

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF
PLATO AND ARISTOTLE TO THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE CONCEPT OF TOLERATION

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This dissertation is about the concept of toleration. It asks: “Did Plato and Aristotle contribute to the emergence of toleration?” This question is important because it is widely believed that the concept of toleration is a product of modern times. If it can be shown that although they did not have an explicit theory of toleration the ancients had something to say about it, this would be a significant improvement in our understanding of the historical evolution of toleration.

In the first part of the dissertation the relationship between skepticism and toleration is analyzed. The examination of the theories of knowledge of Plato and Aristotle shows that neither philosopher was a skeptic, thus, they did not contribute to the emergence of toleration on the basis of skepticism. While Plato fits the definition of the “dogmatist,” Aristotle has a more modest stance in his claims of knowledge in the fields of ethics and politics. To the extent that Aristotle does not reject other views absolutely, it can be expected that he would be more tolerant.

In the second part, the relationship between prudence and toleration is examined. Upon a close examination of Plato and Aristotle's moral and political views, it becomes clear that Plato emphasizes harmony and order in both individual and society and to that extent rejects conflict that can be caused by moral and/or ideological differences. Thus, he does not have a prudent approach to conflict emphasizing stability and peace rather than harmony. On the other hand, Aristotle exhibits a prudent stance towards conflict in the *polis*. Although he also has an ideal view of politics in which conflict is minimized, Aristotle does not dismiss less than perfect political arrangements. By requiring the citizens to be ready to have consensus only on the matters that concern everybody, Aristotle's concept of political friendship provides a private sphere in which the citizens can experience their differences. In this regard, on the basis of prudence, Aristotle's concept of political friendship is similar to the modern concept of toleration in terms of not enforcing uniformity among the citizens.

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by

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about the concept of toleration. The specific question addressed is: Did the two most prominent figures of the classic philosophy--Plato and Aristotle--have anything to contribute to the development of the concept of toleration? This question is important because to the extent that toleration is seen as a product of modern times, the ancient philosophers are believed to have nothing significant to contribute to the development of this concept. Thus Levine (1999b) claims, “no philosophers in ancient Greece or Rome explicitly argued for toleration as a political principle” (p. 7). Therefore the writings of classic philosophers are neglected when a discussion of the evolution of toleration is undertaken.

It may be true that neither Plato nor Aristotle explicitly developed a theory of toleration. Yet, that does not mean that they did not have anything to contribute to the emergence of the concept of toleration. Indeed, there may be some notions in their philosophies that might have helped modern philosophers argue for toleration. That would, in and of itself, make their views worth examining closely. Although they may not have a fully developed theory of toleration if it can be shown that the ancients had something to contribute to its development that would be a significant improvement in our understanding of the historical evolution of toleration.

This is exactly what this study tries to do. It aims to show that at least in the thoughts of Aristotle, the seeds of toleration as a political principle can be found. Why then not focus only on Aristotle in this study since Plato does not have anything specific

to contribute to toleration? The main reason lies in the fact that, as with many of his other ideas, Aristotle's views that provided the first step towards a theory of toleration are developed as a critique of the views of his teacher, Plato. So, in this sense, Plato's views are indispensable for this study.

Before proceeding to build the case for this argument, it is appropriate to try to understand the possible reasons that might have led to the belief that the ancient philosophers had nothing to contribute to the emergence of the concept of toleration. In addition to the absence of a fully developed theory of toleration in their writings, there are at least two reasons for believing that neither Plato nor Aristotle had anything to say about toleration.

The first reason is related to the widely held belief that toleration emerged as a response to religious conflict in Europe at the beginning of modern times in the sixteenth century (Kamen, 1967; Levine, 1999b). Discussing this common view about the connection between the emergence of toleration and religious dissent, Susan Mendus (1989) states:

Indeed, the story of toleration is predominantly the story of the battle against religious intolerance and persecution, and it is in this context that many important conceptual points about the nature and justification of toleration were first formulated. (p. 6)

Given the connection between a fully developed concept of toleration and religious conflict in sixteenth century Europe, it may be argued that because there was no religious dissent in the ancient world there was no need for Plato and Aristotle to contemplate the concept of toleration. Ancient religion was one of civic social practices; it did not have a dogma and a class of clergy who were responsible for preserving that dogma. The result was an absence of religious intolerance. To the

extent that ancient societies did not have religious intolerance, the concept of toleration did not need to occupy a significant value in the philosophical lexicon of the ancient thinkers. One prominent example of this line of reasoning is provided by Rawls (1996) who states:

Ancient religion was a civic religion of public social practice, of civic festivals and public celebrations. Moreover, this civic religious culture was not based on a sacred work like the Bible, or the Koran, or the Vedas of Hinduism . . . As long as one participated in the expected way and recognized the proprieties, the details of what one believed were not of great importance. It was a matter of doing the done thing and being a trustworthy member of society, always ready to carry out one's civic duties as a good citizen--to serve on juries or to row in the fleet in war--when called upon to do so. It was not a religion of salvation in the Christian sense and there was no class of priests who dispensed the necessary means of grace . . . (p. xxiii)

Thus, Rawls implies that since ancient religion lacked a dogma--an undisputed conception of the highest good--and did not have a class of clergy that was responsible for implementing and preserving that dogma, there was freedom of conscience. As a result, the ancient philosophers did not need to contemplate the notion of toleration.

On the other hand, Rawls (1996, p. xxiv) notes that the European medieval era did not witness the emergence of toleration as an important notion despite the existence of a sacred religion, Christianity, with its class of clergy. He explains this by the absence of disunity among the faithful; the Papacy was able to keep the unity intact within Christendom. Therefore, until the Reformation in the sixteenth century AD, there was no serious religious conflict out of which the notion of toleration could emerge as an important value. As Horton and Mendus (1993) indicate, for Rawls, in the absence of a religion that makes claims about the highest good (as in the ancient Greek world), or in the presence of unity with regard to the conception of the highest good (as in the medieval Christian world), politics did not need to concern itself with

adjudication. It was only after the Reformation--that is by the fragmentation of unity regarding the conception of the highest good--did political philosophers have to confront the problem of reconciling rival claims of knowing the highest good (p. 3). So with religious disunity comes intolerance and, therefore, the need for a philosophy of tolerance.

A second reason for thinking that the ancient philosophers did not need to develop a theory of toleration is the belief that the dominant mode of relationships among citizens in ancient society was one of peaceful communication. There is support for this stance. Pericles' "Funeral Oration" as presented by Thucydides (1972) in *The History of Peloponnesian War* observes:

Just as our political life is free and open, so is our day-to-day life in our relations with each other. We do not get into a state with our next-door neighbor if he enjoys himself in his own way, nor do we give him the kind of black looks which, though they do no real harm, still do hurt people's feelings. We are free and tolerant in our private lives; but in public affairs we keep to the law. This is because it commands our deep respect. (p. 145)

It might seem that both of these factors--the absence of a dogmatic religion and tolerant relationships in the ancient *polis*--contributed to preventing both Plato and Aristotle from developing a defense of toleration.¹ However, there is an alternative interpretation of life in the ancient world that depicts life as being not as peaceful and tolerant as presented above.

First there was intolerance, and the philosophers themselves were the subjects of intolerance. Those philosophers who challenged the traditional religion and popular institutions were not tolerated (Barker, 1997, p. 246). The most tragic example of this is the execution of Socrates. As Plato informs us in the *Apology* (1992), Socrates was put to death on the charge of corrupting the youth with unconventional ideas and

introducing new gods. Anaxagoras, Protogoras, and Aristotle were also subjects of intolerance.

Leo Strauss (1989) bears witness to the intolerance that was shown to the philosophers in the ancient world by pointing out that classical philosophers had to justify philosophy to those who did not understand philosophy and were suspicious--and in this sense--intolerant of it. Philosophers found it necessary to try to answer the question: Why does political life need philosophy? They had to answer that question in an affirmative way because their very survival was dependent on their ability to justify philosophy. As Strauss says:

Plato's *Republic* as a whole, as well as other political works of classical philosophers, can best be described as an attempt to supply a political justification for philosophy by showing that the well-being of the political community depends decisively on the study of philosophy. Such a justification was all the more urgent since the meaning of philosophy was by no means generally understood, and hence philosophy was distrusted and hated by many well-meaning citizens. Socrates himself fell victim to the popular prejudice against philosophy. (p. 77)

There was another form of intolerance in the ancient world that was much more costly in terms of human and material losses than the intolerance that was shown to the philosophers. This was political intolerance towards ideological differences in the public realm in the ancient *polis*, and the differences in political outlook caused the deepest conflicts in the world of antiquity. As Finley (1987) indicates, "*stasis*"--namely, the clash between different political factions and mainly the few versus the many in order to gain the control of polity--was an ordinary event of *polis* life (p. 60). Coulanges (1980) observes that:

In every city the rich and the poor were two enemies living by the side of each other, the one coveting wealth, and the other seeing their wealth coveted. No relation, no service, no labor united them . . . They regarded each other with the eyes of hate . . . It is impossible to say which of the two parties committed the

most cruelties and crimes. Hatred effaced in their hearts every sentiment of humanity. (p. 332)

Kalimtzis (2000) points out that “in times of *stasis* the violence between citizens was far more brutal than war between external enemies” (p. 56). One example of such an intolerant and cruel clash is provided by the *stasis* of Corcyra. Thucydides (1972) relates that in 427 BC during the Peloponnesian war, a civil war erupted in Corcyra. Once civil war erupted, both the democrats and the oligarchs appealed to their allies abroad, Athens and Sparta respectively. Upon the arrival of an Athenian fleet under the command of Eurymedon, the democrats in Corcyra gained the upper hand. During the seven days that Eurymedon stayed there with his sixty ships, the democrats massacred their fellow citizens whom they considered to be their enemies. According to Thucydides, the victims of the massacres were accused of conspiracy for subverting the democratic regime, however, there were also those who were killed because of personal hatred and material interests. The extent to which the cruelty continued in Corcyra is best described by Thucydides:

There was the death in every shape and form. And, as usually happens in such situations, people went to [the] extreme and beyond it. There were fathers who killed their sons; men were dragged from the temples or butchered on the very altars; some were actually walled up in the temple of Dionysus and died there.² (p. 241)

Another testimony about the intolerance that was encountered in the public sphere of the *polis* is provided by Socrates in his defense before the assembly of Athens. There, Socrates attributes his staying alive until then--in spite of his unconventional modes of thinking and behavior--to his avoidance of public responsibilities. Socrates says:

. . .O men of Athens, that if I had engaged in politics, I should have perished long ago, done no good either to you or to myself. And don't be offended at my telling you the truth: for the truth is, that no man who goes to war with you or any other multitude, honestly struggling against the commission of

unrighteousness and wrong in the state, will save his life; he who will really fight for the right, if he would live even for a little while, must have a private station and not a public one. (*Apology* 31-32)

The belief that the ancient society was free from intolerance and, as a result, the ancient philosophers might not have felt compelled to advocate a theory of toleration is not true. This society was intolerant: intolerant of philosophers, intolerant of political differences. It should also be noted that the concept of toleration could be meaningfully applied to other sorts of conflicts such as racial, ethnic, and ideological, not just religious conflicts. In this regard, the conflict in the public realm over political differences could have provided the ancient philosophers with the reason for developing a theory of toleration.

In this study, it will be argued that both Plato and Aristotle were aware of the conflict, and thus the intolerance, between the democrats and the oligarchs in the *polis* and thought about it. But, they had different solutions to correct this problem. Whereas, Plato attempted to end the conflict by eradicating the reasons (ideological and moral differences); Aristotle thought that conflict was inevitable and the solution was to look for ways to accommodate that conflict.

In order to evaluate the positions of Plato and Aristotle with regards to toleration, we need to familiarize ourselves with the concept of toleration. In this direction, what follows comprises a concise analysis of toleration.

An Analysis of the Concept of Toleration³

Toleration comes from the Latin word *tolerantia*. According to King (1976), the earlier history of this word and its derivatives were broadly intended to convey a

general notion of enduring or putting up with items of various kinds (p. 12). In contemporary English, there are two nouns that are derived from the Latin word *tolerantia*: tolerance and toleration. Generally, while tolerance refers to an attitude, toleration refers to an action. More specifically, tolerance is a willingness or ability to tolerate; toleration is the practice of tolerating.⁴

In *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2000), toleration is presented as a deliberate decision to refrain from prohibiting, hindering or otherwise coercively interfering with conduct of which one disapproves, although one has power to do so (p. 895). Langerak (1997) sums up this position in one sentence: “I disagree with your position on this matter which I care about but I will not attempt to coerce your behavior” (p. 116).

Fragmenting the concept of toleration into its main components, we have a tolerating and a tolerated subject, each could be an individual, a group, an organization or an institution; an object of toleration which can be an action, a belief or a practice; a negative attitude in the form of dislike or disapproval towards the object of toleration on the part of the subject who tolerates; and a significant degree of restraint in acting against it.

With regard to tolerating subjects, the criterion in determining an entity as a tolerating subject lies in its ability to exhibit *agency*. In other words, to be able to tolerate an entity must be capable of doing something--of acting. The simple reason is that to be intolerant towards an object requires the capacity to act against it. This point becomes clearer when we are reminded of the fact that not all groups are capable of acting. However, in order to be tolerated an entity does not need to exhibit agency.

