More importantly, he is keenly aware of the complexity of the relations between structure and superstructure, and was always opposed to simplistic deterministic interpretations. Therefore, what Gramsci sought to

achieve was to develop a coherent account to explicate and explain a structure-superstructure dialectic, departing from the dominant underpinnings of materialism and "economism".

In line with questioning crudely materialist accounts of Marxism, Gramsci was also clearly interested in emphasizing the role of ideas and social practice. However, it is important to issue a preliminary caution that this reading of Gramsci should not automatically lead to the conclusion that he subscribed to a purely idealist conception of history and social change. Even though he emphasized the role of the superstructure, Gramsci certainly did not reject the important role of material (and economic) factors while constructing his social and political theory.

3.1.4.2 GRAMSCI ON "CIVIL SOCIETY" AND "COMMON SENSE"

Gramsci articulated the concept of civil society in order to demonstrate the importance of superstructural elements for historical change. On the whole, this is related to another concept - that of common sense – and fits into a larger mosaic regarding Gramsci's views on culture and the circulation of ideas.

For Gramsci, civil society is taken to include "a vast range of institutions", ranging from "political organizations" to "the church, the school system, the media and the family". It is suggested that in Gramsci's conception, civil society (and its institutions) is often viewed as a "private realm" of "everyday life", and "it is precisely in this private realm that ruling values seem most natural and therefore unchangeable". These institutions are responsible for sustaining existing worldviews that allow for the dominance of a particular sociopolitical formation, for example, capitalism.

For Gramsci, ***common sense*** is "the prevailing and often implicit 'conception of the world' of a social or regional group". In Gramsci's own words, "common sense" refers to "the philosophy of the non-philosophers" which is in "conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is". Civil-societal institutions are responsible for maintaining a prevailing this common sense that allows for coherence within existing society (among various factions of society) and the predominance of a

ruling class of elites. In this process, a historical bloc - an "economic structure and its ratifying superstructure and ideologies" - is formed.

Gramsci's view of civil society and common sense constitute the foundation of his theory of social and political action. Indeed, the point of "common sense" as an analytical concept was essentially linked to Gramsci's attempt at "understanding subaltern consciousness in hegemony processes". Gramsci is concerned with positing a counter-hegemonic process to the "bourgeois social order" which has, in his opinion, crippled the progress of Marxism.

3.1.4.3 GRAMSCI'S POLITICAL PRESCRIPTIONS: "HEGEMONY" AND REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE

The basic premise of Gramsci's theory of hegemony is that man is not ruled by force alone, but also by ideas". The concept of hegemony is really a very simple one. It means political leadership based on the consent of the led, a consent which is secured by the diffusion and popularization of the world view of the ruling class.

How then, does the idea of hegemony feature in a broader theory of social and political formation(s)? He relates the idea of "hegemony" to the ability of bourgeois ruling class to maintain their position of political dominance. For Gramsci, the "exercise of power" of a dominant class over "subordinate classes" is made possible by "a combination of coercion [or force] and persuasion [or consent]". Gramsci's concern is specifically with the latter - the idea of consent - and the organization of consent is equated with "hegemony".

On the whole, Gramsci's development of "hegemony" explains the presence of a ruling class of bourgeoisie, but it also raises certain questions; for instance, how do socialist movements eventually overcome the existing hegemonic formation? More importantly, to achieve this socialist outcome, the concern expressed is: what would be an appropriate revolutionary strategy to pursue?

In formulating a distinct theory of revolutionary practice, Gramsci draws a distinction between the "two polar strategies" of a war of position and a war of manoeuvre. The dominant ruling class ideology in modern capitalist society is highly

institutionalized and widely internalized. Gramsci believes that a concentration on frontal attack, or direct assault against the bourgeois state ('war of movement' or 'war of manoeuvre') can result only in disappointment and defeat.

As such, in view of the deeply entrenched capitalist system, and its existing hegemonic formation, Gramsci stresses the importance of a *war of position*. For him, given these circumstances, revolutionary forces must wage a battle of ideas on the "cultural front". This entailed a strategy of steady penetration and subversion of the complex and multiple mechanisms of ideological diffusion, conquering one after another all the agencies of civil society (e.g. the schools, the universities, the publishing houses, the mass media, the trade unions). Attention must therefore be directed to the inner redoubt of civil society, in short, to the creation of a proletarian counter-hegemony.

In essence, Gramsci is suggesting that revolutionary forces have to establish an alternative hegemony vis-a-vis the prevailing arrangements of civil society and its institutions. More specifically, he emphasizes the importance of an organized counter-hegemonic effort through and with the leadership of the intellectuals. In short, he "theorized and demanded the integral politicization of the intellectual role". Essentially, the Gramscian idea of revolution is expressed in "an ideological struggle led by the intellectual 'officers' of competing social classes".

In considering all of Gramsci's concepts, the social and political vision that emerges is one of contingency, rather than necessity. Instead of suggesting that capitalism *will* be overthrown eventually, or that the working class *will* be able to seize power, Gramsci's contribution was rather to posit *strategies* involving practical *social and political action* for the proletariat and the communist party. As such, his concepts of civil society (and its institutions), common sense, hegemony, etc, present a detailed and complex conceptual understanding of the nature of class struggle and political practice, rather than a set of historical laws and unchanging constants that will inevitably unravel over time. This explains his constant emphasis on political struggle - it is only through this that socialist movements can come to power. Instead of suggesting any predetermined outcome of national revolutions, Gramsci highlighted the importance of political practice.

3.1.5 ALTHUSSER

Louis Althusser [1918-1990) was a French Marxist philosopher. Althusser is commonly referred to as a structural Marxist, although his relationship to other schools of French structuralism is not a simple affiliation and he was critical of many aspects of structuralism. Many consider that Althusser critically integrated "the best" of twentieth century philosophical sources with that Marxism to constitute the new Marxism.

In his two major works on the philosophy of Karl Marx, ***For Marx*** and ***Reading Capital***, Althusser sought to counter the prevalent interpretation of Marxism as an essentially "humanistic" and "individualist" philosophy in which history is a goal-directed process aimed at the realization and fulfilment of human nature under communism. Althusser asserted that in early days of youthful days Marx was influenced by Hegel and his writings overemphasised this. But later, by the time Marx wrote his *Capital*, one can notice a Marx who developed a new 'science' of history focused not on human beings but on the impersonal historical processes of which human beings are the bearers. In a later influential essay, ""Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"" (1969), Althusser argued against traditional interpretations of Marx as an inveterate economic determinist by demonstrating the "quasi-autonomous" role accorded to politics, law, and ideology in Marx's later writings.

3.1.5.1 IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUSES

Althusser's most well-known work is the essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes towards an Investigation" (1970). In this essay, Althusser seeks to explicate how social institutions like the university play a fundamental role in the reproduction of capitalist exploitation and are thus significant sites of class struggle. To analyze the social reproduction of economic relations, Althusser provides a stylistically-elegant and conceptually-original discussion of ideology, though one that often raises more questions than it answers.

This essay weighs in on a puzzle that has long frustrated Marxism: if capitalism's sole object is to create profits for a ruling minority at the expense of the majority, why isn't mass resistance more common? How does capitalist exploitation get normalized and

justified, even for those it exploits? Althusser addresses these problems by examining the role of the state in reproducing — reinforcing, naturalizing, and securing — capitalist relations of production.

For Althusser, understanding that role means understanding the state in a very broad sense. It's a basic Marxist tenet that the state, as a set of repressive apparatuses, functions to protect ruling-class economic interests. Althusser extends this definition by introducing a distinction between "Repressive State Apparatuses" (RSAs) — the penal system, police and military — and "Ideological State Apparatuses" (ISAs), or social, cultural and political networks such as the family, education, religion, arts and culture, systems of political parties, popular media and so on. Both secure ruling-class domination, although only the former does so by explicit force. If RSAs function through force, ISAs compel by ideology.

Althusser presents an unusual theory of ideology. Althusser tries to define ideology as both reflecting and securing ruling-class domination — but not as merely false consciousness, brainwashing, or bourgeois illusion. Nor is ideology, strictly speaking, ideas, something one consciously thinks or believes. Rather, ideology exists in material practices, performed within the distinct bounds of particular ISAs, that themselves make the individual a ***subject*** who "freely" acts in ways conducive to the reproduction of capitalist relations of production. As the social "glue" that creates subjects who, in their very individuality and agency, act in a manner that subjects them to the mode of production, ideology is an essential component of all social systems, past, present and future.

Under capitalism, the education system is the primary ISA, where students learn the knowledge that distinguish workers from exploiters, as well as to internalize "the freedom, morality and responsibility of adults" — standards of conduct that normalize bourgeois mystifications of capitalist productive relations. Althusser recognizes that, rather than an ivory tower, the academy is actually essential to capitalism's functioning and endurance.

3.1.5.2 ALTHUSSER AND STRUCTURAL MARXISM

Structuralism enabled Althusser to develop a theoretical perspective equidistant from humanistic Marxism, on the one hand, and orthodox Marxism, on the other. Against thinkers like Gramsci and Sartre, he insisted that history is a 'process without subjects', which must be analysed in terms of objective and autonomous structures. Our behaviour, in other words, is reactive, not active or freely chosen; it is subject to deep structural determinants. But if human purposes and choices are merely the products of objective forces, beyond our control, then notions dear to Marxist humanists – authenticity, self-realisation, self-determination – are so much idealistic nonsense.

Althusser, despite his desire to restore the scientific rigour of Marxism, strongly objected to the mechanistic materialism of the orthodox Marxists. For one thing, he rejected their simplistic model of base and superstructure. The economy, he maintained, is just one structure among others: the political, the scientific and the ideological. Society is best described as a 'structure of structures', a 'decentred totality' of four autonomous structures interacting one with another. Each structure determines, and is determined by, the global structure, as well as all the others. Social determination is therefore complex. This is what Althusser labels the 'law of overdetermination'. At first glance, this 'law' might seem a radical deviation from the principles of historical materialism, but he preserves his Marxist credentials by saying that the autonomy of so-called superstructures is relative as opposed to absolute; economic practice is determinant 'in the last instance' because it determines the respective degrees of autonomy of the other practices, or structures. On this model, causality is understood in structural rather than linear or mechanical terms. It is not that A causes B, where A and B are isolated phenomena, but that A and B require each other. The focus is on co-existential regularities, not on causal laws in the classical Marxist sense.

To sum up, Althusser is known for his concept of "Ideological State Apparatus". He is also remembered for his contribution to structural Marxism. By recasting Marxist thought in the idiom of the dominant intellectual paradigm of structuralism, he was able to convince a new generation of intellectuals in France and abroad of Marxism's continued relevance.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. The neo-Marxist thought adds elements of other intellectual traditions to the classical Marxist theory. Comment.

2. Briefly state the contributions of Frankfurt School to the Neo-Marxism.

3. Critically analyse the Gramsci's concepts of Common Sense and Hegemony. How the ruling class operates on common sense to achieve hegemony?

4. Analyse state Gramsci's counter-hegemonic strategies.

5. Write Althusser contribution to Marxist thought.

3.1.6 LET US SUM UP

Marx can be thought of as having offered two sets of ideas. Firstly, Marx gave us a theory of society, i.e , an explanation of how society works, of how and why history has unfolded, and especially an account of the nature of capitalism. These are of great value for the task of describing what is going on in the world and for understanding the problems and directions of our society today. But Marx also regarded capitalism as extremely unsatisfactory and he was very concerned with getting rid of it, via violent revolution and the establishment of a communist society. Marxism is therefore also about political goals and action.

Central to Marxism is the claim that the Mode of Production determines the nature of social and political relations. Marx developed a philosophy founded on 'dialectical materialism' in which the way that economic production was organized was decisive in the institutional and ideological arrangement of a given society. Hence, the 'structure' or 'base' will determine the superstructure', which include ideology, political system, social relations, etc.

The neo-Marxists of the 20th century critiqued this dimension of over determinism in Marxism. They questioned the determining nature of material dimensions or economism. Similarly, they also tried to extend the scope of Marxism to the conditions of 20th century.

An assessment of neo-Marxists success in advancing the cause of ordinary people met with mixed results. If the point of revolutionary theory is to change the world, then Western Marxism must be judged a failure. It has inspired no social upheavals of the kind Marx would have recognised, and few of its leading figures bothered to involve themselves in the struggles of the working class. As a varied body of theory, however, Western Marxism can boast some achievements. It gradually freed itself from the mythology of the infallible proletariat and the belief that Marx's categories were absolute truth. It made Marxism seem relevant to the changing realities of modern life. It also contributed to the critique of scientistic philosophy, by drawing attention to the absurdities and latent normative assumptions of positivist social science. And it revealed

the tension between human emancipation and orthodox Marxism's deterministic conception of human behaviour.

3.2 NATIONALISM: ERIC HOBSBAWM, BENEDICT ANDERSON

- **V. Nagendra Rao**

STRUCTURE

3.2.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to understand:

- The concept of nation and nationalism
- Various theories regarding nationalism, the primordial and modernist theories
- Eric Hobsbawm's perspective on nationalism, his concept of invented tradtion
- Benedict Anderson's contribution to nationalism theory.

3.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The term "nationalism" is generally used to describe two phenomena: one, the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity, and two,

the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve (or sustain) self-determination. The first one raises questions about the concept of a nation (or national identity), which is often defined in terms of common origin, ethnicity, or cultural ties, and specifically about whether an individual's membership in a nation should be regarded as non-voluntary or voluntary. The second raises questions about whether self-determination must be understood as involving having full statehood with complete authority over domestic and international affairs, or whether something less is required.

It is traditional, therefore, to distinguish nations from states — whereas a nation often consists of an ethnic or cultural community, a state is a political entity with a high degree of sovereignty. While many states are nations in some sense, there are many nations which are not fully sovereign states.

In political philosophy, nationalism occupied prominent place. The scholarly explanation of nationalism varies one school to other or one individual to another. In this lesson, we will discuss the meaning of nationalism, history of nationalism and divergent approaches to understand nationalism, with special emphasis on Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson.

3.2.2 THE CONCEPTS OF NATION AND NATIONALISM

The nature and role of nation is one of the most significant and fateful subjects in human history, but it is also one of the most puzzling and ambiguous, liable to fictitious interpretations. This ambiguity reflected when social scientists try to define it in terms of their own ideologies and perspectives. They have failed to agree on a precise definition of “nation”. As Hans Kohn opined “Nationalities are groups...of the utmost complexity. They defy definition”.

However, there is attempt to establish objective criteria for nationhood. The nation was defined as a community of people, characterised by common language, history, culture, common territory, common outlook and the like.

Walker Connor, while refusing objective criteria as insufficient to determine a nation, defined in terms of subjective perceptions. He argued that the “essence of the

nation is a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all non-members in a most vital way". It is not chronological or factual history that is key to the nation, but sentient or felt history. It is "not what is but what people perceive as is which influences attitudes and behaviour". Thus, Connor definition of nation is "a group of people who feel that they are ancestrally related. It is the largest group that can command a person's loyalty because of felt kinship ties". Along the line of subjective criteria, in an extreme way, Renan claims that "A nation's existence is a daily plebiscite".

Nevertheless, as Hobsbawm pointed out, to insist on consciousness or choice as the criterion of nationhood is insensibly to subordinate the complex and multiple ways in which human beings define and redefine themselves as members of groups, to a single option: the choice of belonging to a "nation" or "nationality". Moreover, national consciousness to arise, there must be something for it to become conscious of.

Neither objective criteria nor subjective criteria are fully convincing, one can find better definitions when both are combined. Anthony Smith defined nation as "a named human population inhabiting an historic territory and sharing common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members". Stalin's definition is also best known among these: "A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture". For Miroslv Hroch nation is not an eternal category, but was the product of a long and complicated process of historical development. He defined nation as

> a large social group integrated not by one but by a combination of several kinds of objective relationships (economic, political, linguistic, cultural, religious, geographical, historical), and their subjective reflection in collective consciousness. Many of these ties could be mutually substitutable—some playing a particular important role in one nation building process, and no more than a subsidiary part in others. But among them, three stand out as irreplaceable: (i) a 'memory' of some common past, treated as a 'destiny' of the group or at least of its core constituents; (ii) a density of linguistic or cultural ties enabling a higher degree of social communication within the group than beyond it; (iii) a conception of the equality of all members of the group organized as a civil society.

From these formulations, it becomes clear that ethnic communities and nations, while conceptually related, must be differentiated on a number of dimensions. While the ethnic community is an historical, cultural community, the nation is a community of mass, public culture, historic territory and legal rights. In other words the nation shifts the emphasis of community away from kinship and cultural dimensions to territorial, educational and legal aspects, while retaining links with older cultural myths.

Even though, there was a less agreement among the scholars when they define nation, however, most of them agreed on origin, development, changes and transformation of the concept. Here they linked the term "nation" with other terms like "national consciousness" and "nationalism". They all share a conviction that nationalism and even nationality, far from being natural and primordial characteristics of human societies, are relatively recent phenomenon, that arise at specific historical conjunctures. Walker Connor argued that national consciousness is a mass, not an elite phenomenon, and the masses, until quite recently isolated in rural pockets and being semi or totally illiterate, were quite mute with regard to their sense of group identity. The delay—in cases stretching into centuries—between the appearance of national consciousness among sectors of the elite and its existence to the masses reminds us of the obvious fact that nation formation is a process, not an occurrence or event. And Connor declared further that in any event, claims that a particular nation existed prior to the late-nineteenth century should be treated cautiously. In Hobsbawm's view the nation as conceived by nationalism can only be recognised a *posteriori*.

If we agree that nations and nationalism coincide with the mass movements, these popular movements vary along with their socio-political, economic and historical backgrounds. Along with the changes in their socio-economic, historical backgrounds the nature and character of national movements also changed. To understand this process, we have to look into the history of nationalism itself.

3.2.3 HISTORY OF NATIONALISM

For most of the scholars, nations and nationalism are fairly recent phenomena, arising immediately before, during or in the wake of the French Revolution when the three

estates of the States General were merged into the National Assembly and the Declaration of Rights vested all sovereignty in the "nation". With such a view, "nation" and "state" are merged. Almost simultaneously, the concept of popular sovereignty clearly implied that a "nation" or a people had a right to choose its own form of government and decide for itself the course of action to oppose tyranny and absolutism. The right of self-determination was thus assumed to be the basis of the sovereignty of the people, the ultimate standard of political legitimacy.

Walker Connor makes a significant observation in this context. Prior to the nineteenth century, political legitimacy was dependent upon such diverse and often overlapping attributes as divine right, title to land, conquest, and inheritance. All these justifications had one point in common: they emanated from above. In other words, the basis for political legitimacy was not to be sought among the governed. The notion of "popular sovereignty" therefore represented a truly revolutionary philosophical "aboutface" by ascribing the source of legitimacy to the people. Anthony Smith also viewed in similar terms:

> Nationalism, as a doctrine and ideological movement, did arise in the modern era.... 'Nation-states' are largely modern phenomena, though in the strict sense of that term (where nation and state are coextensive) fairly rare.... Besides, the rise of new states attempting to build nations in Asia and Africa, suggests that nations are neither organic nor immemorial, bur really quite recent constructs.

Similarly, according to Hobsbawm nation "belongs exclusively to a particular, and historical recent period. It is a social entity only insofar as it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state, the nation-state, and it is pointless to discuss nation and nationality except insofar as both relate to it" As Gellner argues "Nations as a natural, God given way of classifying men, as an inherent...political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, some times invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: that is a reality". So "nationalism is not the awakening of the nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist." By agreeing with Gellner, Hobsbawm opines: "nationalism

comes before nations. Nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way round".

In Marxist perspective, the nationality question is situated at the point of interaction of politics, technology and social transformation. Nations exist not only as functions of a particular kind of territorial state or the aspirations to establish one broadly speaking, the citizen state of the French Revolution—but also in the context of a particular stage of technological and economic development. For Marx and Engels, the "modern nation" was the direct outcome or a process whereby the feudal mode of production was superseded by the capitalist mode of production, causing dramatic concomitant changes in the process of social organisation. This event impelled most western European social formations to evolve into linguistically cohesive and politically centralised units through the formation of "modern states". Thus, what Marx and Engels called "modern nations" only came into existence through the embryonic capitalist economy in transition from feudalism to capitalism. As a direct result of this process, the feudal society was slowly under the structure of the destruction of local peculiarities, initiating the process of uniformisation of populations, which was considered an important condition for the formation of market economy. This is in essence, Marx and Engel's account of the emergence of "modern nations". From this argument it is possible to derive two important criteria that distinguish "modern nations" from more "ancient" ethnic communities: 1) modern nations must hold a population large enough to allow for internal division of labour which characterises a capitalist system with its competing classes; and 2) modern nations must occupy a cohesive and "sufficiently large" territorial space to provide for the existence of a "viable state".

However, social scientists connected nationalism in various ways with ethnicity, economic changes, urbanisation, cultural attributes and the development of communications. As Hans Kohn has pointed out, "A study of nationalism must follow a comparative method, it cannot remain confined to one of its manifestations; only the comparison of the different nationalisms all over the earth will enable the student to see what they have in common and what is peculiar to each and thus allow a just evolution. An understanding of nationalism can be gained only by a world history of the age of nationalism". And John Hall also argued that "no single, universal theory of nationalism

is possible. As the historical record is diverse, so too must be our concepts". This divergence led many scholars to interpret the relationship between nationalism, nation and nation-state with different perspectives. They developed different theories to understand ethnicity and cultural, political, economic and historical factors in relation to evolution and development of modern nations. In the following sections we study the major theories about nationalism with specific focus on perspectives of two scholars Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

5. How Walker Connor defined nationalism?

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6. Write Miroslv Hroch definition of nation.

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7. Nation formation is a process, not an occurrence or event. How do you understand this?

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8. According to Gellner ""nationalism is not the awakening of the nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist." How do you understand this?

_____

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_____

5. Briefly state Marxist perspective on Nationalism?

3.2.4 PRIMORDIALIST AND SOCIOBIOLOGICAL THEORIES

Among the few universalist theories of nationalism one should mention the primordialist and the sociobiological perspectives. Primordialism assumes that group identity is a given. That there exist in all societies certain primordial, irrational attachments based on blood, race, language, religion, region, etc. They are, in the words of Clifford Geertz, ineffable and yet coercive ties, which are the result of a long process of crystallisation. Modern states, particularly, but not exclusively, in the Third World, are superimposed on the primordial realities which are the ethnic groups or communities. Primordialists believe that ethnic identity is deeply rooted in the historical experience of human beings to the point of being practically a given. Sociobiologists take this perspective a step further and assert the biological character of ethnicity.

Primordialist approaches contend that ethnic bonds are 'natural', fixed by the basic experiences that human beings undergo within their families and other primary groups. Edward Shils was the first to express this idea when he remarked that in family attachments there is a significant 'relational quality' that can only be called primordial. And this is because there is an ineffable significance attributed to the ties of blood. .

The primordialist position was further elaborated by C. Geertz. Three major ideas follow from his work:

1) Primordial identities are natural or given.
2) Primordial identities are innefable, that is, cannot be explained or analysed by referring to social interaction, but are coercive.
3) Primordial identities deal essentially with sentiments or affections.

Another contribution to primordialism that we will examine is that of Harold Isaacs. In his book ***Idols of the Tribe*** (1975) he mentions the existence of a basic group

identity which, for each individual, is the result of being born into a group at a certain historical time. There are a number of elements which contribute to the basic identity of each person:

a) The physical body (which includes skin colour, size, type of hair and facial traits).

b) The person's name (an individual name, a family name and a group name).

c) The language one learns first to speak and with which one discovers the world.

d) The religion one is indoctrinated into.

e) The history and origins of the group one is born into.

f) One's nationality, or ethnic affiliation.

g) The geography of the place of birth.

h) The culture that one inherits.

Primordialism has been subjected to extensive criticism. In particular, the three qualities emphasised by Geertz - apriorism, innefability and affectivity - seem to preclude the possibility of sociological analysis. Furthermore, primordialism is unable to account for the origins, change and dissolution of ethnic groups, not to speak of the more modern processes of fusion of ethnic groups through intermarriage.

3.2.5 MODERNIZATION THEORIES

Most theories of nationalism assert the modern character of the phenomenon and account for its appearance and development by reference to a variety of factors associated with modernity. While some authors like John Armstrong and Anthony D. Smith contend that nations precede nationalism and that there is a continuity between old and modern nations (in that medieval or even ancient ethnic communities are often a springboard for the modern nation), only primordialists and sociobiologists take perhaps the nation as perennial, that is, an entity which has existed throughout history.

In general terms modernization theories maintain that nationalism emerges as a result of the process of transition from traditional to modern society; some of these theories focus more specifically on the spread of industrialization, and on the socio-

economic, political and cultural conditions functionally associated with it, as the main cause for the development of nationalism.

The ideological roots of modernization can be found in the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment. At the economic level, modernization was bought, at first, by the development of trade and commerce, and subsequently by the process of industrialization. At the political level it implied the appearance of the modern national state – a centralized, bureaucratic, territorial, sovereign polity. When applied to non-Western societies some features of modernity such as commercialization, bureaucratization, secularization, urbanization, mass communications, literacy, etc may be present, while industrialization is often absent.

Modernization theories of nationalism come under different guises. Authors do not always fit easily into rigid typologies. Furthermore, in the course of their work they may have shifted their theoretical stand substantially. With all these provisos in mind we can distinguish three major types of modernization theories:

1. Social communication theories

2. Economistic theories (Marxist and Non-Marxist)

3. Politico-ideological theories

The socio-communication theorists emphasis the role of modern mass culture and media as a factor for rise of modern nationalism. The Economic theorists identify socio-economic factors as catalyst for rise of nationalism. The politico-ideological theorists emphasises role of politics and ideology in the spread of modern nationalism.

The following section attempts to explain in details the perspectives of two scholars, Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson with regard to nation and nationalism.

3.2.6 ERIC HOBSBAWM: NATIONS AS INVENTED COMMUNITIES

Eric Hobsbawm who was born in Jewish family of Austria, later on moved to universities in England. He is member of British Communist Party, and who has commanded respect from a wider community of scholars for his historical writings. His books such as *Age of*

Revolution, *Age of Capital*, *Age of Empire* deals with the most significant part of European history from renaissance to 20th century. Hobsbawm's concept of nationalism is a mixture of cultural and modernist perspectives.

Hobsbawm refuses to settle on a single definition of the nation, arguing that objective definitions are doomed to fail because exceptions can always be found. Hobsbawm defines nationalism as the ideology that the political and national units should coincide. He views the nation as a changing, evolving, modern construct that is brought into being by nationalism, and not the other way around. He agrees that there are certain political, technical, administrative and economic conditions necessary for the emergence of the nation, such as the existence of administrative and educational infrastructure. Finally, Hobsbawm believes nationalism is constructed from above, although it needs to be studied from bellow as this is where it takes root and is most powerful and volatile.

According to Hobsbawm, there are three phases to the development of nationalism:

1. A preliminary phase in which the idea of the nation is purely cultural and/or folkloric;
2. A pioneering phase wherein political campaigners begin to try and raise awareness and mobilize the nation;
3. And finally, the stage at which nationalist movements acquire mass support, an occurrence which can come to pass before or after the birth of the state.

In his analysis, Hobsbawm's primary concern is how and why some nations accomplish the transition from phase 2 to phase 3. In other words, why do certain nationalist movements gain mass support and not others? He proceeds to dissect the rise and evolution of various nationalist movements, largely in a European context. However, throughout his historical analysis, a conclusion can be reached: For a nationalism movement to be successful, the nation needs to be "felt", it needs to be of a certain size and – the real determining factor – it needs to have a national economy to drive it. Without the necessary economic factors, it would never succeed. According to him three historical aspects are essential to a nation to emerge. These are:

- Historic association with a state (which is driven by an economy)

- Long-established cultural elite (to create the culture and impose it from above)
- A capacity for conquest (less critical today)

3.2.6.1 NATIONALISM AS 'INVENTED TRADITION'

The '**invention of tradition**' is a concept made prominent in the famous 1983 book edited by E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger. In his description, Hobsbawm treats 'Invented tradition' as a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. However, insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of 'invented' traditions is that the continuity with it is largely factitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition. It is the contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant, that makes the 'invention of tradition' so interesting for the historians.

According to Hobsbawm, the nation is like a artificial construct. It is a piece of social engineering. In Hobsbawm's approach, the nation is seen, in large part, as set of "invented traditions" comprising national symbols, mythology and suitably tailored history. Hobsbawm states that:

> "Traditions" which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes innovated.
>
> "Invented tradition" is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to include certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.

Speaking of the "nation" and its associated phenomena, nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, etc., Hobsbawm explains: "All these rest on exercises in social engineering which are often deliberate and always innovative, if only because historical novelty implies innovation". In his view, nationalists and their followers have put together the various ingredients of the nation—history, symbols myths and languages. In doing so, often select elements with diverse origins and the state's boundaries include various ethnic communities. So, the modern nation is a composite artefact, cobbled together from a rich variety of cultural sources.

While the decidedly leftist Hobsbawm generally undertakes a fairly materialist review of history, however, his constructivist approach does also seriously advocates to analyse the context from below:

> "For this reason they are…constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist….That view from below, i.e. the nation as seen not by governments and the spokesmen and activists of nationalist (or non-nationalist) movements, but by the ordinary persons who are the objects of their action and propaganda, is exceedingly difficult to discover".

Hobsbawm distinguished between three types of invented tradition: 1) Those establishing or symbolising social cohesion and collective identities; 2) Those establishing or legitimatising institutions and social hierarchies; 3) Those socialising people into particular social contexts.

3.2.7 BENEDICT ANDERSON: NATIONS AS IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

Imagined communities is a concept coined by Benedict Anderson. An imagined community is different from an actual community because it is not (and, for practical reasons, cannot be) based on everyday face-to-face interaction between its members. For example, Anderson believes that a nation is a socially constructed community, imagined

by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group. Anderson's book, ***Imagined Communities***, in which he explains the concept in depth, was first published in 1983, and reissued with additional chapters in 1991 and a further revised version in 2006. According to Anderson, the media also create imagined communities, through usually targeting a mass audience or generalizing and addressing citizens as the public.

In Benedict Anderson's theory, nationality, nationness as well as nationalism are "cultural artefacts of a particular kind". He argues that

> "the creation of these artefacts towards the end of the eighteenth century was the spontaneous distillation of the complex 'crossing' of discrete historical forces; but that, once created they become 'modular,' capable of being transplanted, with varying degree of self-consciousness to a great variety of political and ideological constellations".

Anderson then, proposed the following definition for the nation: "It is an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign". It is ***imagined*** because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or ever hear of them, yet in their mind of each lives the image of their communion.

Anderson further says that "the nation is imagined as ***limited*** because even the largest of them encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet.

It is imagined as ***sovereign*** because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the allomorphism between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state.

Finally, it is imagined as a ***community***, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings. These deaths bring us abruptly face to face with the central problem posed by nationalism: what makes the shrunken imaginings of recent history (scarcely more than two centuries) generate such colossal sacrifices? I believe that the beginnings of an answer lie in the cultural roots of nationalism.

Anderson proposed further that the arrival of "print capitalism" as he calls it, precipitated the search for new ways to link fraternity, power and time. The rise of the vernacular in publishing and in state administration required that a standardised usable language be chosen. "What, in a positive sense, made the new communities imaginable was a half fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print) and the fatality if human linguistic diversity". Print capitalism required that spoken dialects be assembled into print-languages, fewer in number and capable of being understood by larger publics. Larger, unifields of communication were created, which later would be reinforced through state sponsored schools, recruitment of men into armies with a single command language, and markets and towns.

Now the standardisation of history through a canonical textbook is only one, albeit a particular important way of forging an imagined community. There are others also. The creation of canonical literature represents another popular strategy. And here lies the point: these artefacts have created an image of the nation for compatriots and outsiders alike and in doing so have forged the nation itself. Signifier and signified have had been fused. Image and reality have become identical; ultimately, the nation has no existence outside its imagery and its representations. The position becomes even plainer when we turn to the recently formed states of Africa and Asia. In most of these cases, the nation cannot be anything but an imagined and very recent community; one that is being quite deliberately engineered in often polyethnic societies.

In ***Imagined Communities***, Anderson argues that nationalism is not linked with racism: “The fact of the matter is that nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history…The dreams of racism actually have their origin in ideologies of class, rather than in those of nation: above all in claims to divinity among rulers and to ‘blue’ or ‘white’ blood and ‘breeding’ among aristocracies”.

In Anderson’s opinion nationalism even contributes to a better society. It makes people behave better because they are members of a society. He says that people follow the laws because they are their laws - not always, because you perhaps cheat on your tax forms, but normally you do. Nationalism encourages good behaviour.

While explaining nationalism, Anderson adheres to the modernization argument explaining the origin of nations. In other words, nations developed as a necessary component of industrial society, though neither "economic interest, Liberalism, nor Enlightenment could, or did, create in themselves the kind, or shape, or imagined community". Breaking from Gellner understanding of nationalism, Anderson places greater emphasis on the constructed nature of culture and on the role of print capitalism to the development of nations. On the cultural front, Anderson argues that pre-national culture was religious culture. Nations replaced this religious culture with their own uniquely constructed national cultures. Anderson places print capitalism at the very heart of his theory, claiming that it was print capitalism which allowed for the development of these new national cultures and created the specific formations which the new nations would eventually take.

Through depicting the historical development of nationalism, Anderson successfully indicated the arbitrariness and illusiveness of national identity. However, he had not suggest anything that we can learn from the past to overcome the problems of nationalism. Nationalism is still so powerful in nowadays that it can easily disturb the focus of other important social problems, like economic exploitation. Thus, as most of the Marxists would appeal, more studies and discussions are needed in order to find a solution, so that national identity can no longer distract real social oppressions.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 2

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Briefly write primordial perspective on nationalism?

_____

_____

_____

2. What is the contribution of modernist theories to nationalism.

_____

_____

_____

3. How do you understand Eric Hobsbawm's concept of Invented Tradition?

_____

_____

_____

4. According to Benedict Anderson, nation is an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. Elaborate.

_____

_____

_____

3.2.8 LETS SUM UP

A comprehensive theory of nationalism should provide us with the following answers: 1) An account of the genesis and evolution of the idea of nation in Western Europe, as well as of its diffusion world-wide. 2) A spatio-temporal explanation of the varying structures, ideologies and movements of nationalism in the modern period. 3) An understanding of the collective feelings or sentiments of national identity along with the concomitant elements of consciousness.

On the whole, neither classic nor contemporary social science have considered nationalism a central phenomenon of modern societies, but rather a passing ideology;

only recently some authors seem to have realized its endemic character. Not surprisingly, the scientific efforts to account for nationalism have been rather limited. Today there appears to be an array of people writing on nationalism; unfortunately, they do it mostly from a normative or moralistic perspective. Nationalism is and will continue to be for the time being a theoretical challenge; whether the present generation of social scientists can do better than the previous ones is still to be seen.

3.3 MODERNISM, POST MODERNISM: FOUCAULT

- V. Nagendra Rao

STRUCTURE

3.3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will understand:

- The historical context of modernity
- Main assumptions of modernity
- Critique on modernity
- Basic premises of postmodernism
- Foucault's contribution to postmodernism

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Today's globalization, modernism and postmodernism have became common terms in academic discussions, which means that these terms are accepted among politicians,

social scientists and intellectuals, many of whom believe that the world is improving and new adventures are happening now. Most of the social sciences are influenced by debates on modernism and postmodernism.