Thus, there are more potential tolerated subjects than potential tolerating subjects. This point can be better illustrated by an example drawn from the realm of sexual orientation. As a group, gays and lesbians can be a subject of toleration in the sense of being tolerated. That is, they can be the target of intolerant behavior from those who disapprove of their way of life. However, they cannot be a tolerating subject because they lack the necessary structure to act as a group against a subject of toleration who/which is in the position of being tolerated (Oberdiek, 2001, pp. 40-41). According to Oberdiek, it is easier for us to find potential tolerated subjects due to the fact that wherever there is difference, especially deep difference, there is a potential object for toleration, and deep difference exists everywhere. In Oberdiek's (2001) words, "without deep and divisive differences, toleration would not have the important place it does, not only in abstract liberal political theory but also in the lived life of contemporary pluralist, liberal societies" (pp. 46-47).

It is possible to identify two different perspectives regarding the concept of toleration by looking at what kinds of differences are seen as legitimate candidates for the application of toleration; these are the narrow and broad perspectives. In the narrow perspective, the differences that form the object of toleration should involve important moral matters (Weale, 1985, p. 18). In other words, according to the narrow perspective, to be tolerant means accepting differences that really matter to us. The differences in religious beliefs and practices, sexual preferences, and political ideologies are examples of the differences that can potentially cause moral disapproval. In this sense, differences in tastes cannot be a proper object of toleration. It is ridiculous to talk about tolerating a person for, for instance, her/his⁵ choice of color of clothing.

It is argued that if the concept of toleration is going to be “a moral ideal” the proper objects of toleration must involve important moral matters (Nicholson, 1985, pp. 160-161). So, toleration is limited to the cases that involve moral disapproval, excluding feelings such as dislike, distaste, and disgust. As Nicholson (1985) puts it, “toleration is a matter of moral choice, and our tastes and inclinations are irrelevant . . . such feelings are not morally grounded, and cannot be the ground of a moral position” (pp. 160-161). And, as Mendus observes:

[The] claim that toleration arises only where there is moral disapproval rests on the belief that a clear distinction may be drawn between the moral, which is amenable to rational argument, and the non-moral, which is a matter of bare emotion, feeling, or sentiment, [and] as such [is] not amenable to rational argument. (1989, p. 10)

One logical conclusion of this approach is that one of the most divisive differences amongst human beings--race--cannot constitute a proper object of toleration. Because race is a biological fact, it does not have anything to do with moral choice. Another implication of this line of reasoning is that we can apply the notion of toleration properly only to the objects over which the tolerated subjects have the ability to make changes. Likewise, we can talk about moral responsibility only where there is freedom of choice. In the absence of physical compulsion, one can choose the way s/he behaves amongst alternative ways of behavior, and thus, can change her/his behavior if s/he wants to, but one cannot change her/his skin color. When one tolerates someone for a certain belief or behavior, her/his tolerance involves the belief that this belief or behavior is not inevitable in the sense that s/he can expect the tolerated person to believe or act in another way. Yet tolerance also involves not demanding that change. Thus to the extent that it is impossible to change one's race, showing intolerance

towards racial differences is irrational; and, therefore, racial differences have to be accepted rather than being tolerated.

According to the broad perspective, toleration can arise in cases that involve mere dislike, distaste, or disgust as well as disapproval. One example of the broad perspective can be found in Warnock. In advancing this perspective, Warnock (1987) rejects the claim that a clear line between the moral and the non-moral can be drawn (pp. 25-26). On the contrary, she thinks moral judgments may themselves be based on strong feeling. Following David Hume, Warnock claims that “morality is more properly felt than judged of, and moral distinctions are not grounded in reason” (qtd. in Mendus, 1989, p. 11).

However, as Mendus (1989) observes: in suggesting that moral judgments themselves may be based on feeling, Warnock does not claim that all cases of toleration are of equal value. It may be true that some moral judgments are based on feeling and some feelings are unimportant, but that does not mean that all moral judgments are trivial. With these considerations in mind, Warnock makes a distinction between “strong toleration” which involves cases with moral disapproval and “weak toleration” which involves cases of dislike or distaste (pp.11-12). Thus the broad perspective of toleration makes it possible to apply the notion of toleration to racial differences. To the extent to which racial intolerance is based on a form of dislike, it is a legitimate candidate for the application of the notion of toleration. In this study the broad perspective of toleration is followed. Thus, not only moral disapproval but also dislike, distaste, and disgust provide the occasions in which we can properly employ the notion of toleration.

Another point that must be presented is that we do not exercise toleration towards the differences about which we do not care. We are simply indifferent to them. As Mendus (1989) states, “simply to allow the different practices of others, whilst not objecting to them, disapproving of them, or finding them repugnant, is not to display tolerance, but only to favour liberty” (p. 8).

Furthermore, in order to describe a person or an institution as a tolerating subject, we must be able to show that the subject is in a position to impose his/her/its will on the tolerated subject (Mendus 1989, p. 9). Mendus illustrates this condition by an example drawn from the realm of religious differences: “We may be said to tolerate only in the circumstances where, although we disapprove of the heterodox religion, and although we have the power to persecute, we nevertheless refrain” (p. 9). Weale (1985) points out that “those who are tolerant could get their way if they chose. This is the distinction between acquiescence and toleration” (p. 18). In this sense, tolerance is different from resigning oneself to what one disapproves of out of a sense of helplessness. To be tolerant implies that one believes, perhaps falsely, that one could interfere in some way with the disagreeable behavior (Langerak, 1997, p. 117).

The Paradox of Toleration

Every philosopher who grapples with the concept of toleration has to come to grips with “the paradox of toleration”; in other words, s/he must provide persuasive reasons as to why one should not interfere with that of which one disapproves. The fact that toleration requires someone to refrain from prohibiting, hindering or otherwise coercively interfering with exactly what one disapproves of presents the so-called

“paradox of toleration.” On one side of the equation lies the object of toleration, that is, an act or belief that causes disapproval, dislike, or disgust; and on the other side lies the conscience of the tolerating subject. The conscience of the tolerating subject is a battleground where a fierce fight takes place between the moral values of the tolerating subject, which strongly urge the person to stop the object of toleration, and the demands for toleration. In order for the demands of toleration to be victorious in this battle, the conscience of the tolerating subject must be provided with some good reasons to be tolerant. In fact, the reasons that are presented to overcome the paradox of toleration are different ways of justifying toleration.

In the emergence of toleration in the early modern era, there were two secular arguments that were presented to overcome the paradox of toleration. These were skeptical and prudential arguments. Very briefly, in the case of toleration that is based on skepticism, the tolerating subject may believe that s/he has no rational ground to justify her/his intolerance towards the object of toleration. This is the skeptical attitude. Thus, as long as one does not want to commit injustice through imposing her/his own arbitrary position on others, one should be tolerant towards different ways of lives. In the case of toleration that is based on prudence, however, the costs of acting intolerantly are taken into account. The costs of acting intolerantly may be much greater than acting tolerantly. For this reason, prudence recommends to act tolerantly towards the object that causes dislike, disgust, or disapproval.

These two grounds for the justification of toleration provide this study with a roadmap. In the search for toleration in the thoughts of Plato and Aristotle, their positions towards these two arguments will be examined closely to see whether these

philosophers had anything to contribute to the emergence of toleration on these bases in the early modern era.

¹ Except for the direct quotations, in which “state” or “city-state” are employed, I will use the Greek word “*polis*” to denote the highest level of social organization in the ancient world and in the writings of ancient philosophers.

² It may be argued that *stasis* was caused by economic interests and therefore does not qualify as an example of intolerance. Finley (1987, 59-60) may support this view: “Poverty was widespread, the material standard of life was low and there was a deep cleavage between the poor and the rich . . . This has been common enough in all history; what gave it an uncommon twist in Greece was the city-state, with its intimacy, its stress on the community and on the freedom and dignity of the individual which went with membership. The citizen felt he had claims on the community, not merely obligations to it, and if the regime did not satisfy him he was not loath to do something about it--to get rid of it if he could. In consequence the dividing-line between politics and sedition . . . was a thin one in classical Greece, and often enough *stasis* grew into ruthless civil war.” However, the extent to which cruelty went on in Corcyra cannot be explained solely by economic factors. The idea that fathers killed their sons, neighbors butchered one another because of the conflict of economic interests is not persuasive. The hatred that was caused by the differences of economic wealth and political ideology was also responsible for triggering the mass-murder that took place in Corcyra.

³ Before presenting an analysis of the concept of toleration, it must be mentioned that the single most important contribution to the literature on toleration was made by the Center for Morrell Studies in Toleration, located at the University of York, United Kingdom. This center hosted many distinguished scholars and contributed to the publication of many works on toleration. Some of the scholars from this circle whose works I consulted are John Horton, Susan Mendus, and Preston King. There are also scholars who contributed to the literature independently; two of these scholars are Hans Oberdiek and Alan Levine.

⁴ *The Oxford American Dictionary of Current English* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); *The American Heritage Dictionary of The English Language*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000). As King indicates, these two nouns are very often confused and this confusion is really not worth debating. In the end, King argues, these two nouns share the same verb, namely, to tolerate. There is only one adjective—tolerant--that describes the person who either has the attitude or performs the action. In this respect, it is “tolerable” to use “tolerance” and “toleration” interchangeably, and that is what will be done in this study.

⁵ Throughout this dissertation--except for direct quotations where the third person singular is specified as either “she” or “he”--I will use the term “s/he” for the third person singular pronoun.

PART I

SKEPTICISM AND TOLERATION

Skepticism is a particular epistemological attitude. As Annas and Barnes (1985, p. 4) indicate, “epistemology discusses the questions of cognition: What is knowledge? How much can we know? Of what can we be certain? In what circumstances our beliefs are justified?” (p. 4). There are two basic positions with regards to these questions: skepticism and dogmatism¹. While these two positions are in agreement about the answer to the first question--what is knowledge--they give opposite answers to the rest of the questions. Both skeptical and dogmatist positions accept that if someone asserts a statement p but is wrong, that person cannot be said to know that p is true. In this sense one of the main features of the concept of knowledge is that it is impossible to know what is not true (Popkin & Stroll, 2002, p. 40). If I state that the capital of the United States of America is New York, this statement, being incorrect, cannot be a piece of my knowledge.

The second point of agreement between the skeptics and the dogmatists concerns the criterion of certainty. This criterion is connected with the former. If it is possible to be mistaken about p , then one cannot know p ; if I know p , I know p with certainty. The possibility of being mistaken implies an uncertainty in one’s awareness of a given situation, and corresponds to a lack of knowledge (Popkin & Stroll, 2002, p. 40). According to this criterion, a statement such as “The capital of the United States of America might be Washington D.C.” although correct cannot qualify as a piece of knowledge.

As indicated above, skeptics and dogmatists agree only on the answer that they give to the question “what is knowledge?” On the questions of certainty, they radically disagree. At the extreme, skeptics argue that it is impossible to know anything because it is impossible to ascertain certainty. They argue that one can never tell whether what one claims to know is true or false, thus, knowledge is impossible. This is the position of “radical skepticism” and as Popkin and Stroll (2002) put it, “the radical skeptic doubts that any piece of information is any better than any other” (p. 57). However, there is another kind of skepticism that believes that some pieces of knowledge are better than others. This is called “mitigated skepticism.” Generally speaking, a mitigated skeptic is committed to the view that information is to be presented in probabilistic terms--the more probable, the more reliable. These skeptics continue to believe that no matter how high on the scale of probability we go, we can never reach the realm of knowledge grounded on certainty (Popkin & Stroll, 2002, p. 57).

The dogmatist claims that knowledge is possible and one who knows something knows that thing with certainty. There can be secular and religious forms of dogmatism. In the former form a dogmatist may believe in the existence of a fixed truth in nature or science. In religious dogmatism, revealed religion provides all the information with certainty that one needs to know. Secular dogmatism relies ultimately on reason. According to the secular dogmatists, the senses are not reliable tools for attaining truth due to the fact that the objects of sense perceptions are subject to constant change. However, knowledge must be about fixed phenomena, otherwise what we know right now as true will be false in a moment violating the first criterion of knowledge--one cannot know that which is false. Religious dogmatists may also

employ reason; however, their motivation for doing so is always to find explanations that prove the truth of sacred religion.

It is often thought that there is at least an emotional kinship between skepticism and toleration (Tuck, 1988). The core of the skeptical argument for toleration is that there is no rational ground for justifying our moral values, so any attempt to impose our own value system on others forms an arbitrary behavior on our part and corresponds to injustice. If we do not want to commit injustice, we should tolerate the beliefs and/or actions that we believe to be wrong.

Nevertheless, as Mendus (1988) indicates, “the link between skepticism and toleration is not unproblematic . . . There is in fact no straightforward move from moral or religious skepticism to toleration” (p. 2). Alan Levine (2001) illustrates this point by a reference to Dostoyevsky. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoyevsky states that “if nothing is true, everything is permitted” (pp. 14-15). In other words, the skeptical stance may also involve tolerating intolerance. According to this mode of reasoning, if we can never have the knowledge of the truth, or if there is no truth about such matters to be discovered, then there is nothing wrong in enforcing uniformity of belief (Horton, 1998, p. 432).

Therefore, in order for skepticism to lead to tolerance rather than to intolerance, it needs to be interpreted in a certain way. A brilliant example of this kind of interpretation is provided by Michel de Montaigne. I will present his justification of toleration on the basis of skepticism in a later chapter.

Now, in order to see whether Plato and Aristotle had anything to contribute to the justification of toleration on the basis of skepticism, I will examine their theories of

knowledge. Upon the completion of the examination of the theories of knowledge of these two ancient philosophers, I will move to discuss ancient skepticism and the revival of skepticism in the early modern Europe to show how it provided a basis for the emergence of toleration. Finally, I will present Michel de Montaigne's case for toleration on the basis of skepticism to exemplify this process.

CHAPTER 1: THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE ANCIENTS: THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF PLATO

Given the skeptic's claim that one cannot know, the first thing that needs to be said about Plato's theory of knowledge is that it holds that knowledge and certainty exist, and, indeed, that one who knows something knows that thing with certainty (Popkin & Stroll, 2002, p. 43). This bold claim about the nature of knowledge places Plato's theory of knowledge exactly opposite that of the skeptical stance. This radical disagreement between skepticism and Plato's theory of knowledge occurs despite a very important common point between the two stances. This important common point concerns the attitude towards sense perceptions. Like the skeptics Plato believed that sense perceptions do not yield certainty. Plato's acceptance of the Heraclitean doctrine of flux is generally seen as the reason behind his reservation about the results of sense perceptions (Gulley, 1961, p. 26).

As Aristotle indicated in the *Metaphysics* (1941), Plato became acquainted with the Heraclitean doctrine of flux through Cratylus. The basic motto of this doctrine was "all is flux"; the objects of sense perception are subject to constant change, therefore, they cannot be the proper objects of knowledge (987a-987b). According to Heraclitus of Ephesus (540?-470 BC) permanence--being--was an illusion of the senses; the only truth was change--becoming. This view is summed up in Heraclitus' celebrated remark, "you cannot step into the same river twice" (Reinhold, 1964, p. 1). As Popkin and Stroll (2002) observe, for Heraclitus, "every feature of the world comes into being and

passes away. The only thing that does not change is a cosmic balance maintained by the continuous alteration of everything” (p. 50).

Although Heraclitus himself did not draw radical skeptical implications from this doctrine, one of his disciples, Cratylus, did. Depending on the doctrine of flux, Cratylus argued that reality is unintelligible. If everything is under constant change and nothing stands still long enough to be comprehended, human communication is impossible due to the fact that our words and their meanings are constantly changing. Using Heraclitus’ river metaphor, Cratylus concluded that one cannot step into the same river even once, because it is no more the same river by the time one’s foot enters into it. To make the matter more complicated, it is not even the same person who is doing the stepping, nor is it the same foot that is entering the river. Thus, accepting such a doctrine may lead a person to extreme skepticism by concluding that there is nothing stable to be described and the search for certainty is futile. Indeed, it is reported that due to his conviction in the impossibility of meaningful communication, Cratylus eventually refused to utter any word and wiggled his little finger only when asked a question (Popkin & Stroll, 2002, p. 50).

At this point, one wonders how Plato could possibly continue to claim that there was such a thing as knowledge that could be attained with certainty after having accepted the Heraclitean doctrine of flux. A partial answer to this question will be found in Aristotle.

Aristotle (1941) thinks that the combination of the Heraclitian doctrine of flux with the Socratic search for general definitions caused Plato to contemplate about the objects of knowledge which exists in reality (*Metaphysics* 987a-987b). As Gulley

(1961, p. 1) indicates, “in Plato’s early dialogues one of the most characteristic and at the same time most significant feature of Socrates’ inquiries is the attention which they give to general definitions” (p. 1). One example of this Socratic search for a general definition can be found in the *Meno*. In this early dialogue Meno, a young aristocrat from Thessaly visiting Athens, asks Socrates, “does virtue come from teaching?” Socrates claims not to know even what virtue *is*, which he thinks must be settled first. The method that Socrates employs in this search for the definition of virtue is the same method he uses in his other searches for general definitions; he uses a question and answer format. Socrates asks, “what is virtue?” Meno answers Socrates’ question confidently:

Meno First, if it’s virtue for a man you wish to know, that is easy: virtue for a man is the ability to conduct the city’s affairs and, in so doing, to help his friends, hurt his foes, and take good care not to get hurt himself. Or if it’s virtue for a woman you wish for, that’s not hard to describe: she must run the home well, looking after everything in it and obeying her husband. And there is another virtue for a child. . . .And there are a great many other virtues. . . .For there is virtue for every field of practice and time of life, in connection of every activity, and for every one of us . . . (*Meno* 71e1-72a4)

Socrates objects that what Meno is doing is not giving a definition of virtue but rather giving particular examples of virtue. These particulars cannot be what virtue itself is. The attribute that makes all these particulars an example of virtue must be the defining characteristic of virtue. Socrates tries to make Meno understand this point by giving an example:

Soc. If someone asked you . . . “What is shape, Meno?”, and you told him that it was roundness, and he said to you as I did, “Is roundness shape, or *a* shape?”, I would expect you’d tell him that it’s *a* shape.

Meno Yes indeed.

Soc. Your reason being that there are also other shapes?

Meno Yes. . . .

Soc. Well, if he pursued the argument as I did and said, “We keep ending up with many [things]. . .but since you refer to these many things by the one name and say that none of them fails to be a shape even though they are positively inconsistent with each other, tell me what this is, which includes round no less than straight, and which you call shape when you say that roundness is a shape no less than straightness is? Or don’t you say this?”

Meno. Yes I do. . . .

Soc. Then what is this thing which has this name “shape”? Try to tell me. . . . Don’t you understand that I’m searching for the thing which is *the same* in all of these? Or would you have no answer in this case either, Meno, if someone asked you, “What is it in roundness and straightness and the other things you call shapes, that is the same in all of them?” (*Meno* 74b4-75a8)

Eventually, Socrates gives two definitions of “shape.” According to the first shape is the only thing there is which always accompanies color (*Meno* 75b8-9). Meno objects to this definition on the basis that if one did not know what color was, then, the definition of shape would be meaningless. Upon this objection Socrates provides the second definition which states that shape is the limit of a solid (*Meno* 76a6-7).

Regardless of their truthfulness, what these two definitions show us is that Socrates believed that there was such a thing as a universal, unchanging, abstract definition for every object the senses perceive. Although sense perceptions change from person to person, these ideal definitions do not. We never witness the complete materialization of the ideal. All particular examples of a universal phenomenon partake in that universal to a certain extent but never match it, however, that did not prevent Plato from realizing that there were objects of knowledge that could be known with certainty. Thus, as Aristotle indicates, while the Heraclitean doctrine of flux led Plato to think that the objects of sense perceptions were subject to constant change, and, as a result, could not be the proper objects of knowledge; Socrates’ search for general definitions persuaded

him that there were objects of knowledge beyond the reach of sense perceptions which were abstract, universal, changeless, and perfect.

The problem, then, for Plato was how to attain knowledge of these universals. As the multiplicity of definitions for shape might have suggested, Socrates' method of questions and answers resulted in inconsistencies and ambiguities. Plato attempted to develop his original theory of knowledge in later dialogues. However, before turning to a discussion of Plato's own method of attaining knowledge of universals or, as Plato called them, of "Forms"; we need to talk about another influence which consolidated Plato's beliefs in the existence of objective truth.

This influence is due to Parmenides (515-440 BC) whose view starts from a commonsense observation. According to Parmenides, the fact that we call something by the same name despite the fact that this thing is under constant change suggests that some essential feature of it remains constant. An example of this phenomenon would be the change a leaf goes through as the seasons change; a leaf changes from green to brown. Although the appearance of the leaf is subject to change, it is still a leaf. This indicates that there must be something that remains constant throughout the process of change. In other words, "if change were total, there would be nothing that changed, such as a leaf" (Popkin & Stroll, 2002, p. 51). In this sense, change is not a sequence of different appearances. For Parmenides that thing which is constant throughout--but different from color or shape--cannot be anything that can be reached by the senses. The knowledge of this essence is accessible to reason alone (Reinhold, 1964, p. 2). So Plato finds support from Parmenides for his conviction that the objects of knowledge are not the same as the objects of sense perception.

The Nature of the Objects of Knowledge: The Theory of Forms

“Form” and “idea” are English words that stand for the objects of knowledge (*eidê*) in Plato’s philosophy.² As Day (1994) observes, the Theory of Forms is explicitly presented for the first time in the classic dialogues of Plato: the *Phaedo*, the *Symposium*, and the *Republic* (p. 11). In the *Republic* (1991) Book VI, Plato quotes Socrates as saying “there is an absolute beauty and an absolute good, and of other things to which the term ‘many’ is applied there is an absolute; for they may be brought under a single idea, which is called the essence of each” (*Republic* 507). Again in the *Republic* Book X, Socrates says that “whenever a number of individuals have a common name, we assume them to have also a corresponding idea or form” (*Republic* 597).³ In order to make his point clear, Socrates gives an example of beds and tables. Accordingly, there are plenty of beds and tables in the world; however, there are only two Forms of them--one the Form of a bed and the other the Form of a table. Thus, we infer that a Form is an ideal that corresponds to a set of many things to which we apply the same name.

One way of making the nature of Forms clear is to contrast them and their instances. Using Plato’s favorite example the Form “beauty,” Plato would argue that this is, by definition, what beauty actually is. Therefore, it must be absolute and without any qualification, independent of time, places, and persons. By contrast, the things that are ordinarily called “beautiful” are particular instances of the Form “beauty”; they are beautiful in particular respects and contexts, and at particular times. Thus one thing will be beautiful in one respect at one time or in one place, and ugly in another respect at another time and in another place (Day, 1994, p. 12). Another

illustration is provided by Plato in the *Phaedo* (1992) regarding the Form “equality.” In this dialogue Socrates questions Simmias:

[*Socrates*⁴] And shall we proceed a step further, and affirm that there is such a thing as equality, not of wood with wood, or of stone with stone, but that, over and above this, there is equality in the abstract? Shall we affirm this?

[*Simmias*] Affirm, yes . . .

[*Socrates*] Did we not see equalities of material things, such as pieces of wood and stones, and gather from them the idea of an equality which is different from them? . . . Or look at the matter again in this way: Do not the same pieces of wood or stone appear at one time equal, and at another time unequal?

[*Simmias*] That is certain.

[*Socrates*] But are real equals ever unequal? [O]r is the idea of equality ever inequality?

[*Simmias*] That surely was never yet known, Socrates.

[*Socrates*] Then these (so-called) equals are not the same with the idea of equality?

[*Simmias*] I should say, clearly not, Socrates. (74a-c)

The same is true about all other Forms--justice, goodness, and so forth.

Another distinctive feature of the Forms is that they are free from any change.

Being perfect as they are, any change from the state in which the Forms are would have to be towards the direction of decay. Socrates illustrates this point in the *Phaedo*

(1992):

[*Socrates*] Is that idea or essence . . . liable at times to some degree of change? or are they each of them always what they are, having the same simple self-existent and unchanging forms, and not admitting of variation at all, or in any way, or at any time?

[*Cebes*] They must be always the same . . .

[*Socrates*] And what would you say of the many beautiful [things]--whether men or horses or garments or any other things which may be called equal or beautiful--are they all changing and the same always, or quite the reverse? May

they not rather be described as almost changing and hardly ever the same, either with themselves or with one another?

[*Cebes*] The latter . . . they are always in a state of change.

[*Socrates*] And these you can touch and see and perceive with the senses, but the unchanging things you can only perceive with the mind—they are invisible and are not seen?

[*Cebes*] That is very true . . . (78d-79a)

Hence, we arrive at Plato's distinction between the world of vision and that of reality.

The world of which we are aware only through our senses consists of only *instances*, not of forms. Since the world of vision is home to constant changes, the Forms must be residing in another world--in the world of reality. Therefore, the world of reality is perceptible not through the senses but only through the mind.

It should be noted that Plato does not dismiss sense perceptions as totally useless, because although they never produce knowledge and certainty, they help the mind to produce knowledge and certainty. This point will be further developed when the methods of gaining knowledge in Plato's philosophy are discussed. But, sense perceptions also provide the basis for opinion. While opinion has less importance than knowledge because it does not have the same level of truth that knowledge does, it does not correspond to ignorance either. This point is made clear by Plato in the *Republic* (1991). According to Plato, while "being" is the subject matter of knowledge, "not-being" is the subject matter of ignorance (*Republic* 478). Having a state which is darker than knowledge and lighter than ignorance, the subject matter of opinion should be somewhere between these two states; thus, the subject matter of opinion is "becoming." In this context "becoming" corresponds to the state in which the objects of sense perceptions exist. Forms are ideals, there is only one ideal for each thing, and instances

of any Form are manifold. Plato also uses “the many” to denote the objects of sense perceptions, so opinion is the knowledge of “the many.” For Plato, while knowledge is infallible, opinion is fallible (*Republic* 478-480).