The terms modernism and postmodernism are so interlinked that we have to discuss them collectively. We can't understand what modernism is without knowing what is pre-modern. Hence, to understand what is premodernism, modernism and postmodernism, first requires us to understand how these terms are used. Each of these can be talked about as periods of time and as philosophical systems. When discussing them as philosophies, it is probably best to view them as "isms" in the sense that within each epoch there were many different approaches.

When we discuss these as time periods, these are defined by the dominant philosophical system of the time. In other words, from the beginning of history up through the 1650's, the dominant way of viewing the world was largely consistent with the premodern philosophical system. The period spanned from end of Greek history to Renaissance is generally considered as Dark Ages since the societies witnessed very little progress during this period. This dark ages or middle ages were generally understood as premodern. Around the 1650's, premodernism was losing its influence as the dominant system and was being replaced by the modernist mind set. For about 300 years, this was the dominant philosophical system in Western culture. The 1950's are considered the time when the transition from modernism to postmodernism occurred. However, in many ways, modernism is still dominant within much of American culture.

Premodernism, modernism, and postmodernism as philosophical systems are three very different ways of looking at the world. The differences are represented best in their epistemologies. Each of these philosophical approaches has very different ways of looking at and understanding the world. But the differences should not be reduced down to merely a difference in epistemology.

As noted previously, it is very important to keep in mind that each of these major "isms" has many different philosophical approaches. The idea of a unified premodernism, modernism, or postmodernism is a fallacy. There are many variations of each of these philosophical systems.

3.3.2 PREMODERNISM

Premodernism is considered as anything before the Enlightenment or Age of Reason but could find its origin during the Renaissance and Reformation. Civilizations were established mostly as agrarian, family or tribe-centred communities where literature was passed along by oral tradition or held closely by a very high educated elite. As Todd Kappelman states, "Life in the premodern period was dominated by a belief in the supernatural realm, by a belief in God or gods, and His or their activity in human and cosmic affairs". Truth was measured by whether or not the phenomenon could be observed within physical reality and whether or not the truth in question was coherent with past initial truth claims. Life was less "advanced" with slower technology, communication, and a reliance on the land or individual craftsmanship.

The premodern vision of the world is one of totality, unity, and above all, purpose. These values were celebrated in ritual and myth, the effect of which was to sacralise the cycles of seasons and the generations of animal and human procreation. The human self, then, is an integral part of the sacred whole, which is greater than and more valuable than its parts. Myth and ritual facilitated the painful passage through personal and social crises, rationalized death and violence, and controlled the power of sexuality. One could say that contemporary humankind is left to cope with their crises with far less successful therapies or helpful institutions.

The primary epistemology of the premodern period was based upon revealed knowledge from authoritative sources. In premodern times it was believed that Ultimate Truth could be known and the way to this knowledge is through direct revelation. This direct revelation was generally assumed to come from God. The church, being the holders and interpreters of revealed knowledge, were the primary authority in premodern time.

3.3.3 MODERNISM

Modernism is a philosophical movement that, along with cultural trends and changes, arose from wide-scale and far-reaching transformations in Western society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the factors that shaped Modernism were the

development of modern industrial societies and the rapid growth of cities, followed then by the horror of World War I.

Modernism as a mode of thinking—one or more philosophically defined characteristics, like self-consciousness or self-reference, that run across all the novelties in the arts and the disciplines. More common, especially in the West, are those who see it as a socially progressive trend of thought that affirms the power of human beings to create, improve and reshape their environment with the aid of practical experimentation, scientific knowledge, or technology. From this perspective, Modernism encouraged the re-examination of every aspect of existence, from commerce to philosophy, with the goal of finding that which was 'holding back' progress, and replacing it with new ways of reaching the same end.

As a historical category, modernity refers to a period marked by a questioning or rejection of tradition; the prioritization of individualism, freedom and formal equality; faith in inevitable social, scientific and technological progress and human perfectibility; rationalization and professionalization; a movement from feudalism (or agrarianism) toward capitalism and the market economy; industrialization, urbanization and secularization; the development of the nation-state and its constituent institutions (e.g. representative democracy, public education, modern bureaucracy).

Charles Baudelaire is credited with coining the term "modernity" (modernité) in his 1864 essay "The Painter of Modern Life," to designate the fleeting, ephemeral experience of life in an urban metropolis, and the responsibility art has to capture that experience. In this sense, it refers to a particular relationship to time, one characterized by intense historical discontinuity or rupture, openness to the novelty of the future, and a heightened sensitivity to what is unique about the present.

3.3.3.1 PHASES OF MODERNITY

Modernity has been associated with cultural and intellectual movements of 1436–1789 and extending to the 1970s or later. Generally, modernity is periodized into three conventional phases:

Early modernity: 1500–1789

Classical modernity: 1789–1900

Late modernity: 1900–1989

Early modern phase is identified with the political change from papacy to monarchy and religious and state was considerably separated. The second phase witnessed the growth of modern technologies such as the newspaper, telegraph and other forms of mass media. There was a great shift into modernization in the name of industrial capitalism. Finally in the third phase, modernist arts and individual creativity marked the beginning of a new modernist age as it combats oppressive politics, economics as well as other social forces including mass media.

Politically, modernity's earliest phase starts with Niccolò Machiavelli's works which openly rejected the medieval and Aristotelian style of analyzing politics by comparison with ideas about how things should be, in favour of realistic analysis of how things really are. He also proposed that an aim of politics is to control one's own chance or fortune, and that relying upon providence actually leads to evil. Machiavelli argued, for example, that violent divisions within political communities are unavoidable, but can also be a source of strength which law-makers and leaders should account for and even encourage in some ways.

A second phase of modernist political thinking begins with Rousseau, who questioned the natural rationality and sociality of humanity and proposed that human nature was much more malleable than had been previously thought. By this logic, what makes a good political system or a good man is completely dependent upon the chance path a whole people has taken over history. This thought influenced the political thinking of Immanuel Kant, Edmund Burke and others and led to a critical review of modernist politics. More ambitious movements also developed from this insight into human culture, initially Romanticism and Historicism, and eventually both the Communism of Karl Marx, and the modern forms of nationalism inspired by the French Revolution.

Socially, the term modernity generally refers to the social conditions, processes, and discourses consequent to the Age of Enlightenment. In the most basic terms, Anthony Giddens describes modernity as

> ...a shorthand term for modern society, or industrial civilization. Portrayed in more detail, it is associated with (1) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation, by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; (3) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy. Largely as a result of these characteristics, modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society—more technically, a complex of institutions—which, unlike any preceding culture, lives in the future, rather than the past.

The era of modernity is characterised socially by industrialisation and the division of labour and philosophically by "the loss of certainty, and the realization that certainty can never be established, once and for all". With new social and philosophical conditions arose fundamental new challenges. Various 19th-century intellectuals, from August Comte to Karl Marx to Sigmund Freud, attempted to offer scientific and/or political ideologies in the wake of secularisation. Modernity may be described as the "age of ideology."

For Marx, what was the basis of modernity was the emergence of capitalism and the revolutionary bourgeoisie, which led to an unprecedented expansion of productive forces and to the creation of the world market. Durkheim tackled modernity from a different angle by following the ideas of Saint-Simon about the industrial system. Although the starting point is the same as Marx, feudal society, Durkheim emphasizes far less the rising of the bourgeoisie as a new revolutionary class and very seldom refers to capitalism as the new mode of production implemented by it. The fundamental impulse to modernity is rather industrialism accompanied by the new scientific forces. In the work of Max Weber, modernity is closely associated with the processes of rationalization and disenchantment of the world.

Due to this growth of capitalism, industrialization, bureaucratization and rationalization, beginning in the seventeenth century, Western societies steadily

transformed the material conditions of human existence, raising to new levels the economic lot of their populations, improving culture, education, and life expectancy. Bigness foreshadowed modern power's fondness for the huge and massive. In their heaviness, immobility, and fixed location, the factories of industrialized economies mirrored an economy whose power-ideal was the tangible writ large: a giant factory producing iron and steel. In the process industrialized societies established their unsurpassed 'power' as the identifying mark of modernity.

The theory and practice of modern power might be said to have reached its climactic moment at Hiroshima when nuclear bomb left destruction, both men and material, that the world never witnessed. Hiroshima confirmed beyond dispute that the achievements of modern power required the destruction of established practices, institutions, ways of life, and values.

In fact, more than two centuries before Hiroshima writers had begun to catalogue the social and human costs resulting from the systematic application of science and technology to the production of life's necessities and wants. Populations were dislocated, communities and neighbourhoods destroyed, local cultures undermined in order to prepare conditions congenial to modern industry.

And this is the modernity that many started questioning in the post Second World War period, especially from 1960s onwards. This is the time that the academia are dominated by the debates critiquing modernity. Broadly termed as post-Modernists, these critiques on modernity raised many valuable questions, which are dealt in the next section.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

5. Premodernism is considered as anything before the Enlightenment or Age of Reason. Comment.

6. Modernism is a mode of thinking. Elaborate.

7. What are three phases of Modernity?

8. Politically, modernity's earliest phase starts with Niccolò Machiavelli. Expand.

5. Write Anthony Gidden’s description of Modernity?

3.3.4 POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism brought with it a questioning of the previous approaches to knowing. Instead of relying on one approach to knowing, they advocate for multiple ways of knowing. This can include the premodern ways (revelation) and modern ways (science & reason), along with many other ways of knowing such as intuition, relational, and spiritual. Postmodern approaches seek to deconstruct previous authority sources and power. Because power is distrusted, they attempt to set up a less hierarchical approach in which authority sources are more diffuse.

The term "postmodernism" first entered the philosophical lexicon in 1979, with the publication of *The Postmodern Condition* by Jean-François Lyotard. Lyotard's work is characterized by a persistent opposition to universals, meta narratives, and generality. He is fiercely critical of many of the 'universalist' claims of the Enlightenment, and several of his works serve to undermine the fundamental principles that generate these broad claims. Lyotard is a sceptic for modern cultural thought. The impact of the postmodern condition was to provoke scepticism about universalizing theories. Lyotard argues that we have outgrown our needs for grand narratives due to the advancement of techniques and technologies since World War II. He states that "the narratives we tell to justify a single set of laws and stakes are inherently unjust". Little narratives have now become the appropriate way for explaining social transformations and political problems. As matanarratives fade, science suffers a loss of faith in its search for truth.

Hence, postmodernism as a philosophical movement is largely a reaction against the philosophical assumptions and values of the modern period of Western (specifically European) history—i.e., the period from about the time of the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries to the mid-20th century. Indeed, many of the doctrines characteristically associated with postmodernism can fairly be described as the straightforward denial of general philosophical viewpoints that were taken for granted during the 18th-century Enlightenment. The most important of these viewpoints are the following:

1. There is an objective natural reality, a reality whose existence and properties are logically independent of human beings—of their minds, their societies, their social practices, or their investigative techniques. Postmodernists dismiss this idea as a kind of naive realism. Such reality as there is, according to postmodernists, is a conceptual construct, an artefact of scientific practice and language. This point also applies to the investigation of past events by historians and to the description of social institutions, structures, or practices by social scientists.
2. The descriptive and explanatory statements of scientists and historians can, in principle, be objectively true or false. The postmodern denial of this viewpoint—

which follows from the rejection of an objective natural reality—is sometimes expressed by saying that there is no such thing as Truth.

3. Through the use of reason and logic, and with the more specialized tools provided by science and technology, human beings are likely to change themselves and their societies for the better. It is reasonable to expect that future societies will be more humane, more just, more enlightened, and more prosperous than they are now. Postmodernists deny this Enlightenment faith in science and technology as instruments of human progress. Indeed, many postmodernists hold that the misguided (or unguided) pursuit of scientific and technological knowledge led to the development of technologies for killing on a massive scale in World War II. Some go so far as to say that science and technology—and even reason and logic—are inherently destructive and oppressive, because they have been used by evil people, especially during the 20th century, to destroy and oppress others.

4. Reason and logic are universally valid—i.e., their laws are the same for, or apply equally to, any thinker and any domain of knowledge. For postmodernists, reason and logic too are merely conceptual constructs and are therefore valid only within the established intellectual traditions in which they are used.

5. There is such a thing as human nature; it consists of faculties, aptitudes, or dispositions that are in some sense present in human beings at birth rather than learned or instilled through social forces. Postmodernists insist that all, or nearly all, aspects of human psychology are completely socially determined.

6. Human beings can acquire knowledge about natural reality, and this knowledge can be justified ultimately on the basis of evidence or principles that are, or can be, known immediately, intuitively, or otherwise with certainty. Postmodernists reject philosophical foundationalism—the attempt, perhaps best exemplified by the 17th-century French philosopher René Descartes's dictum *cogito, ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am"), to identify a foundation of certainty on which to build the edifice of empirical (including scientific) knowledge.

7. It is possible, at least in principle, to construct general theories that explain many aspects of the natural or social world within a given domain of knowledge—e.g.,

a general theory of human history, such as dialectical materialism. Furthermore, it should be a goal of scientific and historical research to construct such theories, even if they are never perfectly attainable in practice. Postmodernists dismiss this notion as a pipe dream and indeed as symptomatic of an unhealthy tendency within Enlightenment discourses to adopt "totalizing" systems of thought or grand "metanarratives" of human biological, historical, and social development. These theories impose conformity on other perspectives or discourses, thereby oppressing, marginalizing, or silencing them. Derrida himself equated the theoretical tendency toward totality with totalitarianism.

In short, Postmodernism views include reconceptualization of traditionally termed 'modern' elements, methods and styles and to change these aspects for even more and further development. The speed of progress in modernism and materialism in recent decades has caused many scientists to reflect deeply upon this state.

The crucial question here is did postmodernism have dominance over modernism? Hedgier believed that the reason for the fall of modernity is that humans haves lost their own sight in the course of their domination on nature, and had faltered in correctly identifying what is true and what is untrue. Postmodernism is an intellectual and epistemological method that questioned ideas, thoughts and modernity values. When modernism encountered with contradictions and internal schisms due to the gap between reality and facts of modernity and promise of enlightenment philosophy, postmodernism emerged as an alternative. Hence, the context of postmodernism itself was created from within modernity. Eagleton believe postmodernism is the negative truth of modernity. And according to Giddens, postmodernism is the same as modernity only that it had started to understand itself.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 2

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Lyotard's work is characterized by a persistent opposition to universals, meta narratives, and generality. How do you understand this?

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2. Mention some of the postmodern viewpoints.

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3. Do you think postmodernism have dominance over modernism?

_____

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3.3.4 COMPARING MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM

As we discussed earlier postmodernism as a philosophical movement surfaced in the western societies as critique to the assumptions of modernity. On many issues they stand as opposite poles. Some of these oppositions are shown in the Table below. The features in the table are only tendencies, not absolutes. In fact, the tendency to see things in seemingly obvious, binary, contrasting categories is usually associated with modernism. The tendency to dissolve binary categories and expose their arbitrary cultural co-dependency is associated with postmodernism.

Modernism/Modernity	**Postmodern/Postmodernity**
Master Narratives and Metanarratives of history, culture and national identity; myths of cultural and ethnic origin.	Suspicion and rejection of Master Narratives; local narratives, ironic deconstruction of master narratives: counter-myths of origin.
Faith in "Grand Theory" (totalizing explanations in history, science and culture) to represent all knowledge and explain everything.	Rejection of totalizing theories; pursuit of localizing and contingent theories.
Faith in, and myths of, social and cultural unity, hierarchies of social-class and ethnic/national values, seemingly clear bases for unity.	Social and cultural pluralism, disunity, unclear bases for social/national/ethnic unity.

Master narrative of progress through science and technology.	Scepticism of progress, anti-technology reactions
Sense of unified, centred self; "individualism," unified identity.	Sense of fragmentation and decentred self; multiple, conflicting identities.
Hierarchy, order, centralized control.	Subverted order, loss of centralized control, fragmentation.
Faith and personal investment in big politics (Nation-State, party).	Trust and investment in micropolitics, identity politics, local politics, institutional power struggles.
Dichotomy of high and low culture (official vs. popular culture); imposed consensus that high or official culture is normative and authoritative	Disruption of the dominance of high culture by popular culture; mixing of popular and high cultures, new valuation of pop culture, hybrid cultural forms cancel "high"/"low" categories.
Mass culture, mass consumption, mass marketing.	Demassified culture; niche products and marketing, smaller group identities.
Centring/centeredness, centralized knowledge.	Dispersal, dissemination, networked, distributed knowledge

3.3.5 FOUCAULT

Michel Foucault (1926–1984) was a French historian and philosopher, associated with the structuralist and post-structuralist movements. He has had strong influence not only (or even primarily) in philosophy but also in a wide range of humanistic and social scientific disciplines.

Foucault's contribution to post-modern thinking is highly important, though he will not associate himself with postmodernism completely. He cannot be placed in one category or group, as he is a complex thinker. Foucault as a critic of modernity and humanism, approached the problems like society, knowledge, and power and made a considerable influence on the postmodern thinking. Foucault draws upon an anti-Enlightenment tradition that rejects the equation of reason, emancipation and progress. He asserts that an interface between modern forms of power and knowledge has served to create new forms of domination.

Foucault focused on the social and discursive practices that play a role in the formation of the human subject. Throughout his philosophical writings he examined the

means by which social land personal identity are generated and objectified. One of the most important of these strategies consists of dividing practices which categorize, label, isolate and exclude the subject from what is considered 'normal' social intercourse. In his book ***Madness and Civilization*** he deals with how these dividing practices operated in the case of 'insane' and pointed out that the manipulative procedures used to implement dividing practices change over time. In his other important works such as ***The Birth of Clinic*** and ***Discipline and Punish***, Foucault continued his genealogical investigation of the rules and norms generating dividing practices. In ***The Order of Things*** and ***The Archaeology of Knowledge***, he dealt with the autonomous structure of knowledge. He always relates with domination. Knowledge, according to him, is always part of cultural matrix of power relations. His critique of modernity and humanism, and development of new perspectives on society, knowledge, discourse and power, thus made him the important thinker of postmodern thought.