Perhaps the best example of the distinction between the world of vision and that of reality--and the differing levels of truth that correspond to these two worlds--is provided by the analogy of line (*Republic* 509-511). In this analogy the two worlds of vision and reality are represented by a line that is divided into two unequal parts. These two unequal parts are divided again in the same proportion. It is supposed that the first two main divisions represent the division between the world of vision and the world of reality. Next the two subdivisions in the world of vision are examined. It is argued that the first section of the visible world consists of images such as reflections in water and in solid, smooth, and polished bodies, and the like. The other section of the world of vision is comprised of animals and everything that grows or is made. The first section of this world is merely the reflection of the second section; that is, we see the reflection of an animal in the water and we also see the animal itself. The reflection--or using Plato’s word “image”--is only a copy of the object and is not as precise as the object itself. This comparison, between the subsections of the world of vision in terms of clarity and share of truth that is possessed by each subsection, is parallel to the comparison between the world of vision and that of reality. In this sense the world of vision as a whole is only a copy of the world of reality; and, therefore, inferior to it. The objects that are contained in the world of vision resemble the objects of reality, that is Forms. As Socrates explains in the *Phaedo* (1992), all objects in the sensible world aim at a Form of which they fall short (75a-b).

Having completed the examination of the world of vision, Plato turns to explore the world of reality. This world, too, has two subdivisions. The lower of the two subdivisions in the realm of reality consists of Forms such as mathematical and geometrical truths. In the contemplation of these objects of knowledge the soul--the part of a human being that reasons--uses figures that are provided by the world of vision as images. In this subdivision, Plato (1991) says, "The enquiry can only be hypothetical, and instead of going up to a principle descends to the other end" (*Republic* 510). To illuminate this somewhat obscure point: As indicated, the objects of "knowledge" in this part are mathematical and geometrical truths. The knowledge of these truths is gained through the mind rather than through the senses. However, in the process of reasoning one can employ figures drawn from the realm of vision. One such figure can be a triangle drawn on the ground; this figure would facilitate contemplation about triangles. In contemplating triangles, one starts from certain axioms such as the total of the measurements of the interior angles of a triangle equals 180° . One does not question this axiom but draws conclusions from it; and, in this sense, the knowledge of mathematical and geometrical truths are deductively derived. The statements of these truths take the form: "if. . ., then. . ."; therefore, they are hypothetical.

Considering the higher subdivision of the world of reality, Plato (1991) says that ". . . the soul passes out of hypotheses, and goes up to a principle which [is] above hypotheses, making no use of images as in the former case, but proceeding only in and through the ideas themselves" (*Republic* 510). In this subdivision, the soul ascends upward towards a final truth that is presented as "the idea of good" by Socrates (*Republic* 505). The idea of good is the thing which imparts truth to the known and the

power of knowing to the knower (*Republic* 508). The soul is all alone in this upward journey; it cannot use images that pertain to the world of vision. To the extent that they are resemblances, they are useless in comprehending the absolute, changeless, divine being--namely the idea of good. As will be shown in the discussion of the methods of gaining knowledge, the objects of sense perceptions can only remind the soul what it already learned at some earlier time. What this discussion of the two subsections of the realm of reality suggests is that the objects of knowledge, that is Forms, also have a hierarchical ranking in terms of clarity and share of truth.

Having examined the nature of the objects of knowledge, that is of the Forms, I will now discuss the methods of gaining knowledge in Plato's philosophy. The first systematic treatment of Plato's theory of knowledge appears in the *Meno* (1994). As will be remembered, in this dialogue Socrates and Meno discuss whether virtue can be taught. The first reaction of Socrates was to say that he did not even know what virtue is; then they attempted to define virtue. In this attempt one primary rule of defining virtue was that they would not define virtue in terms of its particular instances, so Meno's presentation of the different appearances of virtue would not work. As a result, Meno becomes perplexed and asks desperately, "How are you going to search for this when you don't know at all what it is, Socrates? Which of all the things you don't know will you set up as target for your search? And even if you actually come across it, how will you know that it *is* that thing which you did not know?" (*Meno* 80d6-10).

This is the crucial question that provides the occasion for Plato to introduce his theory of knowledge. The answer, which Plato makes Socrates give, is that there is nothing which the soul did not learn at some earlier time. In this respect, the learning

process is essentially one of “recollection” (*Meno* 81c4-81d6), therefore, the theory purports knowledge as *a priori* in the sense that its source is independent of the experience of this life. As Gulley (1961) points out, the principal ideas which this theory contains are “that it is the soul which has knowledge, that the soul existed prior to incarnation, and that the source of knowledge is independent of present incarnate experience” (p. 6). In associating the soul with the intellectual activity, Plato follows the Socratic doctrine of “the caring of the soul” according to which a soul is identified with an individual’s moral or rational “self.” This doctrine, in turn, reflects in part religious ideas about the soul. The two most influential religious doctrines in shaping Plato’s understanding of the soul and its proper function are the Orphic and Pythagorean religious and philosophical teachings. According to the Orphics, in its life on earth the soul was imprisoned in the body as a punishment and through rites of initiation and purification it aims to avoid further punishments in Hades.⁵ The Orphics ultimately sought the eternal release of the soul from imprisonment in the body. “Similar religious beliefs are attributed to Pythagoras and his school, and it is probable that some kind of sacred literature akin to that of the Orphics existed within the school” (Gulley, 1961, p. 7).

Based on the religious doctrines of the Orphics and the Pythagoreans, Plato thinks that the soul can recollect its knowledge of virtue and everything else that it learned while going back and forth in its existences between states of “life” on earth and of “death” in the other world. In the course of its numerous lives, the soul learns everything. The following words of Socrates show how deeply Plato was influenced by these religious views:

[Socrates] Well, since the soul is immortal, and has been born many times and seen both what is here, and what is in Hades, and everything, there is nothing it has not learnt. So no wonder it's possible that it should recollect both virtue and other things, as after all it did know them previously. For seeing that the whole of nature is akin and the soul has learnt everything, there's nothing to prevent someone who recollects--which people call learning--just one thing, from discovering everything else, if he's courageous and doesn't give up searching; for searching and learning are just recollection." (*Meno* 81c4-81d6)

In order to prove his point that all learning is recollection, in the *Meno* Plato makes Socrates question an ignorant slave-boy who has had no instruction in geometry.

Socrates tries to lead the slave-boy to finding the correct answer to a geometrical problem through questions Socrates asks. The geometrical problem is concerned with discovering the length of the side of a square where the area of the square is known. Moreover, the problem that is chosen by Socrates does not have an exact arithmetical solution, and as a result, the slave-boy keeps giving wrong answers and gets perplexed. Yet, as Gulley (1961) indicates, the problem also lends itself to the use of sensible diagrams by which the slave-boy is made to realize at each point that he is wrong (p. 11). Thus the method which leads the slave-boy to the solution is a combination of the use of sensible diagrams and leading questions. What Socrates is doing is not teaching but guiding the slave-boy to the solution. Socrates explains, "Do you see, Meno, how I am not teaching him anything but instead asking him everything?" (*Meno* 82e3-4)

As Gulley notes, the fact that a slave-boy with no previous knowledge of geometry is able to recognize the truth of certain propositions of geometry implies that the truth was possessed by the soul before it was incarnate in human form. Furthermore, it implies that the truth is still in the soul in this life, otherwise it would be impossible to elicit it in this life (Gulley, 1961, p. 12). Finally, Plato argues that what is true for geometry is true for all branches of knowledge (*Meno* 85e1-2).

Another dialogue in which Plato spells out his doctrine of recollection in detail is the *Phaedo* (1992). This dialogue takes place just before the execution of Socrates in the prison where he is held. The general topic of discussion is whether or not the soul had existed before it became incarnate in human form, and whether or not the soul will perish after the death or continue to exist. In short, Socrates and his visitors in the prison debate if the soul is immortal or not. One argument that is employed for the purpose of proving the immortality of the soul comes from the theory of recollection. Cebes makes this point in the following way:

Your favorite doctrine, Socrates, that knowledge is simply recollection, if true, also necessarily implies a previous time in which we learned that which we now recollect. But this would be impossible unless our soul was in some place before existing in the human form; here then is another argument of the soul's immortality. (*Phaedo* 72e-73a)

In addition to what was presented in the *Meno* with regard to the theory of recollection, in the *Phaedo* (73c-75a), Plato argues that sense perceptions cause recollection in the soul. As mentioned above, although Plato rejects the objects of sense perceptions as the source of knowledge, he does not declare them to be totally useless. The reason is that sense perceptions help the soul recollect the knowledge of that which it already learned prior to its incarnation in human form. However, this knowledge gets forgotten. By definition, recollection "is most commonly a process of recovering that which has been forgotten through time and inattention" (*Phaedo* 73e). Thus, sense perceptions remind the soul of that which is forgotten by it after incarnation.

One example of this process is our being reminded of a close friend, in the absence of her/him, upon our seeing an item that is regularly used by her/him. In Socrates' words, "whenever from seeing one thing you conceived another, whether like or unlike, there must surely have been an act of recollection" (*Phaedo* 74c-d). For

Plato, when we discern the idea of sameness from seeing two pieces of wood, what we do is to recollect. This point also implies that human beings, according to Plato, do not learn inductively--inferring a general conclusion from observing the particular examples of a phenomenon. Rather, we get reminded of that conclusion by seeing the particular examples of that phenomenon. The conclusion is already in the soul.

However, it is common knowledge that not everybody gets reminded of everything in the correct way. Most of the time people entertain false ideas about phenomena such as justice, equality, piety, and such. Only a few people are able to form the correct picture of Forms in their minds. Put differently, sense perceptions do not necessarily lead us to the correct ideas. Having correct ideas about Forms requires education in which we are taught not the Forms, but the methods needed to reach them. The Forms are in our souls. They wait to be discovered, and to discover them is a painstaking process. What we perceive through our senses may remind us of something that we learned in a distant past--that is before we were born--but owing to the defective nature of objects of sense perceptions the recollection would not be perfect. The soul needs to be in charge in order to attain the true natures of Forms. Thus, we reach Plato's famous doctrine of the upward journey of the soul.

In the *Republic* (1991) Plato presents the course of this upward journey of the soul in minute detail. The upward journey of the soul is a journey into the intellectual world as the soul is turned away from the world of becoming to the world of being. As Laidlaw-Johnson (1996) relates:

Plato describes the search for knowledge as a process of a deliberate transformation of the soul from darkness of false belief to the light of knowledge. The soul has indwelling power and reason, analogous to an eye which cannot adjust from darkness to light without turning away from the light

and slowly acclimating itself. Hence, reason, the organ of knowledge, must be turned away with the entire soul until the soul is prepared to endure the contemplation of essence and being. (pp. 31-32)

The final destination in this upward journey is the attainment of the idea of good. The soul learns by degrees to endure the sight of being, and of the brightest and best of being; or in other words, of the good. As Socrates says:

But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eye fixed. (*Republic* 517)

What are the exact steps needed to be taken in this upward journey, which is full of pains and toils, to reach the idea of good? Persistence is necessary. The one who undertakes this journey needs to be expert first in arithmetic. Arithmetic conduces to the desire of reaching the idea of good insofar as it is pursued with the spirit of a philosopher, not with that of a shopkeeper (*Republic* 525-526). The way in which arithmetic serves the ultimate aim is to draw the soul upward from the world of becoming to the world of being. As a matter of fact, arithmetic is concerned not with visible and tangible objects but with objects of thought, namely numbers. However, to the extent that arithmetic is based on hypotheses it cannot help but fail to lead the soul to the idea of good. As explained earlier, for Plato the sciences that work with hypotheses do not question these hypotheses but deduce conclusions from them. Instead of going upward, they go downwards; therefore, they cannot yield absolute knowledge. Going back to the analogy of line, arithmetic resides in the lower part of the intellectual world. In Socrates' words:

The mathematical sciences which . . . have some apprehension of true being--geometry and the like--they only dream about being, but never can they behold the waking reality so long as they leave the hypotheses unexamined, and are unable to give an account of them. (*Republic* 533)

In the second and third steps, one needs to master two branches of geometry, plane and solid geometry (*Republic* 528). If geometry in general is ever going to help the soul turn itself towards the idea of good, it should not be approached with an eye to its practical uses--pitching a camp, closing and extending the lines of an army, and so forth--but with an eye to its philosophical uses.

The fourth science that needs to be studied is astronomy. Once again a philosophical attitude should be the guiding principle in studying astronomy. In discussing the merits of astronomy, Glaucon converses with Socrates about the order of the sciences. Glaucon grows sentimental and argues that astronomy must be the final science which leads the soul to the idea of good, because it compels the soul to look upwards and leads us from this world to another world. However, Socrates rebukes Glaucon by pointing out that although the subject-matter of astronomy, which is the starry heaven, is the fairest and most perfect of the visible things; it cannot yield the knowledge of the idea of good--which is not sensible but only intelligible (*Republic* 528-530).

In the fifth place is the science of harmony. The science of harmony is concerned with the motion of sounds (*Republic* 530-531). In order for these studies to help us discover the idea of good they must “reach the point of inter-communion and connection with one another, and come to be considered in their mutual affinities” (*Republic* 531). After having mastered all these sciences, one can be introduced to the most important science: to the “dialectic” which can lead the soul to the discovery of

the idea of good. As a matter of fact, all the previous sciences are a prelude to this science which is the preeminent science. Indeed, all other sciences are called by the name of science due to custom not as a result of merit (*Republic* 533). For Plato, only dialectic deserves the name science. As Laidlaw-Johnson (1996) recognizes, “dialectic is simply the process of reasoning, without the use of imagery, from assumptions to more abstract notions” (p. 30).

As the capstone of the sciences, dialectic is set over them (*Republic* 534). When presenting the analogy of line, Plato had Socrates comment that in the higher subsection of the world of reality/intellect, “the soul passes out of hypotheses, and goes up to a principle which is above hypotheses, making no use of images as in the former case, but proceeding only in and through the ideas themselves” (*Republic* 510-511). Now, Plato reveals that this process is what science, namely dialectic, is all about. As Socrates puts it:

Then dialectic, and dialectic alone, goes directly to the first principle and is the only science which does away with hypotheses in order to make her ground secure; the eye of the soul, which is literally buried in an outlandish slough, is by her gentle aid lifted upwards; and she uses as handmaids and helpers in the work of conversion, the sciences which we have been discussing. Custom terms them sciences, but they ought to have some other name, implying greater clearness than opinion and less clearness than science: and this, in our previous sketch, was called understanding. (*Republic* 533)

Thus, through dialectic the soul finally reaches the idea of good. In this final ascent, the soul does not employ the assistance of the senses at all; it uses only the Forms in its reasoning, and at last it arrives at the end of the intellectual world, specifically at the idea of good. Once the soul reaches this first principle, it can retrace its path back to where it started, which is the hypothesis of other sciences. This whole process of discovering the truth is best illustrated by the “Allegory of the Cave.”

The scene is set in a dark cave which supposedly corresponds to the world of vision in the analogy of line. The inhabitants of the cave are chained by their necks and legs so that they cannot move and can see only before them--being prevented by the chains from turning their heads around. They have been here all their lives. Above and behind the prisoners there is a fire at a distance. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised wall on which other people pass along carrying all kinds of vessels, statues, figures of animals, and whose shadows are cast on the wall in front of the prisoners. Since all the prisoners can see is these shadows, they interpret the shadows as reality.

For Plato, this is the situation that human beings experience in the world of appearance. We take the objects of sense perceptions to be reality since we are not aware of the existence of eternal truth. The shadows on the wall correspond to the images on the water or on polished bodies. The real people who are parading in the cave correspond to the visible objects in the world of appearance in the analogy of line. In the next step, Socrates describes what would happen if any of the prisoners are released from their chains. At first, the prisoner would insist that her/his previous experience--the shadows of the people who are walking along the wall carrying all sorts of things--was truer than what is seen now. But, an instructor will tell the prisoner that what was seen before was an illusion. While the freed prisoner is still under the shock of what was just learned, s/he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent out of the cave. This new environment where the prisoner is taken corresponds to the world of reality in the analogy of line. In this new environment, the prisoner first will be dazzled by the excess of light coming from the sun. S/he will not be able to look up to the sun

but will set her/his eyes on the shadows and reflections of the objects in the water instead. As her/his eyes become accustomed to the light, the objects themselves will become visible. Finally, the prisoner will be able to turn her/his head towards the sun. When looking directly at the sun in the sky and not at its reflection in the water, s/he will then understand that “this is he who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things” (*Republic* 516).

The shadows and reflections of the objects in water in this new environment correspond to the lower subsection of the world of reality/intellect, and the objects themselves and the sun correspond to the forms and the idea of good in the upper subsection of the world of reality in the analogy of line. Thus, for Plato, there are four levels of apprehension: science, understanding, belief, and the perceptions of shadows. Plato presents this in the following way:

At any rate, we are satisfied, as before, to have four divisions; two for intellect and two for opinion, and to call the first division science, the second understanding, the third belief, and the fourth the perceptions of shadows, opinion being concerned with becoming, and intellect with being . . . (*Republic* 533-534)

Conclusion

In light of this examination of Plato’s theory of knowledge, it is concluded that Plato was a dogmatist. He believed in the existence of knowledge with certainty. According to Plato, the knowledge of the idea of good could be attained by philosophers in above-presented way. Plato believes that this idea can be attained through dialectic. Once it is attained, it is possible to transfer this knowledge to the

world of vision as much as this is humanly possible. Thus it can be safely stated that Plato does not have anything to contribute to the justification of toleration on the basis of skepticism. Now, in order to see whether Aristotle has anything to contribute to the development of the concept of toleration on the basis of skepticism, I will turn to examine his theory of knowledge.

¹ The words “dogmatism” and “dogmatist” in contemporary English carry a pejorative tone. They hint at an irrational rigidity of opinion, a refusal to look impartially at the evidence (see Julia Annas, Jonathan Barnes, 1985, p. 1). In the sense that I am using them here, they are devoid of that pejorative tone; and they merely refer to an epistemological position, and to a person who subscribes to that epistemological position respectively.

² Of the two words, the “Forms” is the one that is more commonly used. Therefore, from here forward I will use “Forms” to refer to the objects of knowledge in Plato’s philosophy.

³ Plato means “particular instances” by the phrase “a number of individuals” here.

⁴ The names are not in the original translation.

⁵ Hades is the god of the dead. Hades was the son of Cronus and Rhea. With his brothers Zeus and Poseidon he shared the empire of the Universe after the defeat of the Titans: Zeus gained the sky, Poseidon the sea, and Hades the Underworld. The Greek Underworld, called ‘the House of Hades’ by Homer, came to be called simply ‘Hades’, *The Penguin Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, Ed. by Stephen Kershaw London: Penguin Books, 1991, 167.

CHAPTER 2: THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE ANCIENTS:

EPISTEMOLOGY OF ARISTOTLE

At the beginning of the discussion of Plato's theory of knowledge it was said that for Plato knowledge and certainty exist and one who knows something knows that thing with certainty. Generally, this is also the case for Aristotle. That is, Aristotle, too, believes in the existence of permanent things and they can be known by human beings. However, I should point out that this agreement between Plato and Aristotle is not an absolute one. The reason for this qualified agreement between Plato and Aristotle is that, unlike Plato, Aristotle thinks that it is impossible to impose a standard of certainty on material that does not permit it. Some of the materials that would not allow discourse with certainty are, for the most part, deliberative and judicial proceedings; in these fields rhetoric, not philosophy, is more important. Depending on probability rather than on certainty, rhetoric tries to address the questions that arise in these realms of human life. Thus, while Aristotle accepts the probability and as a result values rhetoric, Plato sees probability as sham truth and turns his back on rhetoric (Remer, 1996, pp. 23-24).

Going back to the point of agreement, Aristotle, following Plato, also rejects the skeptical claim that there is nothing real that can be known with certainty. For Aristotle reality exists. However, Aristotle differs from Plato with regard to the idea as to where this reality is located. For Plato what we perceive through our senses in this world cannot be real, due to the fact they are subject to constant change. Plato called the

world of which we are aware through our senses the “world of appearance” or the “world of sight.” Reality, having the feature of permanence, should be located somewhere beyond this world of change. Thus Plato, according to Aristotle, assumed a separate existence of the Forms that cast the shadows creating the things that we perceive through our senses.

As Aristotle put it in the *Metaphysics*, Plato thought the Forms to be the causes of things that are around us. The concept that Plato used to describe this mechanism was “participation.” Things that are beautiful are beautiful because they participate in the Form of “beauty.” Aristotle finds this explanation problematic. Plato’s theory of Forms, according to Aristotle, suffers from the problem of the “third man” (*Metaphysics* 990b). In this argument, Aristotle exploits a feature of the language in which Plato introduces the theory of Forms: “Forms are characteristically presented by *predicates*, such as ‘large’ and ‘beautiful’, but according to the theory these are names of *objects*. The theory seems to embody a confusion between things and the properties of things” (Evans, 1987, p. 9). But there is an even more difficult issue. As Russell points out, “participation” is itself a Form. Then the question arises: “How can a Form get connected on the one side to the original Form and on the other to the particular?” It seems that two more Forms are needed, and in this way we are led to a vicious infinite regression. Every time we attempt to solve the problem by introducing a new Form, two further gaps appear (Russell, 1959, p. 62).

In light of these weaknesses in the theory of Forms, Aristotle rejects the idea of a separate realm of existence transcending the temporal reality of sense experience (Portis, 1994, p. 35). According to Aristotle, we must not posit a separate world of

universals or Forms; and we must not suppose that we can explain the world, which is subject to constant change, by the operation of Forms only (Ross, 1949, p. 158).

However, that does not mean that Aristotle rejects the idea of Forms as such. Indeed, Russell thinks that despite the fact that Aristotle believes his theory of existence to be radically different from Plato's transcendent theory of Forms, in the final analysis Aristotle does not really succeed in breaking away from it (Russell, 1959, 83). To see whether Russell's reflects the truth about Aristotle's theory of existence, we need to look to Aristotle.

Like Plato, Aristotle believes that the world is dynamic, changing, and full of movement and flux. However, unlike Plato, this observation does not lead him to search for real existence, which is, for Plato, devoid of change, in a separate realm beyond the world that can be perceived through the senses. Using Plato's analogy, Aristotle rejects the division between the world of appearance/sight and that of reality. These two worlds of Plato are one and the same for Aristotle; what is perceived through our sense organs is real.

However, one should not be led to believe that for Aristotle reality is limited to what is material. In the *Metaphysics* Book XII, Aristotle indicates that there are things which are immaterial but still perfectly real (1069a30-1069b2). First is God, the unmoved mover of the universe; second are the intelligences which, moved by God, move the planetary spheres. Third there is the active element of human reason which, upon the death of an individual, is capable of existing apart from the body (Ross, 1949, p. 159). The word that Aristotle uses to denote "being" is "substance". Aristotle says:

There are three sorts of substance--one that is sensible (of which one subdivision is eternal and another is perishable; the latter is recognized by all men, and

includes e.g. plants and animals), of which we must grasp the elements, whether one or many; and another that is immovable. (*Metaphysics* 1069a30-1069b2)

Of these three substances, the sensible substances--which reside in the celestial and material realms--consist of two components: matter and form. Ross (1949) observes:

The world presents itself to Aristotle as a hierarchy the highest members of which are immaterial substances, while all other actually existing things are complexes in which form is embedded, so to say, in more or fewer layers of matter, and in which matter is moulded into more and more complex forms. (p. 167)

Matter can be thought to be the stuff that goes into the building of a house, such as bricks, cement, and iron. The form or “essence”¹ then would be the plan drawn by the architect. According to Aristotle, it is form, when imposed on matter, that makes matter what it is. As Russell (1959) puts it “the form confers characteristics upon the matter, [and] turns it, in fact, into a substance” (p. 82).

At this point I should draw attention to a potentially confusing point. Aristotle uses the word “substance” in two senses, that of a “concrete thing” and also that of the “natural essence” of something. In the former sense, substance refers to every individual thing that is perceived through our senses: *this* book, *this* table, Socrates. In the latter sense, substance refers to what makes any individual thing what it is, namely its essence or form. Thus in one sense, all three words--substance, essence, and form--refer to the same thing. As Russell presents it, this thing is what underlies the phenomena around us. Likewise, substance is a literal translation from Aristotle’s Greek and simply means the “underlying thing” (1959, p. 82). Thanks to the presence of essence or form in individual things, I am able to understand that the thing on which I sit is *a* chair, on which I write is *a* table; these are the immutable universals whereby

individual things become what they are. To the extent that they are universals they are grasped by reason alone.

In contrast to the immutable forms, matter is subject to change. Matter provides the individuating features to a substance in the first sense. While the differences of matter make this table different from that table, the universal form--essence or substance in the secondary sense--makes both of them tables. Thus, unlike Plato's theory of Forms in which universals are detached from the objects of sense perception and placed in the world of reality, Aristotle's theory of being does not attribute a separate realm of existence to universals, that is Forms. Universals are embedded in particulars. They are uncovered by human reason; however, in this process of discovery the mind is not alone. Since for Aristotle the forms are in the particular substances, it is in sense perceptions where the journey begins. In this respect, Aristotle is right to think that his theory of existence is different from Plato's theory of Forms.

However, to the extent that Aristotle's forms are also universal, abstract entities that are devoid of change, they come very close to Plato's Forms. For this reason, it would not be a mistake to think Aristotle's theory to be a refined version of Plato's. Perhaps the real strength of Aristotle's theory of matter and form over Plato's theory of Forms lies in its ability to let Aristotle contemplate about the changes that we witness in nature. As can be remembered, Plato believed that the subject matter of knowledge must be what is real, namely things that are immutable. Since the things that surround us in nature are all subject to change, Plato dismissed the study of motion that is found in nature--meaning change--from his quest for knowledge. Thus, he neglected the study of physics.

On the other hand, Aristotle's theory of matter and form allowed him to make physics one of his primary fields of study. However, before presenting an analysis of change in Aristotle's philosophy, I must point out that despite the fact that Aristotle does not dismiss change but rather wants to explain it, he does not subscribe to the Heraclitean view of physical world according to which all is flux. For Aristotle change has an order, a point that will be made clearer when the different causes of change in Aristotle's philosophy are presented. At this point it is important to understand that for Aristotle the concept of change is efficient in the realm of ordinary experience and that change does not encompass the whole realm of existence. As discussed previously, the substances that are devoid of matter--such as God and the human mind--are also devoid of change. As Edel puts it, "in Aristotle's specific theory of what is changing and what is unchanging in the totality of things, the eternalist strain is very strong" (1982, p. 56).