3.3.5.1 FOUCAULT ON POWER AND KNOWLEDGE

Michel Foucault, the French postmodernist, has been hugely influential in shaping understandings of power. leading away from the analysis of actors who use power as an instrument of coercion, and even away from the discreet structures in which those actors operate, toward the idea that 'power is everywhere', diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge and 'regimes of truth'.

Foucault challenges the idea that power is wielded by people or groups by way of 'episodic' or 'sovereign' acts of domination or coercion, seeing it instead as dispersed and pervasive. 'Power is everywhere' and 'comes from everywhere' so in this sense is neither an agency nor a structure. Instead it is a kind of 'metapower' or 'regime of truth' that pervades society, and which is in constant flux and negotiation. Foucault uses the term 'power/knowledge' to signify that power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding and 'truth'. Foucault says:

> Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it

> accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.

These 'general politics' and 'regimes of truth' are the result of scientific discourse and institutions, and are reinforced constantly through the education system, the media, and the flux of political and economic ideologies. In this sense, the 'battle for truth' is not for some absolute truth that can be discovered and accepted, but is a battle about 'the rules according to which the true and false are separated and specific effects of power are attached to the true'… a battle about 'the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays'.

Power is also a major source of social discipline and conformity. In shifting attention away from the 'sovereign' and 'episodic' exercise of power, traditionally centred in feudal states to coerce their subjects, Foucault pointed to a new kind of 'disciplinary power' that could be observed in the administrative systems and social services that were created in 18th century Europe, such as prisons, schools and mental hospitals. Their systems of surveillance and assessment no longer required force or violence, as people learned to discipline themselves and behave in expected ways.

Foucault was fascinated by the mechanisms of prison surveillance, school discipline, systems for the administration and control of populations, and the promotion of norms about bodily conduct, including sex. He studied psychology, medicine and criminology and their roles as bodies of knowledge that define norms of behaviour and deviance. Physical bodies are subjugated and made to behave in certain ways, as a microcosm of social control of the wider population, through what he called 'bio-power'. Disciplinary and bio-power create a 'discursive practice' or a body of knowledge and behaviour that defines what is normal, acceptable, deviant, etc. – but it is a discursive practice that is nonetheless in constant flux.

With a critical understanding and insight on power and knowledge, Foucault influenced many intellectuals and activists. At a the level of practice, activists and

practitioners use methods of discourse analysis to identify normative aid language that needs more careful scrutiny, and to shape alternative framings.

3.3.5.2 SUMMING UP FOUCAULT

The question of Foucault's overall political stance remains hotly contested. Scholars disagree both on the level of consistency of his position over his career, and the particular position he could be said to have taken at any particular time. This dispute is common both to scholars critical of Foucault and to those who are sympathetic to his thought.

Many criticised Foucault's concept of power as so elusive and removed from agency or structure that there seems to be little scope for practical action.

However, what can be generally agreed about Foucault is that he had a radically new approach to political questions, and that novel accounts of power and subjectivity were at its heart. Critics dispute not so much the novelty of his views as their coherence. Some critics see Foucault as effectively belonging to the political right because of his rejection of traditional left-liberal conceptions of freedom and justice. Some of his defenders, by contrast, argue for compatibility between Foucault and liberalism. Other defenders see him either as a left-wing revolutionary thinker, or as going beyond traditional political categories.

To summarize Foucault's thought from an objective point of view, his political works would all seem to have two things in common: (1) an historical perspective, studying social phenomena in historical contexts, focusing on the way they have changed throughout history; (2) a discursive methodology, with the study of texts, particularly academic texts, being the raw material for his inquiries. As such the general political import of Foucault's thought across its various turns is to understand how the historical formation of discourses have shaped the political thinking and political institutions we have to live with.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 3

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Write some of the important books written by Foucault.

_____

_____

_____

2. According to Foucault, 'power is everywhere', diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge and 'regimes of truth'. How do you understand this?

_____

_____

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3. Why Foucault thinks power as a source of social discipline and conformity?

_____

_____

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4. Critically evaluate Foucault's contribution to postmodern thinking.

_____

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_____

3.3.6 LETS SUM UP

Modernism and postmodernism are much contested issues in social sciences and there is no consensus in their treatment and interpretation. Modernism and Postmodernism are two sides to the same phenomenon. Postmodernism emerged critiquing most of the things or issues for which modernism stands for. Modernism is a momentous transmission from traditional to modern methods, whereas postmodernism is more a cultural paradigm that goes ahead from new methods to more advanced ones. Modernism is a historical, political event and intellectual, whereas postmodernism is philosophical and discursive period that to kind is involved in crisis of the modernity. Modernism is looking on the basis of design, project and purpose, whereas postmodernism is a kind of play in social life, which is not reliant on base specific purpose. It is based more on chance and accident.

Modernism focuses on structuralism principles like objectivity, certainty, totality, fixedness and centralization in concepts, but postmodernism has focused on structuralism principles such as diffuseness, pluralism, partiality, disintegration, relativism and individualism. Modernism gives attention to the root and depth of concepts and subjects, whereas postmodernism has its attention on surface appearances and on superficial aspects of concepts and phenomenon. In short, the core of modernism is foundationalism, whereas modernism basis itself on anti-foundationalism.

3.4 MULTICULTURALISM, POSTCOLONIALISM AND FEMINISM

- **V. Nagendra Rao**

STRUCTURE

3.4.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- The problems associated cultural plurality

- The issues related to multiculturalism and how it is responding to problem of diversity
- The notion of Communitarianism, its critique on liberalism and the politics it envisages
- The theory and practice of feminism

3.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Cultural pluralism is not a modern phenomenon. History provides many examples of different communities and cultures living sided by side within the same society, co-existing peacefully, and sometimes, even amicably. The ancient empires of Persia, Egypt and Rome were culturally diverse. In India, similarly, people of diverse religions and languages have lived together for several centuries. In some pre-modern societies, differences of religion were even legally recognized and accommodated.

The presence of close interaction between communities and the existence of plural legal system should not, in other words, be read as a sign of equality between communities. We need to go beyond the fact of co-presence and interaction and raise the issue of group equality by examining whether different communities occupying the same social space and participating in each other's cultures, have the same status in the public domain. This is essential because inequality in the public domain can, and often does, co-exist with degrees of legal and social pluralism. In plural societies, dominance is frequently expressed in political and symbolic terms. It is by capturing and gaining exclusive control over public spaces that structures of inequality are put in place. Hence, guaranteeing equal and fair treatment for minorities has become one of the major issues in the political debates for long time, particularly from the 19th century onwards.

In this lesson, we discuss three different approaches or perspectives related to group identity: multiculturalism, post-colonialism and feminism.

3.4.2 MULTICULTURALISM

Multiculturalism is a body of thought in political philosophy about the proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity. Mere toleration of group differences is said to fall short of treating members of minority groups as equal citizens; recognition and positive accommodation of group differences are required through "group-differentiated rights."

While multiculturalism has been used as an umbrella term to characterize the moral and political claims of a wide range of disadvantaged groups, including African Americans, women, gays and lesbians, and the disabled, most theorists of multiculturalism tend to focus their arguments on immigrants who are ethnic and religious minorities (e.g. Latinos in the U.S., Muslims in Western Europe), minority nations (e.g. Catalans, Basque, Welsh, Québécois), and indigenous peoples (e.g. Native peoples in North America, Maori in New Zealand).

3.4.2.1 THE PROBLEM OF MULTICULTURALISM

Most modern states today are, at least to some degree, culturally diverse. Trade, tourism, international dialogue among scholars, scientists and artists, and the movement of skilled labour – as well as migration – have ensured that few countries do not contain within them significant numbers of people from alien cultures. Many societies today are multicultural because they are open to a diversity of peoples who come and go and, sometimes, stay.

It is the fact that many seek to stay in the societies they have entered, however, that gives rise to the problem of multiculturalism. For it gives rise to the question of the degree to which cultural diversity should be accepted or tolerated, as well as to the question of how cultural diversity should be accommodated. When people from diverse traditions have to co-exist within a single society, a number of issues have to be settled so that the ground rules governing their common life are clear and generally accepted. There has to be some clear understanding not only of what kind of conduct is acceptable or required in public, but also of what kinds of matters are matters of legitimate public concern. This means that it has to be clear, for example, what is the language of public

discourse, what kinds of holidays are recognized, what customs are to be tolerated, what standards of public conduct and appearance may be expected, and what rights and obligations individuals and communities enjoy or owe.

The fact of cultural diversity has often given rise to conflicts because these issues are not always easily settled. People often have strong views about what is right and wrong, or about what is good and bad, and they are consequently unwilling readily to modify their behaviour or change their thinking. Thus, for example, Muslim parents in France and (more recently) in Singapore have challenged the legality as well as the moral justifiability of state school regulations forbidding the wearing of head-scarves favoured by Muslim girls (or their parents). Defenders of animal rights in Britain have questioned exemptions given to religious minorities to allow them to disregard laws governing the humane slaughter of animal (to ensure that meat is kosher or halal). And in many western societies the practice of female genital mutilation insisted upon by some immigrant parents from East Africa has led to vigorous debate as authorities have struggled to find solutions that respect minority convictions without departing from more widely held social values.

In these circumstances, to seek the theoretical foundations of multiculturalism is to ask if there is any set of general principles that might guide our reflection on such issues as the ones raised above. What are the principles that govern a multicultural society?

3.4.2.2 FIVE RESPONSES TO DIVERSITY

Societies may respond to the fact of cultural diversity in a variety of ways, not all of which involve an acceptance of the idea of a multicultural society. There are five responses that might usefully be distinguished.

(a) Isolationism

The most obvious response a society might make would be to try to prevent any kind of cultural diversity from emerging by excluding outsiders from entering or making their homes within it – particularly if the outsiders are different. Both Japan and Australia have, at different times in their histories, adopted this particular approach.

There are many reasons why a society or its rulers might choose the path of isolationism in a policy of excluding all outsiders but the select few. Sometimes it is because of a desire on the part of some to protect or preserve their established advantages or privileges. A predominantly Muslim elite, for example, might not want to see the growth of the substantial non-Muslim minority if this might reduce the size of its support base. Or the labour movement might be wary of immigration from poorer nations because it would threaten to lower wage levels by expanding the size of the market for unskilled labour. But a particularly important reason for isolationism in immigration policy is the fear of cultural transformation.

The problem with isolationism as a policy is that it is difficult to sustain, for the costs of the policy are greater than most people are willing to bear. If the aim of the policy is to preserve a kind of cultural homogeneity, the difficulty is that it will not be enough simply to try to maintain a restrictive immigration policy — one that keeps out people from particular cultural, ethnic, religious or linguistic groups; or keeps out would-be immigrants altogether. There are many ways in which a society might come under the influence of foreign cultures besides through interaction with immigrants. Trade and tourism alone will bring the domestic society to awareness of other ways of life. And any kind of openness to foreign artistic and literary traditions will exert its own influence on the local population, encouraging imitation and cultural borrowing. The importing of foods will change dietary habits. Participation in international activities, from World Cup football to international science conventions will also bring home ideas and attitudes from other parts of the globe. To preserve cultural homogeneity it would not be enough to restrict immigration. It would also be necessary to limit contact with the outside world by restricting the freedom of the domestic population to travel, to trade, and generally to communicate with outsiders. Thus far, no nation has been able or willing to do this, and so no nation has been able to escape the forces of cultural transformation.

(b) Assimilationism

One alternative to isolationism is a policy of admitting outsiders but with a view to assimilating them into the existing society, thereby limiting the extent of domestic cultural transformation. This is a policy that seeks to acculturate newcomers, though it

might also be adopted with respect to, say, a minority indigenous population. For much of the era of the White Australia Policy, the Aboriginal population of the country was seen as one that needed to be assimilated into the mainstream of a predominantly Anglo-Celtic and European society. In this regard, Australian social policy for much of the twentieth century was marked by assimilationist aims on two fronts, looking to make both newcomers and the original inhabitants conform to a particular cultural standard.

The problem with the policy of assimilation, however, is that, like isolationism, its chances of success are limited even if one is prepared to pay a very high price to pursue it. First, assimilation is a two-way street: even as newcomers are being assimilated, they will be exerting their own influence to modify the practices and attitudes of the host-society. This, coupled with the other sources of cultural influence to which the society is subject, makes it fairly likely that it is not only newcomers or minorities who will change. Second, not all cultural minorities want to assimilate to the degree sought by the makers of social policy. In Australia, the turning point came when it became clear that many immigrants who had lived for some time in their new country began in the 1960s to consider returning to Europe because they saw their own cultural traditions and beliefs as unwelcome. This was one of the factors that prompted a change in government policy away from assimilation towards a more pluralist outlook. But even if cultural minorities are not willing to go so far as to leave the country, many will resist attempts to assimilate them. At the extreme, this may generate separatist tendencies if resistance leads to a hardening of attitudes on all sides. Third, assimilation may be difficult policy to pursue in a society that has strong traditions of respect for individual freedom, since such a policy may require restrictions not only on newcomers but also on native-born citizens.

(c) Weak multiculturalism

While assimilation may be difficult to enforce, it is also difficult to avoid. In any society in which there is a reasonable degree of freedom, people will associate with and imitate one another. There is a tendency to conformity that is as difficult to eradicate as is the inclination of some individuals to go in a different direction. And for reasons of expediency or prudence, newcomers or minorities in any society will be inclined to follow the dominant norms simply because it makes life easier, less costly, or more

enjoyable. It is easier to learn the language that most people speak than to wait for them to learn our own. It is easier to make friends with people with whom we share something in common. And it is better to have a wide range of people with whom to speak or form friendships than to be confined to the company of a few who are like-minded in every way.

The multiculturalist response to the fact of cultural diversity is neither to try to prevent diversity from emerging in society by isolating it from others, nor to try to prevent diversity from taking root by assimilating minorities into the whole. The multicultural outlook, however, is both willing to accept a diversity of newcomers to a society, and untroubled if they remain undigested. The doors should be open to anyone who wishes to enter society; and the extent to which anyone assimilates should be determined by the desire and capacity of each individual to do so.

(d) Strong multiculturalism

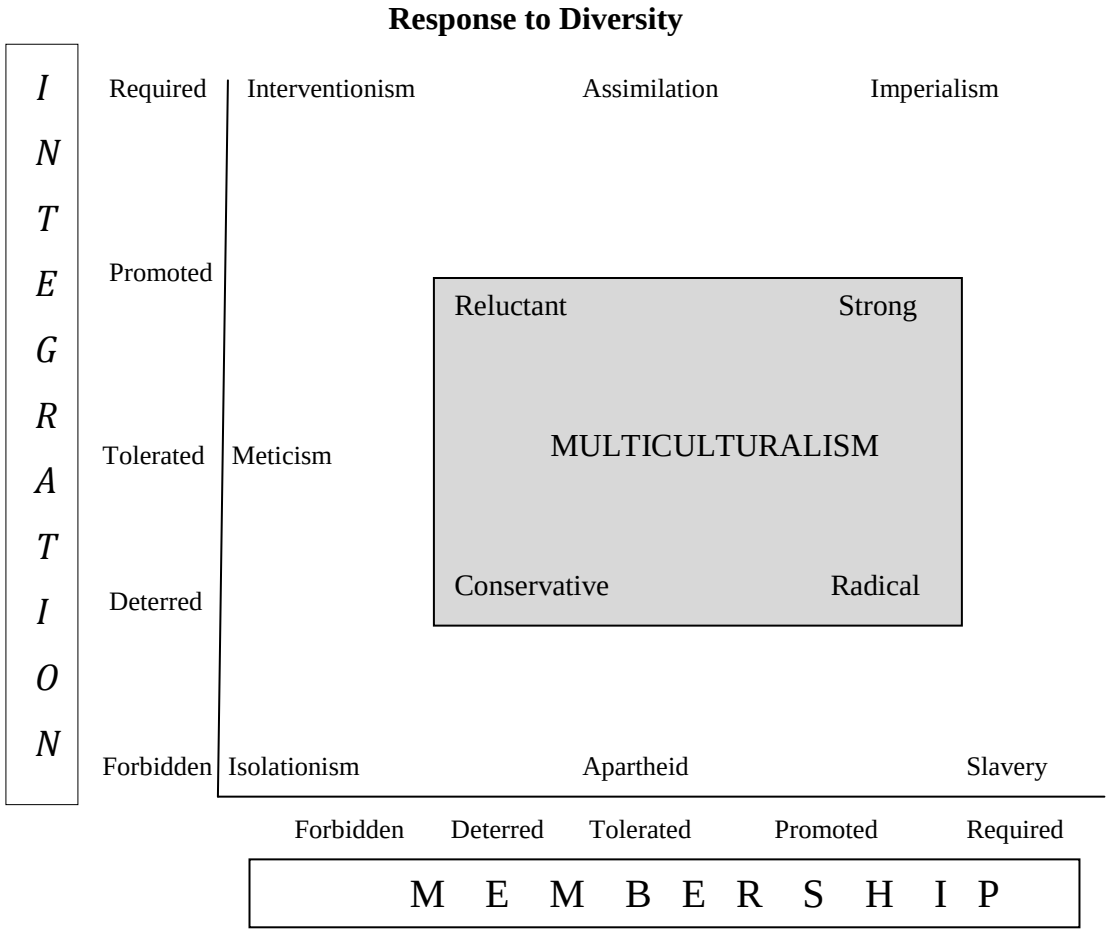
One characteristic of the weak multiculturalist view, however, is that leaves open the possibility that some people will assimilate into a society less because they wish to do so than because they have little other option. It leaves such people, members of minority cultures within the wider society, either unable to enjoy their separate cultural identity because the costs of sustaining it are too high, or unable fully to participate in the society because their particular cultural beliefs or traditions. The strong multiculturalist view is that society should take positive measures not only to enable such people to participate as full members of society but also better to enable them to maintain their separate identity and traditions. Diversity should not only be tolerated but also fostered or promoted, and supported – both financially (if necessary) and by special rights for minority cultures.