Aristotle begins his study of change by enumerating four kinds of change that matter goes through: change in quantity, that is growth or diminution; change in quality, that is alteration; change in place, that is locomotion; and finally change in substance, that is generation or corruption (Edel, 1982, p. 57). In the next step Aristotle presents the causes of change. As Bolotin (1998) observes:

[I]n trying to explain anything, or to answer the question Why? about it, there are four ways, according to Aristotle, that we can respond. These four kinds of responses, these four ways of saying "because," are each a kind of cause of the matter in question. (p. 34)

These four causes are a constituent or material cause, a formal cause, an efficient cause and a final cause.

The material cause is that out of which a thing is composed, such as a statue is made of bronze. This is the stuff that goes into making any substance. Nothing comes

into being out of nothing; there must be something existent that precedes the generation of another thing. The formal cause is the “what-it-is,” the way in which the matter is organized. An account of this cause would tell us its *essence* (Edel, 1982, p. 61). As Bolotin (1998) states:

[B]y the “form” of a being we do not mean its visible shape alone, but rather its whole character--a character that we may not be able to articulate clearly at first, but that we must already understand to a considerable degree simply to identify the being as what it is. . .we call a statue a statue because of its form, by which we do not mean its shape alone but, more importantly, its being the sculpted image of some other being, such as a man or a god. Similarly, we call a human being a human being because of its form, by which we mean above all that we are animals with the power of reason. (p. 34)

The efficient cause is the cause of motion, in other words, the producer of change (Reinhold, 1964, p. 58). As Russell (1959) points out, that would be “what in modern terminology is called simply the cause. Thus, a stone falls from a step, because someone or something gives it a push. In physical science, this is the only kind of causality recognized” (p. 88). Going back to the example of the statue, the sculptor who is the creator of the statue is the efficient cause of it, according to Aristotle. The final cause is the fourth kind of change and it is the end or purpose for which something comes into being, or for which it exists. Health, for instance, would be the final cause of surgery. Or to return to the example of the statue, honoring the gods or decorating a temple might be the end or purpose for which the sculptor created the statue (Bolotin, 1998, p. 35). A point that must be stressed in the presentation of this portion of Aristotle’s philosophy is the doctrine that all action consists in bringing into actuality what was somehow potentially contained in the material on which the agent works. This is true not merely in the world of living things in which, for example, the oak is potentially contained in the acorn; but also in the world of inanimate things in which

heat, for example, is potentially contained in water and needs but the agency of fire to be brought out into actuality.²

Russell (1959) comments that the observation that our natural surroundings appear to display some sort of order might be seen as the main reason in Aristotle's developing such a teleological view of change. Russell says that "Causal necessity, which is connected with efficient causality, seems to be a blind force whose operation does not account for the order in nature" (p. 89). For Aristotle, nature works like an artist or craftsman whose movement toward an end is evident in his actions. In *The Politics* (1256b20-21), Aristotle states that nature makes nothing incomplete or in vain, that nature has reason is obvious from the goodness and beauty of the things that are contained in it. In *The Metaphysics* (1941), Aristotle maintains:

For it is not likely either that fire or earth or any such element should be the reason why things manifest goodness and beauty both in their being and in their coming to be. . .nor again could it be right to entrust so great a matter to spontaneity and chance. When one man said, then, that reason was present--as in animals, so throughout in nature--as the cause of order and of all arrangement, he seemed like a sober man in contrast with the random talk of his predecessors. We know that Anaxagoras certainly adopted these views, but Hermodotus of Clazomenae is credited with expressing them earlier. (984b11-19)

Now, it is time to present Aristotle's specific theory of knowledge. Perhaps the most important point that needs to be kept in mind in any discussion of Aristotle's epistemology is the fact that he regards the universal as being *in* the particular. As Edel (1982) puts it, for Aristotle, "to come to know is not a process of getting away from the particulars to the home of universals, as it was for Plato" (p. 194). Because of his belief that the universals are embedded in the individual and particular phenomena, Aristotle's starting point for his scientific inquiry is sense perception.

In order to grasp the universal one first needs to grasp the particular. We begin to get familiar with the particular thing that we want to understand through our senses. Our senses enable us to be aware of the individuating features of the objects around us. In the opening sentences of *The Metaphysics* (1941), Book I, Aristotle emphasizes the significance of sensation in the process of attaining knowledge thus: “All men by nature desire to know. An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses; for even apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves; and above all others [is] the sense of sight” (980a22-24).

Aristotle thinks that by nature all animals are born with the faculty of sensation, and from sensation memory is produced in some of them. This point is presented in *Posterior Analytics* (1964):

A faculty all animals have--an innate faculty of discernment, [is] viz., perception. And in some animals perceptions persist. There is no knowledge, outside the moment of perception, for animals in which perceptions do not persist, or about things in respect of which they do not persist; but in some animals, when they have perceived, there is a power of retention. And from many such actions of retention there arises in some animals the forming of a conception. Thus from perception arises memory. (99b15-100b17)

And, those with memory are adept at learning because they can remember. However, some of those with memory do not have, for instance, a sense of hearing--such as bees—and as a result they cannot be taught. Aristotle then presents the emergence of experience by stating that “from memory experience is produced in men; for. . .several memories of the same thing produce, finally, the capacity for a single experience” (*Metaphysics* 980b27-981a7).

In *The Metaphysics* (1941), Aristotle argues that “we do not regard any of the senses as Wisdom; yet surely these give the most authoritative knowledge of particulars. But they do not tell us the ‘why’ of anything--e.g. why fire is hot; they only

say *that* it is hot” (981b10-13). In *The Posterior Analytics* (1964) he states that “it is impossible to have scientific knowledge by perception. . .for while perception is of the particular, scientific knowledge involves recognition of the universal” (87b28-88a17). Sense perceptions can only provide the mind with the raw material from which it can produce knowledge. Sense perceptions can naturally lead to experience but experience is not knowledge. Aristotle thinks that experience is like knowledge but still inferior to it because “we think we know a fact when we know its cause” (*Posterior Analytics* 94a20). However, experience does not tell us what the causes are. When we know the causes of things, in other words when we have knowledge, then we have art or science. Aristotle believes that

from experience--i.e. when the whole universal (the one distinct from the many and identical in all its instances) has come to rest in the soul--there comes the beginning of art and science--of art if the concern is with becoming, of science if with what is. (*Posterior Analytics* 99b15 -100b17)

Aristotle distinguishes the difference between experience, which is based on sense perception and limited by it, and art, which starts from sense perception but goes beyond it, by giving an example from the field of medicine. According to Aristotle, to say that Callias suffered from a certain disease and a certain medicine made him well, and then to say that Socrates suffered from the same disease and the same medicine made him well is a matter of experience. Men of experience know that a thing is so. However, to say that that same medicine will cure all people marked off in one class because they have the same characteristics is a matter of art. Thus, men of art and science know the “why” and the cause, and as Aristotle puts it, “art arises when from many notions gained by experience one universal judgment about a class of objects is

produced” (*Metaphysics* 981a5-7). While experience is about the individuals – particulars--, art and science are about the universals.

The leap forward from experience to art or science corresponds to ‘inductive reasoning.’ As Edel (1982) points out “intuitive induction is a process in which the mind goes beyond sense perception and memory to stabilize and strengthen the universal in its entirety” (p. 196). Through induction one is able to grasp the essence of the particular things that are perceived through the senses. Through abstraction and generalization the mind goes beyond the individuating features of the objects that are observed and attains the knowledge of their nature--their form. Thus, induction provides one with the knowledge of the universals.

Scientific knowledge proceeds to the next stage of the attainment of knowledge: “the deductive reasoning.” Aristotle also calls this sort of reasoning “demonstration” or “syllogism.” In the process of demonstration, starting from one or more propositions called premises one deduces other propositions that follow from, or are consequences of, these premises. Inductive reasoning, as indicated above, provides these premises. To the extent that inductive reasoning involves intuition, it leaves these premises unproven. However, as Russell (1959, 85) shows, Aristotle thinks that “science must begin with statements that stand in no need of demonstration” (p. 85). In Aristotle’s words these premises, “must be primary, indemonstrable premises, because otherwise we should not have knowledge unless we had proof of them; for to know (otherwise then *per accidens*) that which is provable is to have proof of it” (*Posterior Analytics* 71b9-72b4). In the next chapter of the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle states that “(a) not all knowledge is demonstrative, that of immediate premises not being so; and (b) that

there is not only scientific knowledge but also a starting-point of it, whereby we know the limiting propositions” (72b5-73a20). In *The Nicomachean Ethics* (1976), Aristotle relates that “induction introduces us to first principles and [then to] universals, while deduction starts from universals. Therefore there are principles from which deduction starts which are not deducible; therefore they are reached by induction” (1139b25-30).

The basic building blocks of syllogism--propositions--are divided on the basis of whether they are universals or individuals. In the former case, the proposition is called a universal proposition, and an example of this would be “all men are mortal.” Alternatively, the statement may encompass only part of the universal as in “some men are wise,” and in this case what we have is a particular proposition. The individual proposition is exemplified by a proposition such as “Socrates is a man.” When we combine propositions in an argument the individual must be treated as a universal proposition. Propositions can be either affirmative or negative depending on whether something is asserted or denied about a subject.

A syllogism is an argument that combines two subject and predicate premises that have one term in common, the “middle term.” This middle term disappears in the conclusion. An example of a syllogism is: Socrates is a man, all men are mortal, therefore Socrates is also mortal. In this case the conclusion does follow from the premises, so the argument is valid. As Russell (1959) indicates, “indeed, it is possible to derive true conclusions from false premises. The important thing however is that if the premises are true, then any conclusion validly derived is also true” (p. 84).

This whole process of inductive and deductive reasoning that starts at the objects of sense perception is best summarized by Aristotle in the *Posterior Analytics*(1964):

If a man lacks any of the senses, he must lack some knowledge which he cannot obtain, since we learn either by induction or by demonstration. Demonstration is from universals, induction from particulars; but it is impossible to grasp universals except through induction, and it is impossible to be led on inductively to the universals if one has not perception. For it is perception that grasps individual facts; we cannot obtain scientific knowledge of them from universal facts without previous induction, nor learn them by induction without perception. (81a38-b9)

According to Aristotle there are three types of science that can be pursued through such a theory of knowledge, and they are classified according to the main purpose achieved by each. The three types of science are theoretical science, practical science, and productive science. By theoretical science Aristotle means metaphysics, physics, and mathematics. Generally, the subject matter of theoretical sciences is what cannot be otherwise. Stated differently, the subject matter of these sciences are external to human beings and are exempt from the willful control of humankind; they follow their own nature and their natures are fixed. Therefore, the subject matter of theoretical sciences exhibit regularities and they can be universally formulated. On the other hand, the subject matter of practical and productive sciences is what can be otherwise, and they are internal to human beings. They are concerned with the products of willful human behavior. Practical science is comprised of ethics and politics, and, in this sense, is about doing or acting (*praxis*). Productive science is about making (*poiesis*) and includes poetry and other fine arts.

As stated at the beginning of this presentation of Aristotle's theory of knowledge, he does not believe that all sciences have the same level of certainty. As Barnes (1976) states, "Aristotle emphasizes that the sciences cannot all aspire to an equal degree of 'precision' or *akribeia*: different subject matters make different demands, and the subject matter of ethics in particular allows only a modest amount of

precision” (p.20). The reason why ethics lacks precise judgments is that its subject matter--human behavior--lacks regularity. The judgments of ethics can only hold “for the most part.” While a mathematician can advance theorems that have the nature of “every F is G”; moralists are compelled to make generalizations in the form of “most Fs are Gs” or “as a rule, Fs are Gs.” Thus, for Aristotle, “morals cannot by any means be reduced to a set of universal principles; any principle that may be formulated is liable to exception, any universal judgment (strictly construed) is false” (Barnes, 1976, p. 21). Salkever (1990) agrees, and observes that for Aristotle practical philosophy necessarily lacks precision and it “should be treated not as a source of definite answers to definite questions about how to act but rather as a preparation for informed deliberation in cases where no such answers are available” (p. 4).

Conclusion

It is clear from the examination of Aristotle’s epistemology that he does not agree on many points with his teacher. One of the most important points of disagreement between the two is that Aristotle does not believe in the separate existence of the objects of knowledge. Rather, he thinks that what we perceive through our senses is real. Thus he is able to study the topics such as physics and biology that Plato rejects as illusory. Aristotle believes that physical objects contain matter and form. While the matter gives the individuating features to an object, the form gives the essence of a thing that is universal. In grasping the essence of physical things the sense perception is the departure point.³ Through the method of induction, Aristotle derives the first principles. And from the first principles he deduces knowledge about particular

phenomena. In this sense, Aristotle is also a dogmatist because he thinks that knowledge exists and it can be attained with certainty.

Yet as indicated above Aristotle does not claim that knowledge can be attained with certainty in each field of life. He excludes ethics and politics from the fields of thought in which certainty can be expected. As indicated earlier, Aristotle thinks that it is impossible to impose a standard of certainty on material that does not permit it; human behavior is one such material in that it lacks regularity. Therefore, the judgments of ethics can only hold “for the most part.” In this regard, to call Aristotle a dogmatist in all fields of thought would not be correct.

Yet, Aristotle is not a skeptic either. He certainly has a moral view that he believes to be true, however, he does not insist on the absolute rightness of his views as Plato does. In this sense, he stands in a place between the mitigated skeptics--who claim that knowledge can exist only in probabilistic terms--and the dogmatists--who argue that knowledge and certainty exist. Thus, strictly speaking and to the extent that Aristotle is not a skeptic, we can think that he does not have anything to contribute to the justification of toleration on the basis of skepticism either. However, given that he does not insist on the universal validity of his moral principles and that his moral judgments hold only “for the most part,” one can find a basis for the toleration of differences in Aristotle’s epistemology.