(e) Apartheid

There is a fifth response to the fact of diversity that ought to be mentioned for the sake of completeness: apartheid. This response does not seek to exclude cultural minorities (usually because it is not possible to do so) but forbids them to assimilate to any degree. South Africa under white minority rule supplies an example of such a regime, though in

this particular case the groups denied the right to participate fully in the society themselves formed a majority of the total population.

The problem with this response to diversity is that is hard to sustain given people's propensities to associate. It suffers from the same difficulties that beset the isolationist response. In some ways, however, it confronts problems that are even more intractable since the people it seeks to keep apart co-exist within the same national boundaries. It is difficult to maintain such a regime without creating a polity in which different citizens have different and unequal rights and duties. It may be impossible to sustain such a form of political order without resort to repression.



3.4.2.3 MULTICULTURALISM: A MODEL RESPONSE TO DIVERSITY

This typology of responses to diversity might usefully be presented on a graph illustrating their relations to one another. Responses towards cultural diversity might be plotted on a graph whose vertical axis measures the polity's attitude to the integration of diverse peoples into society, and whose horizontal axis measures the polity's attitude to the membership of different peoples in the polity. At one extreme, a polity might simply deny minority cultures or communities within it the right to become a part of the society, refusing to allow them to integrate into the society. Equally it might deny outsiders the opportunity to join the society by forbidding them to enter or to become members; it

might even expel minorities from the polity. At the other extreme, a polity might require that some groups of people integrate into the society even if they have no wish to do so. Equally, a polity might require that a group of people acquire or retain membership of the polity whether or not they wish to do so. But political societies do not have to take extreme positions. They might try either to deter or to promote integration, or they might simply tolerate those who wish to integrate without let or hindrance. And they might respond in similarly moderate fashion to those who seek membership of the polity. A number of political positions can be identified along these dimensions. These are noted on the graph shown above.

Societies that try to restrict membership by forbidding entry by outsiders, and also to enforce conformity within their boundaries by denying those who are different the opportunity to integrate, fall into the corner labelled 'isolationism'. Though it is difficult to find examples of societies that fall neatly into any category, Uganda under Idi Amin might fit here, since it not only restricted entry into the country but also expelled the Asian population rather than let it integrate or assimilate into the native population. Less extreme, in some ways, is the position labelled 'apartheid'. In such a society, the membership in the polity of diverse groups is accepted, but particular groups are forbidden to integrate into society. A more extreme position would be one which forced some into membership in a society while denying them any opportunity to integrate. Slavery in the United States falls into this category, since Africans were forcibly brought to America but, by virtue of being enslaved, were forbidden to integrate into society.

Some societies are less hostile to others integrating into their way of life but remain unwilling to allow them fully to become members of the polity. A society might, for example, welcome guestworkers, and willingly allow them to live as a part of society, but deny them full rights of membership. Germany's attitude toward Turkish residents, or Malaysia's attitude to Indonesian and Filipino workers supply possible examples here. To identify this position we use the term meticism, after the metics or foreign residents of city-states of ancient Greece.

Societies that want to see other peoples conform to their way of life but are unwilling to allow them to become a part of that society occupy the top left-hand corner

of the graph. These are labelled ‘interventionist’ societies. Crusading states would come into this category. They differ, however, from imperialist states, which are distinguished by a concern to incorporate other societies into a greater polity, expanding the membership of a highly integrated state. These states occupy the top right-hand corner of the graph. Not all imperialist states, however, seek full integration of subjugated peoples. The millet system of the Ottoman Empire required societies within the empire to remain members but tolerated a diversity of cultural practices and traditions.

States that tolerate or permit the admission of outsiders without seeking forcibly to enforce membership, but nonetheless require all members of society to integrate fully into the ways of the dominant culture, are ‘assimilationist’ polities. These fall into the top centre section of the graph. Modern France comes close to falling into this category, since it admits a diversity of peoples but strongly requires that they conform in various ways to French traditions; indeed it requires that they become French.

Finally, those political societies that fall in the centre of the graph are what might be called ‘multicultural’ societies. In general, they admit outsiders without either encouraging or deterring them from seeking membership, and tolerate their ways whether they seek to integrate into the new society or elect to hold on to their separate traditions and beliefs.

The various positions plotted in this scheme are highly stylised, and it would be hard to find any state that fell precisely into one of the corners or spaces identified. And the place a state occupies would be changeable to some degree depending on the policies pursued at any one time. This scheme is intended to be suggestive rather than indicative of any permanent or enduring set of relations among political societies. Nonetheless, this scheme is intended to make one claim clear: that the liberal attitude to cultural diversity seeks a medium among extremes.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. The presence of close interaction between communities and the existence of plural legal system should not be read as a sign of equality between communities. Comment.

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2. Write problems associated with multiculturalism.

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3. What are the five responses to diversity across the societies?

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4. State briefly multiculturalism's model response to diversity.

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3.4.3 POSTCOLONIALISM

Postcolonialism is a broad and constantly changing movement that has aroused a good deal of both interest and controversy. Inaugurated during and after the fight for independence in the remaining British and French colonies around the 1950s and 1960s, it has developed rapidly to become a major area of intellectual innovation and debate. While the term first became popular in North American university campuses, and in particular in literary departments, it is now widely used both inside and outside Western academic institutions and attracts ever-growing numbers of commentators as well as students.

Postcolonialism's point of origin was in literary and cultural studies, where it started as a movement to transcend the marginalization of non-Western literatures in the canon. Postcolonial studies rapidly migrated beyond literary analysis, to find a happy home in other disciplines. It was most visible in history and anthropology, but its influence soon spread to other scholarly domains. This was part of a broader trend in academia which has often referred to as "the cultural turn." The New Lefts brief flirtation with Marxist materialism had, by this time, largely dissipated; in its wake came an abiding interest in culture and ideology, not merely as an object of study but as an explanatory principle that rapidly usurped the same exalted place that "class" or "capitalism" had occupied just a decade prior. As the shift toward cultural analysis gathered steam, it was not altogether surprising that intellectuals looked to literary theory for guidance on how to approach their subject. The frameworks and theories dominant in departments of literature thus found an audience in related fields—and among the exports was postcolonial studies. For area specialists in particular, whose focus was what had been known as the Third World, the turn toward cultural analysis naturally translated into a fascination with postcolonial studies as a framework. By the turn of the century, then, the approach was no longer a purely disciplinary phenomenon.

The second noteworthy fact about postcolonial studies was that it claimed not just to study colonial history but also to enable political practice. The ambition was not simply to generate scholarly output but, as Robert J. C. Young advised, to "foreground its interventionist possibilities." Leading figures in the postcolonial field have often referred to it as more than just a theory; it is also presented as a form of practice or even a movement. In its early years, this impulse was naturally directed toward the structures of colonial and neo-colonial domination. More recently, however, postcolonial studies has expanded its domain to the social sphere more generally. In a recent introduction to the field, it is described as a theory relevant to anyone "joined by the common political and ethical commitment to challenging and questioning the practices and consequences of domination and subordination." Thus, the focus on imperial cultures and colonial rule occupies only one part of the fields universe: it now takes as its remit the gamut of social practices.

Due to this, postcolonial studies has positioned itself not only as positive theory but also as radical critique. In so doing, it has stepped quite consciously into the vacuum left by the decline of Marxism in both the industrialized West and its satellites. In part, this flows from the biographical trajectories of its leading lights, many of whom had brief encounter with the New Lefts and Marxism. Figures such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Ranajit Guha, Anibal Quijano, Partha Chatterjee, and Dipesh Chakrabarty emerged from the Marxist milieu of the 1970s, even if their immersion in it varied in intensity. It was only natural for them to take Marxism as their primary interlocutor as they made their way out of its orbit and forged the agenda for postcolonial studies. But while these biographical factors are certainly not irrelevant, the primary source of the engagement with, and rejection of, Marxism has been political: a sense that the world has moved on; that the dilemmas of late capitalism, particularly in the Global South, cannot be apprehended by the categories of historical materialism; even more, that the failure of liberation movements in the twentieth century was, in substantial measure, the result of Marxisms abiding theoretical inadequacies.

3.4.3.1 CONCEPTUALISING POSTCOLONIALISM

The term "postcolonialism" can generally be understood as the multiple political, economic, cultural and philosophical responses to colonialism from its inauguration to the present day, and is somewhat broad and sprawling in scope. While "anti-colonialism" names specific movements of resistance to colonialism, postcolonialism refers to the wider, multifaceted effects and implications of colonial rule. Postcolonialism frequently offers a challenge to colonialism, but does not constitute a single programme of resistance; indeed, it is considered consequently by some to be rather vague in its ever more ambitious field of enquiry.

What do we understand specifically by the term "postcolonialism"? We might assume that postcolonialism designates the aftermath of any form of colonial rule. This means it could presumably refer not only to the effects of British rule in India, for example, or of the French presence in Algeria, but also to the wake of the Roman Empire, or to the traces of the Spanish and Portuguese colonization of Latin America. Indeed, some critics

believe that the model for current conceptions of postcolonialism precisely emerges out of the earlier experiences of independence and neo-imperialism in Latin America, and certainly, some thinking around the concepts of liberation and transculturation can be traced back to this region. So the term could be seen to name a series of historical contexts and geographical locations that is bewildering in scope. In fact, however, perhaps as a result of the new understanding of imperialism as associated with capitalism, postcolonialism is more frequently conceived to describe what has resulted from the decline of British and French colonialism in the second half of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, most critics who identify themselves with postcolonialism focus on the particular form of colonial ideology that was also tied to capitalism, and that brought about not just the conquest of peoples and the use of their resources, but also industrialization and the wholesale restructuring of their economies.

So postcolonial thought is potentially geographically and historically wide-ranging, but has been narrowed slightly by some of the major critics, who tend to concentrate on British and French capitalist forms of colonialism. The question of the precise dating of the postcolonial, however, remains to be resolved. On this matter, thinkers have distinguished the "post-colonial" from the "postcolonial': arguing that the removal of the hyphen designates a shift in meaning. It is widely agreed that "post-colonial" names a distinct historical period following the end of direct colonial rule. Post-colonial Algeria, for example, describes the nation's trajectory after 1962, once decolonization was agreed after eight years of bloody conflict. Post-colonialism is in this way narrow in its scope and names a specific, identifiable moment. Postcolonialism, with no hyphen, is larger and more problematic. For a start, it tends to refer not to all that happened after the end of colonialism, but to the events that succeeded its beginning. So postcolonialism also names the period of colonial rule, together with its gradual weakening and demise. Far from celebrating the definitive conclusion to colonialism, then, postcolonialism analyses its effects both in its heyday and during the period that followed the end of the literal, concrete colonial presence. The movement is associated with the examination and critique of colonial power both before and after decolonization.

This expansion of the historical period to which the term postcolonialism refers means that it has come to be associated with a range of situations and events. Furthermore,

postcolonialism names the analysis of the mechanics of colonial power, the economic exploitation it brought with it, and a form of both cultural and ethical critique or questioning. It is both a political and a broader ethical philosophy. Overall, it can be agreed that postcolonialism names a set of political, philosophical or conceptual questions engendered by the colonial project and its aftermath. But the approach taken by critics towards these questions varies significantly with one school of thought tending to lean towards a denunciation of colonial politics and economics, and to call for practical revolution or reform, and another stressing colonialisms ethical blindness and the cultural regeneration required in the wake of that oppression. Postcolonialism does not propose one answer to such questions - although many critics have objected that it tries to - but offers a framework for their expansion, exploration and clarification. So although commentators point out the risks associated with conceiving the term as a homogeneous label, unifying distinct experiences of oppression, it can be understood to describe a multifaceted and open process of interrogation and critique. It is not a single structure or a straightforward answer, but it is a process, a way of thinking through critical strategies.

Stating precisely, Postcolonialism is a movement of questioning that seeks not, as critics have at times objected, to propose a single model or understanding for the colonial project and its aftershocks, but to analyse the nuances and implications of its multiple, varying manifestations. Postcolonialism is equally not a coherent strategy for resistance, but at times self-contradictory or internally conflictual movement in thought that examines, unpicks and compares multiple strategies and potential modes of critique.

Postcolonialism, then, is a word that is useful only if we use it with caution and qualifications. In this it can be compared to the concept of ‘patriarchy’ in feminist thought, which is a useful shorthand for conveying a relationship of inequity that is, in practice, highly variable because it always works alongside other social structures. Thus feminist theory has had to weave between analysing the universals and the particulars in the oppression of women. Similarly, the word ‘postcolonial’ is useful as a generalisation to the extent that ‘it refers to a process of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome, which takes many forms and is probably inescapable for all those whose worlds have been marked by that set of phenomena: “postcolonial” is (or should be) a descriptive not an evaluative term.

In short, a working definition of the Postcolonialism summarises what so far we have discussed. “Postcolonialism involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the local level of ex-colonial societies as well as at the level of more general global developments thought to be the after affects of empire. Discussion on slavery, immigration, suppression and resistance, difference, race, gender, place, etc are integral to Postcolonial debates. The term is as much about conditions under imperialism and colonialism proper as about conditions coming after the historical end of colonialism. Postcolonialism attempts to formulate non-Western modes of discourse as a viable means of challenging the West”.

3.4.3.2 POSTCOLONIALISM – CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

The very success of the Postcolonial field raises formidable challenges to a proper assessment of it. Owing in large measure to their roots in poststructuralist theory and its anti-foundationalism, many postcolonial intellectuals have eschewed developing the kind of clearly constructed propositions that would normally accompany a research agenda. Again and again, we find that the proponents of the field present it more as an intellectual orientation than as a theory. It is part o f the move to what has been called post-theory. In the inaugural issue of one of the journals dedicated to the field, Robert Young announces that “postcolonialism offers a politics rather than a coherent methodology. Indeed. . . strictly speaking there is no such thing as postcolonial theory as such—rather there are shared political perceptions and agenda which employ an eclectic range of theories in their service.”

Though a genuine understanding of the multiple levels and layers of postcolonial critique will offer critical insights to grasp the realities of the post-colonial contexts, however, the immediate problem with such a theory being the very multiplicity of national colonial experiences and manifold responses to colonialism. In this way postcolonialism appears as a theoretical chimera. Postcolonial discourses fail to empower precisely because of this drive to encompass all colonialism within its polemic. Thus Aijaz Ahmad regards ‘Postcolonialism’ as a term that “designates far too many things, all at once”.

On the other hand, critiques questioned about Postcolonialism's usefulness as a category of literary study to charges of its complicity with the very discourses of Western colonialism and neocolonial domination that it purports to critique.

Arif Dirlik also makes the point that currently, hybridity seems to be understood as 'uniformly between the postcolonial and the First World, never, to my knowledge, between one postcolonial intellectual and another', and he suggests that conditions of in-betweenness and hybridity cannot be understood without reference to the ideological and institutional structures in which they are housed.

Critics such as Benita Parry (1994a) also suggest that current theories of 'hybridity' work to downplay the bitter tension and the clash between the colonisers and the colonised and therefore misrepresent the dynamics of anti-colonial struggle.

Arif Dirlik complains that 'postcolonial criticism has focused on the postcolonial subject to the exclusion of an account of the world outside of the subject'

Many other scholars have argued that postcolonial theories are inadequate to the task of either understanding or changing our world because they are the children of post-modernism. In an oft cited essay, Kwame Anthony Appiah pronounced that:

> "Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia: a relatively small, Western-style, Western trained group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery. In the West they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other, and for Africa".

Several recent critiques of postcolonial studies reiterate the crux of Appiah's argument about 'postcoloniality'. Arif Dirlik calls 'postcolonialism' a 'child of postmodernism' which is born not out of new perspectives on history and culture but because of 'the increased visibility of academic intellectuals of Third World origin as pacesetters in cultural criticism'. He too argues for the 'First world origins (and situation)' of the term postcoloniality. Similarly, Aijaz Ahmad's work, even though it challenges the ideologies behind the break-up of the globe into First, Second and Third Worlds ('Three-Worlds

Theory'), also attributes a postmodern outlook and sensibility to what he calls 'literary postcoloniality', and contrasts this unfavourably with a Marxist radicalism.

Of the various critics who have written in this vein, Dirlik formulates the case against 'postcolonialism' most vehemently: he argues that David Harvey and Fredric Jameson have established an interrelation between post-modernism and late capitalism that can now be extended to postcolonialism. In other words, if post-modernism is, in Jameson's words, the 'cultural logic' of late capitalism, then postcolonialism is also complicit with the latter. Both post-modernists and postcolonialists celebrate and mystify the workings of global capitalism. Even the 'language of postcolonialism … is the language of First World post-structuralism'. Therefore, postcolonialism, which appears to critique the universalist pretensions of Western knowledge systems, and 'starts off with a repudiation of the universalistic pretensions of Marxist language ends up not with its dispersal into local vernaculars but with a return to another First World language with universalist epistemological pretensions'. So Dirlik modifies Appiah's critique to suggest that 'Postcoloniality is the condition of the intelligentsia of global capitalism'.

Dirlik points out that postcolonial criticism has not seriously considered the way in which postcoloniality today is necessarily shaped by the operations of capitalism— both the way in which capitalism globalises, drawing various local cultures and economies into its vortex, and how it weakens older boundaries and decentres production and consumption. The ways in which global capitalism might be re-configuring postcolonial relations are thus obscured, says Dirlik, by postcolonial critics.