¹ As both Reinhold and Ross (Ross 1949, 166-167; Reinhold 1964, 57) indicate, Aristotle uses the words “essence” and “form” interchangeably.

² *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. I.

³ Yet, I should also indicate that Aristotle believed in the existence of substances that are devoid of matter, such as God and mind. They were accessible to reason alone.

CHAPTER 3: A DEFENSE OF TOLERATION ON THE BASIS OF SKEPTICISM

Ancient Skepticism

There are two different traditions of skepticism that flowered in ancient Greece: Academic skepticism and Pyrrhonism. Although Pyrrho of Elis (360-270 BC), from whom Pyrrhonians get their name, lived before the emergence of Academic skepticism, it was the Academic skeptics who formulated skepticism as a philosophical methodology for the first time in the third century BC. Beginning with Arcesilaus (315-240 BC) the Academics embraced as their motto the Socratic remark: "All that I know is that I know nothing." For two hundred years more, the Academy remained skeptical. Another notable leader of the Academy after Arcesilaus in this new era was Carneades (214/13-129/8 BC) (Annas and Barnes, 1985, p. 14). Although the writings of both Arcesilaus and Carneades have been lost, as Popkin (1967) indicates, later writings by Cicero, Sextus Empiricus, and Diogenes Laertius provide a fairly good idea of the kinds of arguments that they put forward (p. 14). Because of these writings, we know that Arcesilaus attacked the Stoics, and Carneades severely criticized both the Stoics and the Epicureans.

As dogmatists, the Stoics claimed that there are certain sense perceptions that could not possibly be false either *per se* or as signs of the true nature of reality. Arcesilaus and Carneades responded to this claim by pointing out that there are no secure criterion that can be established for the purpose of differentiating such kinds of

perceptions from others. As Popkin (1967) puts it, “Carneades insisted that there were no intrinsic marks or signs which these so-called real perceptions possessed and which illusory ones did not” (p. 450). As a result the Academics concluded that we must suspend judgment about whether reliable representations of objects actually exist. According to the Academics this situation confirms the fact that no knowledge claims, about what is happening beyond our immediate experience, are certain. Depending on the information that is gathered through the senses, we cannot possess knowledge but merely reasonable belief. All information that can be gained must be described in probabilistic terms. So, Academic skepticism formed a kind of mitigated skepticism (Popkin, 1967, p. 450).

According to Annas and Barnes, the Academics were not positive skeptics--believing that nothing should be asserted. As Annas and Barnes (1985) describe, the positive skeptics

were essentially critics. . . .Typically, they would take hold of one of the doctrines of a dogmatist philosopher (the Stoics were their usual target) and attempt to reduce it to absurdity. “If you Stoics are right,” they would argue, “and such-and-such is the case, then we cannot know the truth about so-and-so. You Stoics are committed by your own principles to skepticism.” (p. 14)

Using the Socratic remark, “all that I know is that I know nothing” as his departure point, Arcesilaus made the fundamental assertion: “Nothing can be known.” This assertion could not escape criticism. One such criticism is attributed to the Stoic, Antipater, who pointed out that to claim that knowledge is unattainable is to know something and therefore Arcesilaus’ position is self-refuting. In defense of Arcesilaus, Carneades argued that Arcesilaus’ remark should not be taken as an explicit affirmation but rather as a presupposition. The presupposition encompasses the idea that knowledge was impossible. Carneades claimed that a skeptic does not need to prove

this point but rather to defend it in the face of the dogmatic claims to the contrary, by showing that such claims are destined to fail (Popkin & Stroll, 2002, p. 54).

Our knowledge about Pyrrhonism comes from the writings of three ancient thinkers: Sextus Empiricus, Cicero, and Diogenes Laertius. The last great Pyrrhonist from antiquity was Sextus Empiricus. We do not know much about the life of Sextus. He was a doctor and may have lived for a while in Alexandria, Egypt, and it seems most probable that he produced his works in the middle of the second century AD. Fortunately, his works are not as obscure as his life, for although not all of his writings survived those that did provide a good idea of ancient skepticism. The *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*--a general introduction to Pyrrhonism in three books--and a group of eleven books known collectively as *Against the Mathematicians* are two works by Sextus that have survived. These two works, Cicero's *Academica*, and Diogenes Laertius' *Life of Pyrrho* form the main source of the ideas of ancient Greek skepticism (Annas and Barnes 1985, p. 16; Schmitt, 1983, p. 226).

In contradistinction to the Academic skeptics, Pyrrhonian skeptics present a positive skepticism, thinking that nothing should be asserted. As a skeptical tradition Pyrrhonism emerged under the leadership of Aenesidemus in the first century BC during the Roman period. Aenesidemus, who probably taught in Alexandria, is reported to have attacked both the Academic skeptics and the dogmatic philosophers. He criticized the Academics because they were sure that what is probable and what is improbable can be distinguished from one another; and he criticized the dogmatic philosophers because they claimed to have discovered the truth (Popkin, 1967, p. 450). As noted earlier, Pyrrhonians claim to be the followers of Pyrrho of Elis. None of his

works survived and virtually all that is known about him comes from the writings of later skeptics, mainly from Diogenes Laertius and Sextus Empiricus. In Book I in *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (1976), Sextus Empiricus states that “Pyrrho appears to us to have applied himself to skepticism more thoroughly and more conspicuously than his predecessors” (Book I, 7). Pyrrho accepted an extreme skepticism and lived by it. He rejected all assertions and beliefs; and, as a result, he led a tranquil life. Indeed, one of the basic principles of Pyrrhonism--the life of *ataraxia*--is consistent with this attitude. The word *ataraxia* is commonly translated into English as “unperturbedness.”

The goal for the Pyrrhonians was to attain unperturbedness through *epoche*, which is suspension of judgment. Sextus Empiricus summarizes this point in *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (Book I, 8)

Skepticism is an ability, or mental attitude, which opposes appearances to judgments in any way whatsoever, with the result that, owing to the equipollence of the objects and reasons thus opposed, we are brought firstly to a state of mental suspense and next to a state of “unperturbedness” or quietude.

The Pyrrhonian view that tranquility will be found in the suspension of judgment stands in explicit opposition to the widespread Greek view that there is a positive connection between knowledge and fulfillment. According to this latter view, happiness--or *eudemonia* that is the goal of life--comes from virtuous activity, and virtuous activity necessitates the knowledge of what virtue is. Therefore, a philosophical life that is a life of inquiry is indispensable for the attainment of happiness. However, the Pyrrhonians argue that our troubles are caused exactly by that which is supposed to bring about happiness--the quest for knowledge (Hookway, 1990, p. 5). Making human happiness dependent on knowledge leads to failure in the attainment of happiness

because it is, in fact, impossible to gain knowledge. So, human beings are in constant anxiety because of the unrealistic expectation of acquiring the truth.

Faced with the appearance that all attempts to answer questions with certainty remain elusive, the Pyrrhonians turned away from the project of inquiry and achieved tranquility (Annas and Barnes, 1985, p. 17; Hookway, 1990, p. 5). Abandoning the pursuit of the truth is consistent with a kind of passive acceptance of the world as it is. Popkin and Stroll's (2002, 55) notes, "one lives in this world, acts in it, takes it as it is without reflection" (p. 55). Thus, *epoche*--suspension of judgment--leads one to conform to the prevailing customs and standards of one's society, and to base one's life on sensory appearances and bodily needs and desires (Hookway, 1990, p. 6). So it is not misleading to say that the Pyrrhonian way of life is essentially conservative in its consequences. A Pyrrhonian is committed to the opposite of the Socratic belief that the unexamined life is not worth living. Indeed, *ataraxia* is the unexamined life (Popkin & Stroll, 2002, p. 56).

One can wonder whether it is possible to remain non-assertive while posing a fatal challenge to the dogmatist's claims to knowledge, and if it is possible that, without affirming or claiming anything, the Pyrrhonian position can have argumentative force. The answers lie in the fact that the Pyrrhonist employs an implicit rhetorical strategy that places the dogmatist in a defensive position. Rather than using arguments with the purpose of showing that knowledge is impossible as the Academic skeptics do, the Pyrrhonians are satisfied with questioning the knowledge claims of the dogmatist (Popkin & Stroll, 2002, p. 56). For example, a dogmatist claims to know that it is raining now. The Pyrrhonist does not need to deny that claim; instead, he can ask,

“How can you be sure that it is raining?” The dogmatist may reply, “Because I see the rain drops and hear the sounds that they make on the ground.” To this response, the Pyrrhonist may proceed by saying, “It might be the case that you could have all your present sense perceptions but still be mistaken.” Indeed, it is perfectly possible that the dogmatist might be hallucinating when s/he thinks it is raining, or water may be dripping from the roof causing her/him to think that it is raining. Thus, as long as there is the possibility of being wrong, the dogmatist cannot have knowledge. In this way, and without any explicit assertions, the Pyrrhonist can make her/his dogmatist opponent accept that the evidence that s/he has does not warrant the conclusion that s/he has drawn (Popkin & Stroll, 2002, p. 56-57).

The Revival of Skepticism in the Early Modern Period

The last time ancient Greek skepticism exerted serious influence, before its rediscovery in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was when St. Augustine (354-430 AD) attacked Academic skepticism in his *Contra Academicos*. In this work, the famous theologian presented a powerful argument against the skeptical position that was so brilliantly stated in Cicero’s *Academica*. From the appearance of St. Augustine’s *Contra Academicos* to the Renaissance, ancient skepticism was practically absent from the circles of the learned. As Schmitt (1983) observes, “the writings of Sextus Empiricus, by far the most important and most detailed of the three, exerted no visible influence during the Middle Ages” (p. 227).¹ However, when rediscovered it was Sextus Empiricus’ works that exerted the greatest influence on the emergence of modern skeptical philosophy (Schmitt, 1983, p. 233).

However, outside the Christian world among the Muslim and Jewish theologians, who had more direct access to ancient skeptical and other writings, we find more indications of skepticism. Especially Al-Ghazali (1059-1111 AD) and Yehuda Halevi (ca. 1085-ca.1147 AD) who argue against the possibility of explaining the origin and nature of the universe through rational, scientific and theological reasoning. Their arguments have many parallels to the arguments of the Academic and Pyrrhonian skeptics. Particularly important in their writings were *Tahafut al-falasifah* (*Destruction of the Philosophers*) and *Kuzari* respectively (Schmitt, 1983, p. 228). However, the Muslim and Jewish theologians used skepticism completely differently from the classical writers. Popkin (1967) states, “Al-Ghazali and Yehuda Halevi were concerned to bring men to a mystical and nonrational appreciation of religious truths by making them see the intellectual bankruptcy of the rational theologies then current” (p. 451); in the philosophical lexicon this position is known as fideism. As Schmitt (1983) notes, “fideism is the position that faith alone provides the way to truth and that philosophical activity is of no avail” (p. 229).

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the writings of Sextus Empiricus, Cicero and Diogenes Laertius introduced and disseminated in the Christian West. During the following century “skepticism emerged as an important philosophical movement, which had a significant impact not merely on philosophical thought, but on theology, science, and literature as well” (Schmitt, 1983, p. 228). However, since the main goal here is to present the way in which skepticism was employed in the early modern period to justify the notion of toleration, the analysis of modern skepticism will not be extended beyond the point when it was utilized for this purpose in the sixteenth

century. The skeptical crisis that was created by the religious confrontation involved in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation was, perhaps, the most important reason that the ideas of ancient skepticism disseminated so quickly in the sixteenth century (Popkin, 1993, p. 15). Other factors that contributed to the skeptical crisis of the sixteenth century included the new astronomical theories and geographical discoveries. The Judeo-Christian conception of the universe and humankind's place in it was shaken by Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), and Galileo (1564-1642) in the realm of astronomy; and by Vasco da Gama, Christopher Columbus, Sir Francis Drake and others in the realm of geography (Popkin & Stroll, 2002, p. 59). However, at this point, I should emphasize that opposite to the contemporary belief--that skepticism undermines religious faith--skepticism, as it developed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, did not generally have anti-religious connotations. As Schmitt (1983) puts it, "in fact, it was more often used in behalf of religion. In later times--in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries--skepticism came to have an increasingly antireligious tinge, but such was not the case for earlier period" (p. 229).

One example of fideism based on skepticism is found in the debate between Erasmus and Martin Luther that took place between 1524-1525 about freedom of the will. As Popkin reports, Erasmus contended that the issues involved in this matter were too complicated for him to make up his mind. Therefore, as a skeptic, he would rather suspend judgment and follow the decision of the Church on this matter. Luther, on the other hand, claimed that the issue was of such a high level of importance that it could not be solved through skeptical argument. Popkin (1993) reports that Martin Luther

believed that “one had to reach a decision, and Judgment Day was coming. [Luther] warned Erasmus, ‘The Holy Ghost is not a skeptic.’ ” (p. 17).