3.4.3.3 CONCLUDING POSTCOLONIALISM

Postcolonialism emerged as one of the important element to understand the contemporary social world, especially the context in once colonized countries. What establishes postcolonial as a unity or heading is not specific method, thesis or object of analysis but a condition; that is the discourses collectively known as postcolonial share, if not a common history of colonialism then a condition or state of having been or presently been colonized, as well as the problem of how best to think of and live with that condition. These shared concerns constitute a broad context or outline for postcolonial studies as it

emerges at the intersection of discourses such as nationalism, class, ethnicity, gender, language, economics, and geography, so on. The postcolonial is, in this sense, certainly a response to the brute facts of colonization; but beyond that it also represent an analysis of its own relation to colonialism.

3.4.4 FEMINISM

Feminism is both an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and the end of sexism in all forms. However, there are many different kinds of feminism. Feminists disagree about what sexism consists in, and what exactly ought to be done about it; they disagree about what it means to be a woman or a man and what social and political implications gender has or should have. Nonetheless, motivated by the quest for social justice, feminist inquiry provides a wide range of perspectives on social, cultural, economic, and political phenomena. Important topics for feminist theory and politics include: the body, class and work, disability, the family, globalization, human rights, popular culture, race and racism, reproduction, science, the self, sex work, human trafficking, and sexuality.

In the mid-1800s the term ‘feminism’ was used to refer to “the qualities of females”, and it was not until after the First International Women's Conference in Paris in 1892 that the term, following the French term féministe, was used regularly in English for a belief in and advocacy of equal rights for women based on the idea of the equality of the sexes. Although the term “feminism” in English is rooted in the mobilization for woman suffrage in Europe and the US during the late 19th and early 20th century, of course efforts to obtain justice for women did not begin or end with this period of activism. So some have found it useful to think of the women's movement in the US as occurring in “waves”. On the wave model, the struggle to achieve basic political rights during the period from the mid-19th century until the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 counts as “First Wave” feminism. Feminism waned between the two world wars, to be “revived” in the late 1960's and early 1970's as “Second Wave” feminism. In this second wave, feminists pushed beyond the early quest for political rights to fight for greater equality across the board, e.g., in education, the workplace, and

at home. More recent transformations of feminism have resulted in a "Third Wave". Third Wave feminists often critique Second Wave feminism for its lack of attention to the differences among women due to race, ethnicity, class, nationality, religion, and emphasize "identity" as a site of gender struggle.

3.4.4.1 FEMINISM: NORMATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE COMPONENTS

In many of its forms, feminism seems to involve at least two groups of claims, one normative and the other descriptive. The normative claims concern how women ought (or ought not) to be viewed and treated and draw on a background conception of justice or broad moral position; the descriptive claims concern how women are, as a matter of fact, viewed and treated, alleging that they are not being treated in accordance with the standards of justice or morality invoked in the normative claims. Together the normative and descriptive claims provide reasons for working to change the way things are; hence, feminism is not just an intellectual but also a political movement. So, for example, a Liberal approach of the kind already mentioned might define feminism (rather simplistically here) in terms of two claims:

- (Normative) Men and women are entitled to equal rights and respect.
- (Descriptive) Women are currently disadvantaged with respect to rights and respect, compared with men […in such and such respects and due to such and such conditions…].

On this account, that women and men ought to have equal rights and respect is the normative claim; and that women are denied equal rights and respect functions here as the descriptive claim.

In an effort to suggest a schematic account of feminism, Susan James characterizes feminism as follows:

> Feminism is grounded on the belief that women are oppressed or disadvantaged by comparison with men, and that their oppression is in some way illegitimate or unjustified. Under the umbrella of this general characterization there are, however, many interpretations of women and their

> oppression, so that it is a mistake to think of feminism as a single philosophical doctrine, or as implying an agreed political program.

James seems here to be using the notions of "oppression" and "disadvantage" as placeholders for more substantive accounts of injustice (both normative and descriptive) over which feminists disagree.

3.4.4.2 FEMINISM AND DIVERSITY OF WOMEN ISSUES

The issues of the women differ in terms of class, place, race, occupation, etc. Hence, feminism, as a movement working towards ending all forms of oppression against women, must account for the diversity with which the issues of women intertwined. For example, if we also acknowledge that women are oppressed not just by sexism, but in many ways, e.g., by classism, homophobia, racism, ageism, ableism, etc., then it might seem that the goal of feminism is to end all oppression that affects women.

Feminism's objective is to end sexism, though because of its relation to other forms of oppression, this will require efforts to end other forms of oppression as well. For example, feminists who themselves remain racists will not be able to fully appreciate the broad impact of sexism on the lives of women of color. Furthermore because sexist institutions are also, e.g., racist, castiest, classist and homophobic, dismantling sexist institutions will require that we dismantle the other forms of domination intertwined with them.

Recent accounts of oppression are designed to allow that oppression takes many forms, and refuse to identify one form as more basic or fundamental than the rest. For example, Iris Young describes five "faces" of oppression: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and systematic violence. Sexist, racist or castiest oppression, for example, will manifest itself in different ways in different contexts, e.g., in some contexts through systematic violence, in other contexts through economic exploitation. Pluralist accounts of sexist oppression must also allow that there isn't an over-arching explanation of sexist oppression that applies to all its forms: in some cases it may be that women's oppression as women is due to the male dominance, but in other cases it may be better explained by women's reproductive value in establishing kinship

structures, or by the shifting demands of globalization within an ethnically stratified workplace. In other words, pluralists resist the temptation to "grand social theory," "overarching metanarratives," "monocausal explanations," to allow that the explanation of sexism in a particular historical context will rely on economic, political, legal, and cultural factors that are specific to that context which would prevent the account from being generalized to all instances of sexism.

3.4.4.3 FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON POWER

Although any general definition of feminism would no doubt be controversial, it seems undeniable that much work in feminist theory is devoted to the tasks of critiquing women's subordination, analyzing the intersections between sexism and other forms of subordination such as racism, heterosexism, and class oppression, and envisioning the possibilities for both individual and collective resistance to such subordination. Insofar as the concept of power is central to each of these theoretical tasks, power is clearly a central concept for feminist theory as well. And yet, curiously, it is one that is not often explicitly discussed in feminist work. This poses a challenge for assessing feminist perspectives on power, as those perspectives must first be reconstructed from discussions of other topics. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify three main ways in which feminists have conceptualized power: as a resource to be (re)distributed, as domination, and as empowerment.

Power as Resource: Liberal Feminist Approaches : Those who conceptualize power as a resource understand it as a positive social good that is currently unequally distributed amongst women and men. For feminists who understand power in this way, the goal is to redistribute this resource so that women will have power equal to men. Implicit in this view is the assumption that power is "a kind of stuff that can be possessed by individuals in greater or lesser amounts".

Power as Domination: Although feminists have often used a variety of terms to refer to power as domination — including 'oppression', 'patriarchy', 'subjection', and so forth — the common thread in these analyses is an understanding of power not only as power-over, but as a specific kind of power-over relation, namely, one that is unjust or

illegitimate. In what follows, I use the term 'domination' simply to refer to such unjust or oppressive power-over relations.

Power as Empowerment: A significant strand of feminist theorizing of power starts with the contention that the conception of power as power-over, domination, or control is implicitly masculinist. In order to avoid such masculinist connotations, many feminists have argued for a reconceptualization of power as a capacity or ability, specifically, the capacity to empower or transform oneself and others. Thus, these feminists have tended to understood power not as power-over but as power-to. Wartenberg argues that this feminist understanding of power, which he calls transformative power, is actually a type of power-over, albeit one that is distinct from domination because it aims at empowering those over whom it is exercised.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 3

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. What are the important issues or topics in feminist theory.

_____

_____

_____

2. Write the issues highlighted in each 'wave' of the feminist movement.

_____

_____

_____

3. Differentiate between the normative and descriptive components of feminism.

_____

_____

_____

4. How feminism responded to diversity of women issues?

_____

_____

3.4.5 LET US SUM UP

The twentieth-century drive for civil rights in all over the world, particularly in the United States, for affirmative action and other policies designed to end a wide variety of discriminatory practices led to origin and raise of a wide variety of group or identity based movements. Feminism, multiculturalism and communitarianism falls under this broader category. While multiculturalism emphasize the affirmative action towards minorities to end discrimination and provide equal opportunities, Communitarianism bases its premises on the uniqueness of the community and advancing the communal life. On the other hand feminism specically focuses on gender discrimination in day to day life and issues related to women and their rights.

4.1 LIBERTY: BERLIN'S THEORY OF LIBERTY

- **Dr. Rajnish Saryal**

STRUCTURE

4.1.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to

- Know the importance of liberty and freedom to Human Life
- The meaning of the concept of Liberty
- Berlin's two concepts of liberty and its critical evaluation.

4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

We shall probably all agree that liberty, rightly understood, is the greatest of blessings; that its attainment is the true end of all our efforts as citizens. But when we thus speak of freedom (liberty and freedom are used interchangeably here although some theorists make distinction between the two), we should consider carefully what we mean by it. We do not mean merely freedom from restraint or compulsion. We do not mean merely freedom to do as we like irrespective of what it is that we like. We do not mean a freedom that can be enjoyed by one man or one set of men at the cost of a loss of freedom to others. When we speak of freedom as something to be so highly prized, we mean a

positive power or capacity of doing or enjoying something worth doing or enjoying, and that, too, something that we do or enjoy in common with others. We mean by it a power which each man exercises through the help or security given him by his fellow-men, and which he in turn helps to secure for them. When we measure the progress of a society by its growth in freedom, we measure it by the increasing development and exercise on the whole of those powers of contributing to social good with which we believe the members of the society to be endowed; in short, by the greater power on the part of the citizens as a body to make the most and best of themselves.

4.1.2 THE CONCEPT OF LIBERTY

Liberty being the central value of human life has traditionally been defined and explained from the negative and positive perspective. In general, negative liberty is the absence of obstacles, barriers or constraints. One has negative liberty to the extent that actions are available to one in this negative sense. Positive liberty is the possibility of acting — or the fact of acting — in such a way as to take control of one's life and realize one's fundamental purposes. While negative liberty is usually attributed to individual agents, positive liberty is sometimes attributed to collectivities, or to individuals considered primarily as members of given collectivities.

The idea of distinguishing between a negative and a positive sense of the term 'liberty' goes back at least to Kant, and was examined and defended in depth by Isaiah Berlin in the 1950s and '60s. Discussions about positive and negative liberty normally take place within the context of political and social philosophy. They are distinct from, though sometimes related to, philosophical discussions about free will. Work on the nature of positive liberty often overlaps, however, with work on the nature of autonomy.

According to Berlin, negative and positive liberty are not merely two distinct kinds of liberty; they can be seen as rival, incompatible interpretations of a single political ideal. Since few people claim to be against liberty, the way this term is interpreted and defined can have important political implications. Political liberalism tends to presuppose a negative definition of liberty: liberals generally claim that if one favours individual liberty one should place strong limitations on the activities of the state. Critics of liberalism often contest this implication by contesting the

negative definition of liberty: they argue that the pursuit of liberty understood as self-realization or as self-determination (whether of the individual or of the collectivity) can require state intervention of a kind not normally allowed by liberals.

4.1.3 ISAIAH BERLIN

Isaiah Berlin (1909–97) was a British philosopher, historian of ideas, political theorist, educator and essayist. For much of his life he was renowned for his conversational brilliance, his defense of liberalism, his attacks on political extremism and intellectual fanaticism, and his accessible, coruscating writings on the history of ideas. His essay *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1958) contributed to a revival of interest in political theory in the English-speaking world, and remains one of the most influential and widely discussed texts in that field: admirers and critics agree that Berlin's distinction between positive and negative liberty remains, for better or worse, a basic starting-point for theoretical discussions of the meaning and value of political freedom. Late in his life, the greater availability of Berlin's numerous essays began to provoke increasing scholarly interest in his work, and particularly in the idea of value pluralism; that Berlin's articulation of value pluralism contains many ambiguities and even obscurities has only encouraged further work on the subject by other philosophers.

Berlin had always been a liberal; but from the early 1950s the defence of liberalism became central to his intellectual concerns. This defence was, characteristically, closely related to his moral beliefs and to his preoccupation with the nature and role of values in human life; in his thinking about these issues Berlin would develop his idea of value pluralism, which assumed prominence in his work in the 1960s and '70s. In the early 1960s Berlin's focus moved from his more political concerns of the 1950s to a concern with the nature of the human sciences; throughout the 1950s and '60s he was working on the history of ideas, and from the mid-1960s nearly all of his writings took the form of essays on this subject, particularly on the romantic and reactionary critics of the Enlightenment.

By the early 1950s Berlin's central beliefs had emerged out of the confluence of his philosophical preoccupations, historical studies, and political and moral commitments and anxieties; and his major ideas were either already fully formed, or developing. Such essays of the late '50s as 'Two Concepts of Liberty' served as the occasion for a synthesis and solidification of his thoughts. Thereafter, he would continue to refine and re-articulate his ideas, but his course was set, and he appears to have been largely unaffected by later intellectual developments.

4.1.4 BERLIN'S TWO CONCEPTS OF LIBERTY

Imagine you are driving a car through town, and you come to a fork in the road. You turn left, but no one was forcing you to go one way or the other. Next you come to a crossroads. You turn right, but no one was preventing you from going left or straight on. There is no traffic to speak of and there are no diversions or police roadblocks. So you seem, as a driver, to be completely free. But this picture of your situation might change quite dramatically if we consider that the reason you went left and then right is that you're addicted to cigarettes and you're desperate to get to the tobacconists before it closes. Rather than *driving*, you feel you are *being driven*, as your urge to smoke leads you uncontrollably to turn the wheel first to the left and then to the right. Moreover, you're perfectly aware that your turning right at the crossroads means you'll probably miss a train that was to take you to an appointment you care about very much. You long to be free of this irrational desire that is not only threatening your longevity but is also stopping you right now from doing what you think you ought to be doing.

This story gives us two contrasting ways of thinking of liberty. On the one hand, one can think of liberty as the absence of obstacles external to the agent. You are free if no one is stopping you from doing whatever you might want to do. In the above story you appear, in this sense, to be free. On the other hand, one can think of liberty as the presence of control on the part of the agent. To be free, you must be self-determined, which is to say that you must be able to control your own destiny in your own interests. In the above story you appear, in this sense, to be unfree: you are not in control of your own destiny, as you are failing to control a passion that you yourself would rather be rid

of and which is preventing you from realizing what you recognize to be your true interests. One might say that while on the first view liberty is simply about how many doors are open to the agent, on the second view it is more about going through the right doors for the right reasons.

In a famous essay first published in 1958, Isaiah Berlin called these two concepts of liberty negative and positive respectively. The reason for using these labels is that in the first case liberty seems to be a mere *absence* of something (i.e. of obstacles, barriers, constraints or interference from others), whereas in the second case it seems to require the *presence* of something (i.e. of control, self-mastery, self-determination or self-realization). In Berlin's words, we use the negative concept of liberty in attempting to answer the question "What is the area within which the subject — a person or group of persons — is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons?", whereas we use the positive concept in attempting to answer the question "What, or who, is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be, this rather than that?"

It is useful to think of the difference between the two concepts in terms of the difference between factors that are external and factors that are internal to the agent. While theorists of negative freedom are primarily interested in the degree to which individuals or groups suffer interference from external bodies, theorists of positive freedom are more attentive to the internal factors affecting the degree to which individuals or groups act autonomously. Given this difference, one might be tempted to think that a political philosopher should concentrate exclusively on negative freedom, a concern with positive freedom being more relevant to psychology or individual morality than to political and social institutions. This, however, would be premature, for among the most hotly debated issues in political philosophy are the following: *Is* the positive concept of freedom a political concept? Can individuals or groups achieve positive freedom through political action? Is it possible for the state to promote the positive freedom of citizens on their behalf? And if so, is it desirable for the state to do so? The classic texts in the history of western political thought are divided over how these questions should be answered: theorists in the classical liberal tradition, like Constant, Humboldt, Spencer and Mill, are typically classed as answering 'no' and therefore as

defending a negative concept of political freedom; theorists that are critical of this tradition, like Rousseau, Hegel, Marx and T.H. Green, are typically classed as answering 'yes' and as defending a positive concept of political freedom.

In its political form, positive freedom has often been thought of as necessarily achieved through a collectivity. Perhaps the clearest case is that of Rousseau's theory of freedom, according to which individual freedom is achieved through participation in the process whereby one's community exercises collective control over its own affairs in accordance with the 'general will'. Put in the simplest terms, one might say that a democratic society is a free society because it is a self-determined society, and that a member of that society is free to the extent that he or she participates in its democratic process. But there are also individualist applications of the concept of positive freedom. For example, it is sometimes said that a government should aim actively to create the conditions necessary for individuals to be self-sufficient or to achieve self-realization. The negative concept of freedom, on the other hand, is most commonly assumed in liberal defences of the constitutional liberties typical of liberal-democratic societies, such as freedom of movement, freedom of religion, and freedom of speech, and in arguments against paternalist or moralist state intervention. It is also often invoked in defences of the right to private property, although some have contested the claim that private property necessarily enhances negative liberty.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. The idea of distinguishing between a negative and a positive sense of the term 'liberty' goes back at least to Kant. Comment

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2. Berlin's essay *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1958) contributed to a revival of interest in political theory. Elaborate.

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3. Analyse Berlin's notions regarding two concepts of liberty.

4.1.5 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

In Berlin's view, the state can only secure negative liberty to the individual by ensuring that he is not prevented from choosing his own course of action. On the other hand, positive liberty belongs to the individual's own will and capacity which is beyond the scope of state. He further said, if one cannot fly like an eagle or swim like a whale, one is by no means deprived of political liberty on this count. Similarly, if a man is too poor to afford something on which there is no legal ban – a loaf of bread, a journey around the world, recourse to law courts – he cannot complaint that he has been deprived of political liberty. The capacity or incapacity to fulfil one's desires belongs to man himself; the state is not concerned with this sphere. Accordingly, the existing social inequalities cannot be questioned from the point of view of liberty. Berlin's position on this point is itself questionable.

On deeper analysis, it becomes clear that Berlin has confused between two sphere of positive liberty, namely the moral sphere and material sphere. In the moral sphere, Berlin's conception is very illuminating. However, when we turn to the material sphere, enjoyment of positive liberty is hampered by different reasons. Here again Berlin has confused between two types of disabilities. Just recall his illustration: in the first case Berlin is pointing to natural limitations (unable to fly like an eagle or swim like a whale), something that is unalterable. Hence any complaint in this behalf would be untenable. In actual life, such disabilities are never sought to be overcome by political action. But in the second case, Berlin is referring to such disabilities as are the product of social arrangement (unable to buy a loaf of bread, etc.) that is alterable by political action.

Despite these critical points on Berlin's theory of liberty his distinction of liberty into negative and positive continues to dominate mainstream discussions about the meaning of political and social freedom.

4.2 EQUALITY: DWORKING'S THEORY OF EQUALITY

- **Dr. Rajnish Saryal**

STRUCTURE

4.2.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to:

- Dworkin's views regarding equality of resources
- Importance of Compensation in Dworkin's understanding of equality
- Critical appraisal of Dworkin's views

4.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Equality is a popular but mysterious political ideal. People can become equal (or at least more equal) in one way with the consequence that they become unequal (or more unequal) in others. If people have equal income, for example, they will almost certainly differ in the amount of satisfaction they find in their lives, and vice versa. It does not follow, of course, that equality is worthless as an ideal. But it is necessary to state, more exactly than is commonly done, what form of equality is finally important.

Dworkin considers two general theories of distributional equality. The first (which he calls equality of welfare) holds that a distributional scheme treats people as equals when it distributes or transfers resources among them until no further transfer would leave them more equal in welfare. The second (equality of resources) holds that it treats them as equals when it distributes or transfers so that no further transfer would leave their shares of the total resources more equal. For Dworkin, each of these two theories is very abstract because there are many different interpretations of what welfare is, and also different theories about what would count as equality of resources. Nevertheless, even in this abstract form, it should be plain that the two theories will offer different advice in many concrete cases.

Suppose, for example, that a man of some wealth has several children, one of whom is blind, another a playboy with expensive tastes, a third a prospective politician with expensive ambitions, another a poet with humble needs, another a sculptor who works in expensive material, and so forth. How shall he draw his will? If he takes equality of welfare as his goal, then he will take these differences among Equality of *Welfare* his children into account, so that he will not leave them equal shares. Of course he will have to decide on some interpretation of welfare and whether, for example, expensive tastes should figure in his calculations in the same way as handicaps or expensive ambitions. But if, on the contrary, he takes equality of resources as his goal then, assuming his children have roughly equal wealth already, he may well decide that his goal requires an equal division of his wealth. In any case the questions he will put into himself will then be very different.

4.2.2 DWORKIN AND EQUALITY OF RESOURCES

The difficulty for Rawls in this area was brought out very well indeed by Ronald Dworkin, who, in a pair of long papers at the same time, set out a response to Nozick's libertarian challenges, as well as attempting to refute a range of competing egalitarian theories.

Dworkin can be read as raising two central challenges to Rawls. The first develops Nozick's objections, and can be put like this: before devoting social resources to

improving the position of those with the least income and wealth, should we not, at the very least, first investigate how they came to be in that position? Some may be badly off because they are unable to work, or unable to find work. But others may have chosen to do no work. Are they equally deserving or entitled to benefit from the work of others? Can it be fair to tax the hard-working for the benefit of those who are equally capable of hard work, and equally talented, but choose to laze around instead? The difference principle, however, does not require answers to these questions. Hence, to put Dworkin's first argument in a nutshell, it subsidizes scroungers, or to put it less tendentiously, the deliberately under-productive. In Dworkin's view this is contrary to equality. Equality should, other things being equal, allow those who work hard to reap the rewards, while those who chose to do less should bear the consequences of their choices.

A second objection raises a new difficulty. The index of primary goods, and in particular the focus on income and wealth, ignores the fact that some people have much more expensive needs than others. In particular, people who are severely disabled, or have expensive medical requirements, may have a reasonable income, but this could be wholly inadequate to pay the expenses needed to achieve a reasonable level of well-being.

The natural response to the problem of expensive needs, such as those of disabled people, would be to abandon primary goods as a currency of justice, and move to assessment of well-being in terms of some form of welfare, such as happiness or preference satisfaction. However, Dworkin argues that this would be a mistake. First he unleashes a battery of objections against the coherence of a welfare measure – essentially the difficulty of determining when two different people are at the same level, which of course is central to any theory of equality. But the argument that is most distinctive and has had the greatest impact, is the problem of expensive tastes. Imagine two people who have the same ordinary tastes, talents and resources, and the same ability to convert resources into welfare, however that is construed. Now one of them – Louis – decides that he wants to change his tastes, and manages to develop expensive taste for dining at high ended restaurants and is consequently unsatisfied with normal home meal. According to Dworkin, the theory of equality of welfare would require a transfer of resources from the person with ordinary tastes to the person with expensive tastes, in order to equalise their resources. This, he plausibly argues, is deeply counter-intuitive.

The difficulties he identifies in Rawls's theory are addressed by Dworkin in a way which avoids the problem of subsidizing expensive tastes. The key insight is that a notion of responsibility can be incorporated within the theory of equality. It is possible to make people responsible for matters within some domains, but not within others. Dworkin makes a distinctive between one's ambitions –including the realm of the voluntary choices one makes – and endowments, which we can think of as including in-born talents, genetic pre-dispositions, and so on.

In brief, Dworkin's theory is that while equality requires government to take steps to compensate for the bad 'brute luck' of being born with poor endowments, or unforeseeable poor luck in other aspects of life, it does not require compensation for poor 'option luck' which typically includes the results of freely made choices. Hence on Dworkin's view there is no reason to subsidise Louis, who has made his own choice to develop expensive tastes. Similarly those who choose not to work, if they are able to, will not be subsidised either, and this, in principle, overcomes the 'problem of responsibility' identified with Rawls' Difference Principle.

4.2.3 COMPENSATION

On the question to determine the appropriate level of compensation or subsidy Dworkin makes the brilliant move of appealing to the idea first of insurance, and then of hypothetical insurance. His first observation is that real life insurance converts brute luck into option luck. It may be a matter of pure chance whether lightning strikes my house. But it is not a matter of pure chance if I have declined to take out an easily available insurance policy to protect myself from loss. Dworkin's argument is that if insurance is available against a hazard, and I decide not to take out insurance, then, against a background of equality, there is no case in justice for subsidising the uninsured by taxing others who beforehand were no better off. If it were possible to insure against all brute luck then it appears that Dworkin's theory would simply require an equal distribution of resources and then allow people to make their own choices and run whichever risks they wished.

Life, though, is not so simple. Brute lucks affects us from the moment we are born. Some people are born with low talents, or, as already discussed, disabled: this was one of the problems Dworkin identifies for Rawls. But it is not possible to take out insurance against bad brute luck which has already happened. However, it is possible to imagine what insurance one would take out, hypothetically, behind a veil of ignorance in which you knew the preponderance of, and disadvantage caused by, different types of disability, but did not know whether or not you personally were affected. Knowing this information should allow one to decide whether to insure, and if so at what level. Averaging the decisions gives a standard hypothetical premium and payout, and these can be used to model a just tax and transfer scheme. A similar move is available to model appropriate welfare payments for those of low talent.

Dworkin's argument, then, has the merit of squaring up to, and attempting to answer, a number of hard questions. What is the currency of justice? How do we make room for issues of responsibility within egalitarian theory? How do we determine the appropriate level of compensation for people of low earning power or who have disabilities? A coherent systematic picture emerges which provides a response to Nozick, and repairs defects identified in Rawls's position. This explains the central place of his work in the literature.

4.2.4 DWORKIN'S EQUALITY: CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Before looking at direct responses to Dworkin, it is worth noting that not everyone accepts that the problem of responsibility is as serious as he supposes. An alternative theory suggests that each person is entitled to a payment from the state whether or not they work, or are willing to work or not. This is the theory of 'unconditional basic income', and it has several possible foundations. Philippe van Parijs and Andrew Levine, have defended the view essentially on the grounds of neutrality between conceptions of the good; some prefer to work, some prefer not to, and, to simplify, why should we privilege the conception of the good of one over the other? Arguments are also made that it would have various consequential advantages such as ending discrimination against part-time workers, and requiring work with poor conditions to be paid a decent wage.

In an alternative version defended by Hillel Steiner, all human beings are joint owners of the earth and its resources. To simplify, we can imagine each of us as the owner of one share in 'Earth PLC'. Anyone who wishes to use any of the world's resources must pay a rent to do so, and this rent is returned to the shareholders as a dividend. Accordingly anyone who uses more than a per capita share of the world's resources owes more rent than he or she will get back in dividend; those who use less will get more dividend than they must pay in rent. This, of course, yields a payment for everyone, whether they act responsibly or irresponsibly, although, of course, some will pay more in rent than they receive back in dividend. While I will not here pursue this option further, it is necessary to register it as a live and important line in political philosophy.

4.2.5 EQUALITY OF WELFARE REVISITED

To return to the main line, recall that Dworkin considers and rejects equality of welfare as a possible response to the problem presented by the fact that disabled people may need more resources than other people to achieve an acceptable standard of living. The rejection is based on the argument from Louis's expensive tastes. Richard Arneson, however, suggests that this argument is confused. The problem with Louis is that he is has deliberately cultivated expensive tastes. He could have achieved the same level of welfare as other people by remaining content with hen's eggs and beer, but for whatever reason he decided to cultivate expensive tastes. Arneson's response is that we need to understand that there is a distinction not only between theories of resources and theories of welfare, but also what we could call 'outcome' and 'opportunity' theories. It is true, Arneson, accepts, that equality of welfare outcomes would require subsidizing Louis's deliberately cultivated expenses tastes. However, Louis does have equality of opportunity for welfare, but he squanders this by deliberately cultivating expensive tastes. If he was born with expensive tastes then the case for subsidising is more compelling, for he would then lack equality of opportunity for welfare. Hence, Arneson argues, Dworkin has drawn the wrong conclusion from his example. In effect, Arneson suggests, Dworkin has compared equality of welfare outcomes with equality of opportunity for resources. The

expensive tastes argument shows that equality of welfare outcomes is unacceptable, but this is a reason for moving to an opportunity conception, not a resources conception.

G.A. Cohen argues in a similar way, although unlike Arneson he claims that an adequate theory of equality must use the currency of 'advantage' which incorporates both welfare and resources, although Cohen admits that he has no account of how the two notions can be combined. Cohen endorses one of Dworkin's arguments against pure welfarism; that it would have the bizarre consequence that it would require transfers from the very cheerful poor – such as Dickens' Tiny Tim – to the wealthy but miserable, such as Scrooge. But equally, Cohen argues, it would be wrong to follow Dworkin and endorse a pure resource based metric in which people were not compensated for pain and suffering, for example.

Dworkin, however, is not persuaded by the criticisms of Arneson and Cohen, arguing that the objection to subsidizing expensive tastes is equally strong even if they are the result of genetic pre-disposition. Whether a person should be subsidised for their expensive tastes depends on whether the average person would, hypothetically, have insured against having that taste. The origin of the taste is, for Dworkin, not relevant. Critics are far from convinced that this is plausible response, and I think it is fair to say that the dispute especially between Dworkin and Cohen remains unsettled.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Dworkin considers two general theories of distributional equality. Comment

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2. Write briefly Dworkin's views regarding equality of resources.

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3. What is the importance of ‘Compensation’ in Dworkin’s theory of Equality.

4. Critically evaluate equality of Welfare with Dworkin’s equality notions.

4.2.6 LETS SUM UP

Dworkin has made important contributions to what is sometimes called the equality of what debate. He advocates a theory he calls ‘equality of resources’. This theory combines two key ideas. Broadly speaking, the first is that human beings are responsible for the life choices they make. The second is that natural endowments of intelligence and talent are morally arbitrary and ought not to affect the distribution of resources in society. Like the rest of Dworkin's work, his theory of equality is underpinned by the core principle that every person is entitled to equal concern and respect in the design of the structure of society. Dworkin's theory of equality is said to be one variety of so-called luck egalitarianism, but he rejects this statement

4.3 JUSTICE: JOHN RAWLS' THEORY OF JUSTICE

- **Dr. Rajnish Saryal**

STRUCTURE

4.3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand John Rawls notions of Justice as Fairness
- Know Rawls 'The Original Position'
- Comprehend two principles of justice as fairness
- Understand difficulties associated with Rawlsian theory

4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

John Rawls was an American political philosopher in the liberal tradition. His theory of *justice as fairness* envisions a society of free citizens holding equal basic rights cooperating within an egalitarian economic system. His account of *political liberalism* addresses the legitimate use of political power in a democracy, aiming to show

how enduring unity may be achieved despite the diversity of worldviews that free institutions allow.

4.3.2 JUSTICE AS FAIRNESS: JUSTICE WITHIN A LIBERAL SOCIETY

Justice as fairness is Rawls's theory of justice for a liberal society. As a member of the family of liberal political conceptions of justice it provides a framework for the legitimate use of political power. Yet legitimacy is only the minimal standard of political acceptability; a political order can be legitimate without being just. Justice is the maximal moral standard: the full description of how a society's main institutions should be ordered.

4.3.2.1 THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

Justice as fairness aims to describe a just arrangement of the major political and social institutions of a liberal society: the political constitution, the legal system, the economy, the family, and so on. The arrangement of these institutions is a society's *basic structure*. The basic structure is the location of justice because these institutions distribute the main benefits and burdens of social life, for example who will receive social recognition, who will have which basic rights, who will have opportunities to get what kind of work, what the distribution of income and wealth will be, and so on.

4.3.3 THE ORIGINAL POSITION

Rawls suggests the *original position* where individuals can decide about the principles of justice in a fair and free atmosphere. The *original position* aims to move from these abstract conceptions to determinate principles of social justice. It does so by translating the question: “What are fair terms of social cooperation for free and equal citizens?” into the question “What terms of cooperation would free and equal citizens agree to under fair conditions?” The move to agreement among citizens is what places Rawls's justice as fairness within the social contract tradition of Locke, Rousseau and Kant.

The strategy of the original position is to construct a method of reasoning that models abstract ideas about justice so as to focus their power together onto the choice of

principles. The original position is a thought experiment: an imaginary situation in which each real citizen has a representative, and all of these representatives come to an agreement on which principles of justice should order the political institutions of the real citizens. Were actual citizens to get together in real time to try to agree to principles of justice for their society the bargaining among them would be influenced by all sorts of factors irrelevant to justice, such as who could appear most threatening or who could hold out longest. The original position abstracts from all such irrelevant factors. In effect the original position is a situation in which each citizen is represented as only a free and equal citizen, as wanting only what free and equal citizens want, and as trying to agree to principles for the basic structure while situated fairly with respect to other citizens. For example citizens' basic equality is modelled in the original position by imagining that the parties who represent real citizens are symmetrically situated: no citizen's representative is able to threaten any other citizen's representative, or to hold out longer for a better deal.

The most striking feature of the original position is the *veil of ignorance*, which prevents other arbitrary facts about citizens from influencing the agreement among their representatives. As we have seen, Rawls holds that the fact that a citizen is for example of a certain race, class, and gender is no reason for social institutions to favour or disfavour him. Each party in the original position is therefore deprived of knowledge of the race, class, and gender of the real citizen they represent. In fact the veil of ignorance deprives the parties of all facts about citizens that are irrelevant to the choice of principles of justice: not only their race, class, and gender but also their age, natural endowments, and more. Moreover the veil of ignorance also screens out specific information about the citizens' society so as to get a clearer view of the permanent features of a just social system.

Behind the veil of ignorance, the informational situation of the parties that represent real citizens is as follows:

a. Parties do not know:
    i. The race, ethnicity, gender, age, income, wealth, natural endowments, comprehensive doctrine, etc. of any of the citizens in

society, or to which generation in the history of the society these citizens belong.

ii. The political system of the society, its class structure, economic system, or level of economic development.

b. Parties do know:

i. That citizens in the society have different comprehensive doctrines and plans of life; that all citizens have interests in more primary goods.

ii. That the society is under conditions of moderate scarcity: there is enough to go around, but not enough for everyone to get what they want;

iii. General facts about human social life; facts of common sense; general conclusions of science (including economics and psychology) that are uncontroversial.

The veil of ignorance is intended to situate the representatives of free and equal citizens fairly with respect to one another. No party can press for agreement on principles that will arbitrarily favour the particular citizen they represent, because no party knows the specific attributes of the citizen they represent. The situation of the parties thus embodies reasonable conditions, within which the parties can make a rational agreement. Each party tries to agree to principles that will be best for the citizen they represent (i.e., that will maximize that citizen's share of primary goods). Since the parties are fairly situated, the agreement they reach will be fair to all actual citizens.

4.3.4 THE TWO PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE AS FAIRNESS

Under the *veil of ignorance* people agree to two principles of justice.

First Principle: Each person has the same indefeasible claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all;

Second Principle: Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions:

1. They are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of *fair equality of opportunity*;
2. They are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (the *difference principle*).

The first principle of equal basic liberties is to be used for designing the political constitution, while the second principle applies primarily to economic institutions. Fulfilment of the first principle takes priority over fulfilment of the second principle, and within the second principle fair equality of opportunity takes priority over the difference principle.

The first principle affirms for all citizens' familiar basic rights and liberties: liberty of conscience and freedom of association, freedom of speech and liberty of the person, the rights to vote, to hold public office, to be treated in accordance with the rule of law, and so on. The principle ascribes these rights and liberties to all citizens equally. Unequal rights would not benefit those who would get a lesser share of rights, so justice requires equal rights for all in all normal circumstances.

Rawls's first principle accords with widespread convictions about the importance of equal basic rights and liberties. Two further features make this first principle distinctive. First is its priority: the basic rights and liberties must not be traded off against other social goods. The first principle disallows, for instance, a policy that would give draft exemptions to college students on the grounds that educated civilians will increase economic growth. The draft is a drastic infringement on basic liberties, and if a draft is implemented then all who are able to serve must be equally subject to it.

The second distinctive feature of Rawls's first principle is that it requires *fair value of the political liberties*. The political liberties are a subset of the basic liberties, concerned with the rights to hold public office, the right to affect the outcome of national elections and so on. For these liberties Rawls requires that citizens be not only formally but also substantively equal. That is, citizens similarly endowed and motivated should have the same opportunities to hold office, to influence elections, and so on regardless of their social class.

Rawls's second principle of justice has two parts. The first part, fair equality of opportunity, requires that citizens with the same talents and willingness to use them have the same educational and economic opportunities regardless of whether they were born rich or poor. “In all parts of society there are to be roughly the same prospects of culture and achievement for those similarly motivated and endowed”. So for example if we assume that natural endowments and willingness are evenly distributed across children born into different social classes, then within any type of occupation (generally specified) we should find that roughly one quarter of people in that occupation were born into the top 25% of the income distribution, one quarter were born into the second-highest 25% of the income distribution, one quarter were born into the second-lowest 25%, and one-quarter were born into the lowest 25%. Since class of origin is a morally arbitrary fact about citizens, justice does not allow class of origin to turn into unequal real opportunities for education or meaningful work.

The second part of the second principle is the difference principle, which regulates the distribution of wealth and income. With these goods inequalities can produce a greater total product: higher wages can cover the costs of training and education, for example, and can provide incentives to fill jobs that are more in demand. The difference principle requires that social institutions be arranged so that any inequalities of wealth and income work to the advantage of those who will be worst off. The difference principle requires, that is, that financial inequalities be to everyone's advantage, and specifically to the greatest advantage of those advantaged least.

Consider four hypothetical economic structures A-D, and the lifetime-average levels of income these would produce for representative members of three different groups:

Economy	**Least-Advantaged Group**	**Middle Group**	**Most-Advantaged Group**
A	10,000	10,000	10,000
B	12,000	30,000	80,000

C	30,000	90,000	150,000
D	20,000	100,000	500,000

Here the difference principle selects Economy C, because it contains the distribution where the least-advantaged group does best. Inequalities in C are to everyone's advantage relative to an equal division (Economy A), and relative to a more equal division (Economy B). But the difference principle does not allow the rich to get richer at the expense of the poor (Economy D). The difference principle embodies equality-based reciprocity: from an egalitarian baseline it requires inequalities that are good for all, and particularly for the worst-off.

The difference principle gives expression to the idea that natural endowments are undeserved. A citizen does not merit more of the social product simply because she was lucky enough to be born with gifts that are in great demand. Yet this does not mean that everyone must get the same shares. The fact that citizens have different talents and abilities can be used to make everyone better off. In a society governed by the difference principle citizens regard the distribution of natural endowments as an asset that can benefit all. Those better endowed are welcome to use their gifts to make themselves better off, so long as their doing so also contributes to the good of those less well endowed. “In justice as fairness,” Rawls says, “men agree to share one another's fate.”

4.3.5 DIFFICULTIES WITH THE RAWLSIAN THEORY

The task for Rawls was to create a theory that was more in aligning with our intuitive conceptions about fairness, both with respect to institutions and actual behaviour.

But Amartya Sen argues that ’ in the Rawlsian system of justice as fairness, direct attention is bestowed almost exclusively on ‘just institutions’, rather than focusing on ‘just societies’ that may rely on both effective institutions and on actual behavioural features‘. Sen has a point. It seems like Rawls thinks that the two principles are seen to both ensure the right choice of institutions and to lay the ground for the emergence of appropriate actual behavior. This is not so obvious.

A second critique raised by Sen is connected with Rawls perception of the primary goods According to Sen, Rawls fails to acknowledge the wide variety between people, with respect to their differences in health, need and mobility. Since Rawls considers health to be a natural good, it is regarded by him as not being subject to distribution. What about differences in need? For example, a pregnant woman needs, among other things, more nutritional support than another person, who is not bearing a child. She can do far less with the same level of income and other primary goods. Is it then reasonable to think that individuals value a marginal increase of social primary goods equally? Sen thinks otherwise, and argues that we should move our focus to actual assessment of freedoms and capabilities.

Rawls theory has been subject to a lot of critique. Among them, the absent of direct dialogue between the participants. His assumption that the participants of the 'social contract' are mutually disinterested are also a lose one.

Although some of his critics seem to think that his theory could be extended to capture more diverse cases and meet further challenges. However, being subject to critical scrutiny for over three decades, contemporaries seem to have abandoned his basic ideas. But his fundamental idea that justice is to be viewed in terms of fairness, which is a Rawlsian hallmark, is by large still seen as a common point of departure for further elaboration on distributional justice

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. Briefly state Rawls notion regarding The Original Position.

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2. How do you understand 'the veil of ignorance'.

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3. What are the two principles in Justice as Fairness.

4. Briefly state the difficulties associated with Rawlsian theory.

4.3.6 LET US SUM UP

John Rawls was arguably the most important political philosopher of the twentieth century. He wrote a series of highly influential articles in the 1950s and ’60s that helped refocus Anglo-American moral and political philosophy on substantive problems about what we ought to do. His first book, *A Theory of Justice*, revitalized the social-contract tradition, using it to articulate and defend a detailed vision of egalitarian liberalism. In *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls attempts to solve the problem of distributive justice (the socially just distribution of goods in a society) by utilising a variant of the familiar device of the social contract. The resultant theory is known as "Justice as Fairness", from which Rawls derives his two principles of justice: *the liberty principle* and *the difference principle*.

Many critiqued Rawls’ views regarding Justice. Amartya Sen states that ideas about a perfectly just world do not help redress actual existing inequality. Sen faults Rawls for an over-emphasis on institutions as guarantors of justice not considering the effects of human behaviour on the institutions' ability to maintain a just society. Sen believes Rawls understates the difficulty in getting everyone in society to adhere to the norms of a just society. Sen also claims that Rawls' position that there be only one possible outcome of the reflective equilibrium behind the veil of ignorance is misguided. Sen believes that multiple conflicting but just principles may arise and that this undermines the multi-step processes that Rawls laid out as leading to a perfectly just society.

4.4 DEMOCRACY: MACPHERSON'S THEORY OF DEMOCRACY

- **Dr. Rajnish Saryal**

STRUCTURE

4.4.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you will be able to:

- Know how democracy is defined
- Comprehend authority of democracy and it's limits
- Understand Macphersons's theory of democracy and four models of democracy

4.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Democratic theory deals with the moral foundations of democracy and democratic institutions. It is distinct from descriptive and explanatory democratic theory. It does not offer in the first instance a scientific study of those societies that are called democratic. It aims to provide an account of when and why democracy is morally desirable as well as moral principles for guiding the design of democratic institutions. Of course, normative

democratic theory is inherently interdisciplinary and must call on the results of political science, sociology and economics in order to give this kind of concrete guidance.

This brief outline of normative democratic theory focuses attention on four distinct issues in recent work. First, it outlines some different approaches to the question of why democracy is morally desirable at all. Second, it explores the question of what it is reasonable to expect from citizens in large democratic societies. This issue is central to the evaluation of normative democratic theories as we will see. A large body of opinion has it that most classical normative democratic theory is incompatible with what we can reasonably expect from citizens. It also discusses blueprints of democratic institutions for dealing with issues that arise from a conception of citizenship. Third, it surveys different accounts of the proper characterization of equality in the processes of representation. These last two parts display the interdisciplinary nature of normative democratic theory. Fourth, it discusses the issue of whether and when democratic institutions have authority and it discusses different conceptions of the limits of democratic authority.

4.4.2 DEMOCRACY DEFINED

The term "democracy," refers very generally to a method of group decision making characterized by a kind of equality among the participants at an essential stage of the collective decision making. Four aspects of this definition should be noted. First, democracy concerns collective decision making, by which means decisions that are made for groups and that are binding on all the members of the group. Second, this definition means to cover a lot of different kinds of groups that may be called democratic. So there can be democracy in families, voluntary organizations, economic firms, as well as states and transnational and global organizations. Third, the definition is not intended to carry any normative weight to it. It is quite compatible with this definition of democracy that it is not desirable to have democracy in some particular context. So the definition of democracy does not settle any normative questions. Fourth, the equality required by the definition of democracy may be more or less deep. It may be the mere formal equality of one-person one-vote in an election for representatives to an assembly where there is competition among candidates for the position. Or it may be more robust, including

equality in the processes of deliberation and coalition building. “Democracy” may refer to any of these political arrangements. It may involve direct participation of the members of a society in deciding on the laws and policies of the society or it may involve the participation of those members in selecting representatives to make the decisions.

The function of normative democratic theory is not to settle questions of definition but to determine which, if any, of the forms democracy may take are morally desirable and when and how. For instance, Joseph Schumpeter argues that only a highly formal kind of democracy in which citizens vote in an electoral process for the purpose of selecting competing elites is highly desirable while a conception of democracy that draws on a more ambitious conception of equality is dangerous. On the other hand, Jean-Jacques Rousseau is apt to argue that the formal variety of democracy is akin to slavery while only robustly egalitarian democracies have political legitimacy. Others have argued that democracy is not desirable at all. To evaluate their arguments we must decide on the merits of the different principles and conceptions of humanity and society from which they proceed.

4.4.3 THE AUTHORITY OF DEMOCRACY

Since democracy is a collective decision process, the question naturally arises about whether there is any obligation of citizens to obey the democratic decision. In particular, the question arises as to whether a citizen has an obligation to obey the democratic decision when he or she disagrees with it.

There are three main concepts of the legitimate authority of the state. First, a state has legitimate authority to the extent that it is morally justified in imposing its rule on the members. Legitimate authority on this account has no direct implications concerning the obligations or duties that citizens may hold toward that state. It simply says that if the state is morally justified in doing what it does, then it has legitimate authority. Second, a state has legitimate authority to the extent that its directives generate duties in citizens to obey. The duties of the citizens need not be owed to the state but they are real duties to obey. The third is that the state has a right to rule that is correlated with the citizens’ duty to it to obey it. This is the strongest notion of authority and it seems to be the core idea

behind the legitimacy of the state. The idea is that when citizens disagree about law and policy it is important to be able to answer the question, who has the right to choose?

With respect to democracy we can imagine three main approaches to the question as to whether democratic decisions have authority. First, we can appeal to perfectly general conceptions of legitimate authority. Some have thought that the question of authority is independent entirely of whether a state is democratic. Consent theories of political authority and instrumentalist conceptions of political authority state general criteria of political authority that can be met by non democratic as well as democratic states. Second, some have thought that there is a conceptual link between democracy and authority such that if a decision is made democratically then it must therefore have authority. Third, some have thought that there are general principles of political authority that are uniquely realized by a democratic state under certain well defined conditions.

4.4.3.1 LIMITS TO THE AUTHORITY OF DEMOCRACY

If democracy does have authority, what are the limits to that authority? A limit to democratic authority is a principle violation of which defeats democratic authority. When the principle is violated by the democratic assembly, the assembly loses its authority in that instance or the moral weight of the authority is overridden. A number of different views have been offered on this issue. First, it is worthwhile to distinguish between different kinds of moral limit to authority. We might distinguish between internal and external limits to democratic authority. An internal limit to democratic authority is a limit that arises from the requirements of democratic process or a limit that arises from the principles that underpin democracy. An external limit on the authority of democracy is a limit that arises from principles that are independent of the values or requirements of democracy. Furthermore, some limits to democratic authority are rebutting limits, which are principles that weigh in the balance against the principles that support democratic decision making. Some considerations may simply outweigh in importance the considerations that support democratic authority. So in a particular case, an individual may see that there are reasons to obey the assembly and some reasons against obeying the

assembly and in the case at hand the reasons against obedience outweigh the reasons in favor of obedience.

On the other hand some limits to democratic authority are undercutting limits. These limits function not by weighing against the considerations in favor of authority, they undercut the considerations in favor of authority altogether; they simply short circuit the authority. When an undercutting limit is in play, it is not as if the principles which ground the limit outweigh the reasons for obeying the democratic assembly, it is rather that the reasons for obeying the democratic assembly are undermined altogether; they cease to exist or at least they are severely weakened.

4.4.4 MACPHERSON'S THEORY OF DEMOCRACY

Political philosopher C.B. Macpherson explores the implications of the ideas about democracy in *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* and *Democracy Theory – Essays in Retrieval*. Macpherson modifies, extends, and clarifies the concept of a man's power and that of the "transfer of powers," and argues that a liberal-democratic theory can be based on an adequate concept of human powers and capacities without insuperable difficulties. Arguing that the neo-classical liberalisms of Chapman, Rawls, and Berlin fall short of providing an adequate basis for a twentieth-century liberal-democratic theory largely because, in different ways, they fail to see or understate the transfer of powers. Macpherson suggests that the liberal theory of property should be, and can be, revised fundamentally to accommodate new democratic demands. In this manner Macpherson establishes the need for a theory of democracy that gets clear of the disabling central defect of current liberal-democratic theory, while recovering the humanistic values that liberal democracy has always claimed.

4.4.5 MACPHERSON'S FOUR "MODELS" OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Macpherson designated four models of liberal democracy are as "Protective Democracy", "Developmental Democracy", "Equilibrium Democracy", and "Participatory

Democracy." He critically examines the first three models of democracy and then presented his model of participatory democracy.

4.4.5.1 PROTECTIVE DEMOCRACY

The first, which makes its case for democracy on the grounds that it alone can protect the governed from oppression, is found in the utilitarianism of Bentham and James Mill, reluctant democrats who simply felt that the needs of an essentially capitalist economy in the then prevailing conditions demanded such political reforms as the extension of the franchise.

4.4.5.2 DEVELOPMENT DEMOCRACY

The "developmental" model, which Macpherson divides into two stages, is a more humanistic one. The model is best represented by J.S. Mill who first articulated the principle which for Macpherson is the essence of the tradition, that aspect of it he wants to preserve: the commitment to the self-development of all individuals equally. In the 20th century, this developmental model, represented by philosophical idealists like Barker or Lindsay, pragmatists like Dewey or "modified utilitarians" like Hobhouse, while retaining Mill's ethical commitment lost some of his realism concerning the obstacles to the fulfillment of the liberal goal posed by the realities of class and exploitation. They simply assumed that the regulatory and welfare state would suffice to bring about the desired end.

4.4.5.3 EQUILIBRIUM DEMOCRACY

The third model, the currently prevalent one, is that of modern social scientists, the "pluralist elitist equilibrium model" inaugurated by Schumpeter and developed by political scientists like Robert Dahl. This model, argues Macpherson, lacks the ethical dimension of the previous one and offers a description, and a justification, of stable democracy as a "competition between elites which produces equilibrium without much popular participation." Democracy according to this model is "simply a mechanism for choosing and authorizing governments, not a kind of society or a set of moral ends. . ."

4.4.5.4 PARTICIPATORY MODEL

Macpherson after critically examined each of these models and explaining the reasons for their successive failures and eventual replacement by a new model, finally turns to the emerging model of "Participatory Democracy", which began as a slogan of the New Left student movement. He proposes to develop this into a complete model to supersede earlier ones, embodying a specific political programme and some suggestions about the kinds of social and ideological changes which would be needed to make the political programme workable.

Macpherson has observed that Schumpeter-Dhal axis treat democracy as a mechanism designed to maintain an equilibrium. It conceives of democracy as a competition between two or more elite groups for the power to govern, the whole society, requiring only a low level of citizen participation. In Macpherson's view, it is a distorted view where democracy is reduced from a humanistic aspiration to market equilibrium.

Concept of participatory democracy repudiates this model of democracy as it regards peoples political participation as the basic principle of democracy. In short, political participation denote the active involvement of individuals and groups in the governmental process affective their lives. In other words, when citizen themselves play an active role in the process of formulation and implementation of public policy and decision, their activity is called political participation. Conventional modes of political participation includes voting, standing for office, campaigning for a political party or contributing to the management of a community project, like public safety, or the maintenance of a public park, etc. interestingly, an act of opposition or public protest also involves political participation. For example, signing a petition, attending a peaceful demonstration, joining a protest march or forming a human chain, etc. come within the preview of political participation. Indeed, the various acts of public protest in the non-democratic setup like passive resistance, civil disobedience and *satyagraha*, also qualifies as political participation. They are the manifestation of the strong awareness of public interest.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE 1

NOTE: Use the space given below for your answers. Use separate sheet if space is not sufficient.

1. How do you define democracy?

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2. There are three main concepts of the legitimate authority of the state. What are they?

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3. What are the four models of Macpherson's democracy?

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4.4.6 LET US SUM UP

Macpherson, who wrote from a democratic socialist perspective, was a strong critic of liberalism and liberal democracy, particularly of their historical conflation with capitalist markets. In his political theory, he sought to retrieve the democratic elements of liberalism from the excessive influence of individual rights and commodification of social life.

Macpherson's most well-known contribution to political theory is his notion of "possessive individualism," which he contrasted with a more radical vision of democracy. By studying English political thought from the seventeenth century onward—particularly that of philosophers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke—Macpherson attempted to uncover an "underlying unity" of a view of humanity as possessive individuals. The tensions in liberal democratic thought and problems of legitimacy in liberal political systems are, Macpherson argued, due to the underlying assumption that individuals are fundamentally possessive.

Macpherson contrasted the political culture of possessive individualism and competitive theories of democracy with a view of democracy freed from its liberal baggage. He advocated a neo-republican view of life and politics in which the development of "truly" human capacities, such as rational understanding, moral judgement, aesthetic appreciation, and emotional ties, was the primary goal. With this sort of democratization, Macpherson believed society could acknowledge its interdependence and replace competition with social cooperation.