Erasmus, Gian Francesco Pico della Mirandola--at the outset of the sixteenth century--and Pedro Valencia--at the end of the sixteenth century--put forward arguments using ancient skeptic reasoning to support Christianity. Pico della Mirandola’s *Examen vanitatis* (completed in 1516 but published in 1520) was a skeptical attack against the then current dogmatist philosophical tradition. By referring to Sextus Empiricus’ works in Greek, Pico hoped to show the futility of any attempt towards finding the truth on the basis of rational and scientific reasoning. For Pico, the answer lied in Scripture alone (Popkin, 1967, p. 451; Schmitt, 1983, p. 236). As Schmitt (1983) puts it:

[Pico] was particularly intent upon applying Sextus’ arguments against Aristotle in the name of Christianity. In brief, he maintained that the Aristotelian sense based epistemology--that is, as represented by the slogan *nihil est in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu*--could not be upheld in the face of the various difficulties raised by the skeptics’ critique. For him, skepticism was a tool to be used in behalf of Christianity. With it he felt that he could cut out all hope of certitude from under the Aristotelian philosophers and thereby bring home to his readers that truth and reliability was to be found in Scripture alone. (p. 236)

Similarly, in his *Academica*, which was published in Antwerp in 1596, Pedro Valencia presented an examination of ancient skeptical literature and suggested that these writings proved that the ancient dogmatist philosophers could not find the truth through their rational inquiries. As a result, he urged, one should give following the ancient dogmatists’ footsteps and rather turn to the real sage: Jesus Christ (Popkin, 1967, p. 452).

In 1562, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* by Sextus Empiricus was translated into Latin for the first time by Henri Estienne. Seven years later, Gentian Hervet presented Sextus

Empiricus' the *Adversus mathematicos* to the Latin reading circles of the learned. As Schmitt (1983, 237) points out

This is really the crucial event in the development of Renaissance and early modern skepticism, for now by far the most important work of ancient skepticism was generally available for the first time. . . [and] once the translations were in print we see a direct development of skepticism as a more potent force in European life. (p. 237)

It was not long after the translation of Sextus' works into Latin that two distant cousins, Francisco Sanches (ca.1550-ca.1623) and Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) advanced their skeptically oriented views (Popkin, 1967, p. 52; Schmitt, 1983, p. 237). Then, *Quod Nihil Scitus* by Sanches was published in 1576. In this treatise Sanches attacked the Aristotelian understanding of science which claimed that it was possible to grasp the necessary causes behind natural phenomena through deduction from the first principles, which are gained by induction (Popkin, 1967, p. 452). As Popkin (1993) points out:

[Sanches] showed that, in Aristotle's sense of "knowing", nothing can be known; premises of syllogisms could not be known to be true unless the conclusions drawn from them were known to be true. (For example, to tell that "All men are mortal" is true, one would have to know "Socrates is mortal" is true.) Hence, there was an unavoidable circularity at the base of Aristotelian theory that prevented it from being a way to knowledge. (pp. 20-21)

Instead of pursuing knowledge based on certainty, Sanches argued, men should gather factual information based on observation, draw generalizations from these facts, and then test these generalizations against further observations of the phenomenon under investigation. This process would lead to a limited kind of knowledge. According to Sanches, we could not know the true nature of reality and must base our actions on appearances rather than the truth. Sanches called this process the "scientific method" (Popkin, 1993, p. 21).

The idea of scientific knowledge based on probability that was presented by Sanches was enthusiastically accepted and promoted by Pierre Gassendi and Marin Mersenne. The two close friends, Gassendi and Mersenne, presented a detailed analysis of knowledge based on mitigated or constructive skepticism which would replace dogmatist theories of knowledge that claimed to have found the true nature of reality. Ultimately, Gassendi and Mersenne granted that the skeptical challenge to the claims about knowledge could not be answered. However, they argued that this conclusion would not hinder us from pursuing reasonable information based on probability. For Gassendi and Mersenne, human beings are able to make sense of the appearances that are perceived through the senses. As long as we do not purport that what we sense stands for the real objects of knowledge or that our explanations of what we sense are the truth, we can continue to deal with our surroundings on the basis of this probabilistic information (Popkin, 1993, pp. 21-22). Thus, we find a form of Academic skepticism in the beginnings of modern science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this sense Gassendi and Mersenne's works can be seen as another attempt to replace the Aristotelian tradition of science which still remained dominant in the academic circles of Europe until about the second half of the seventeenth century (Schmitt, 1983, p. 240).

Perhaps the most damaging impact to the ancient dogmatist traditions of philosophy--such as Aristotelianism, Platonism and various forms of Renaissance naturalism--came from Michel de Montaigne. As Popkin (1993) states that:

central issues in modern thought such as the epistemological basis of certitude, the kinds of evidence that can be obtained to support basic beliefs such as the existence of an external world, were proposed in the initial Renaissance presentations of ancient skepticism by Montaigne and his followers. (p. 15)

Furthermore, Montaigne found solid ground in skepticism on which a thorough defense of toleration can be based, but he is not the first modern thinker who developed an understanding of toleration on the basis of skepticism.

In fact before Montaigne, Sebastian Franck and Sebastian Castellio had defended toleration towards religious dissidents on the basis of skepticism, and both emphasized that religious truth was not easy to discover and that many doctrines contained in the Christian Scriptures were too obscure to be grasped with certitude. Given this veil of obscurity over religious truth, labeling certain people as “heretic” and then persecuting them was bound to remain unjustified. Who decides who is a heretic and who is not, and using what criteria? Maybe those who persecute others using the allegations of heresy are heretics themselves. Franck explains that “we know in part. Socrates was right, that we know only that we do not know. We may be heretics quite as much as our opponents.”² Castellio agrees when he says, “a heretic is simply one with whom we disagree, and ‘there is practically no sect which does not hold others for heretics.’ ”³ For both Franck and Castellio, in order to avoid shedding the blood of innocent human beings in the name of ambiguous doctrines, we ought to extend toleration to those with whom we disagree on religious matters (Kamen, 1967, p. 77).

What makes Montaigne different and more interesting than his predecessors is the fact that he was the most significant thinker responsible for the revival of ancient skepticism in the sixteenth century. Popkin (1964), in discussing Montaigne, says:

Not only was he the best writer and thinker of those who were interested in the ideas of the Academics and Pyrrhonians, but he was also the one who felt most fully the impact of the Pyrrhonian theory of complete doubt, and its relevance to the religious debate of the time. (p. 44)

Because he was the most important thinker who advanced skeptical views in the sixteenth century, his defense of toleration on the basis of skepticism merits special treatment. A close examination of Montaigne's defense of toleration on the basis of skepticism will allow us to better understand the connections between skepticism and toleration. Therefore, I will now present his understanding of skepticism and then discuss his notion of toleration.

Montaigne's Skeptical Defense of Toleration

Montaigne's examination of ancient skepticism is found in his longest essay, "Apology for Raimond de Sebonde" in the *Essays*. The apparent reason for Montaigne in writing this essay is to defend--against two main criticisms--Raimond de Sebonde, a Spaniard theologian, whose work *Theologia Naturalis* Montaigne had translated into French. Montaigne (1991) writes that in *Theologia Naturalis* Sebonde "undertakes to establish against the atheists and to show by human, natural reasons the truth of all the articles of the Christian religion" (p. 491).

The first criticism toward Sebonde's undertaking was the argument that true Christians do not need to prove rationally the articles of their religion because these articles can only be conceived by faith and divine revelation; this is the fideistic approach that was previously discussed. To a great extent Montaigne (1991, 492) agrees with this point and states that

Only faith can embrace, with a lively certainty, the high mysteries of our religion. . . . If faith does not come and dwell within us as something infused, beyond the natural order; if she comes in, not just by reasoning but by any human means, then she is not there in her dignity and splendour. (p. 492)

However, Montaigne thinks that it is an honorable act to put our natural capabilities into God's service. Thus, to the extent in which Sebonde's book is seen as a rational supplement to the divinely revealed truth, it can be excused. According to Montaigne (1991) we advance our arguments in favor of divine religion not because God needs our arguments, but as an attempt to honor him through our intellectual service.

The Christian faith is not something obtained by us: it is, purely and simply, a gift depending on the generosity of Another. Our religion did not come to us through reasoned arguments or from our own intelligence: it came to us from outside authority, by commandments. That being so, weakness of judgment helps us more than strength; blindness, more than clarity of vision. We become learned in God's wisdom more by ignorance than by knowledge. (p. 557)

Montaigne defends Sebonde against a second criticism that concerns the strength of the rational arguments that Sebonde advances. According to Montaigne some think that Sebonde's arguments are rather weak to serve the purpose for which Sebonde employs them. Montaigne finds a greater threat in this criticism than in the first, and thinks that it is more dangerous and malicious than the first criticism (p. 500). As Popkin (1964) points out, Montaigne claims that "since all reasoning is unsound, Sebonde should not be blamed for his errors" (p. 46). Indeed, this second criticism provides Montaigne with the opportunity to develop his skeptical attack on dogmatism.

According to Montaigne in any philosophical inquiry there are three distinct outcomes that can be arrived at: either the inquiring person will conclude that s/he has found the truth, or the truth is impossible to be found, or s/he will continue to search for truth. These three positions correspond to the positions of dogmatism, the Academic skepticism, and Pyrrhonism, respectively. According to Montaigne, the Peripatetics, i.e. Aristotelians, Epicureans, Stoics, and others subscribe to the dogmatist position. As Montaigne puts it, "they founded the accepted disciplines and expounded their

knowledge as certainties” (p. 559). On the other hand, the Academics, including Clitomachus and Carneades, argued that truth cannot be gained by human capabilities. Yet these two positions--the dogmatists and the Academics--are criticized by the Pyrrhonians. Pyrrhonians think that the dogmatists, who concluded that they had found the truth, are infinitely deceived. And Pyrrhonians think the Academics, who claim that nothing can be known, fail to avoid the dogmatist’s malady because of their opinion about the status of human knowledge which they hold with certitude. In Montaigne’s words, Pyrrhonians believe that “ignorance which is aware of itself, judges itself, condemns itself, is not complete ignorance: complete ignorance does not even know itself” (p. 560). Therefore, Pyrrhonians abstain from making any assertion. They doubt, and inquire, and are not sure of anything. Montaigne argues that of the three actions of the soul, the imaginative, the appetitive, and the consenting, the Pyrrhonians accept the first two and they hold the last one ambiguous, “inclining neither way, giving not even the slightest approbation to one side or the other” (p. 560).

Although scholars agree that Montaigne was a skeptic, they remain divided as to whether he was an Academic or a Pyrrhonian skeptic. Popkin (1964) believes that Montaigne was a Pyrrhonian skeptic. He points out that by revitalizing the Pyrrhonism of Sextus Empiricus during a time when the intellectual paradigm of the sixteenth century was losing ground, Montaigne deserved to be identified as one of the most crucial designers of modern thought. Popkin (1964) argues, “Montaigne’s genial *Apologie* became the *coup de grace* to an entire intellectual world. It was also to be womb of modern thought, in that it led to the attempt either to refute the new Pyrrhonism, or to find a way of living with it” (p. 55). On the other hand, Levine

(1999a, 1999b, 2001) argues that Montaigne was an Academic skeptic. According to Levine (1999b, pp. 56-57), although

Montaigne does use Pyrrhonist arguments and the Pyrrhonist mode of procedure throughout the “Apology”. . . . Unlike the Pyrrhonists, however, Montaigne focuses his inquiries on human things.

Montaigne never thematically discusses Academic skepticism, because he is an Academic skeptic.

Identifying Montaigne as a follower of the Academic or Pyrrhonian tradition is beyond the scope of this dissertation, especially in light of the observation of Annas and Barnes (1985) that “to outside observers there was little difference between the skeptical Academics and the Pyrrhonists” (p. 14). It is important for and relevant to this study that Montaigne was a skeptic.

One line of Montaigne’s skeptical attack on dogmatism derives its sources from a comparison between human beings and animals. This comparison is intended to reveal the vanity and presumptuousness of human beings (Popkin, 1964, p. 47). The ancients had defined human beings as “rational animals” and placed them above all other animate creatures due to their exclusive possession of reason. Montaigne thinks that rather than being a characteristic that privileges human beings over other creatures, rationality is the very thing that makes them miserable. What is worse is that human beings are not aware of this state in themselves. They think that they know everything and all other creatures are in their service, and they place themselves at the center of the universe. According to Montaigne (1991), this presumption is “the very foundation of the tyrannous rule of the Evil Spirit” (p. 501) and he continues:

Let Man make me understand by the force of discursive reason, what are the grounds on which he has founded and erected all those advantages which he thinks he has over other creatures and who has convinced him that it is for his convenience, his service, that, for so many centuries, there has been established

and maintained the awesome motion of the vault of heaven, the everlasting light of those tapers coursing so proudly overhead or the dread surging of the boundless sea? Is it possible to imagine anything more laughable than that this pitiful, wretched creature--who is not even master of himself, but exposed to shocks on every side--should call himself Master and Emperor of a universe, the smallest particle of which he has no means of knowing, let alone swaying. (p. 502)

As Levine (2001, p. 57) indicates, Montaigne believes if there is any difference between human beings and animals it is to the disadvantage of human beings. Animals lead the life that nature has prescribed for them. They follow their instincts and stay in the limits of their nature. They attend to their natural needs and desires. Montaigne (1991) argues, "Animals obey the rules of Nature better than we do and remain more moderately within her prescribed limits." On the other hand, human beings run after what is unnatural. Instead of attending to our natural desires that we share with other animals, such as eating, drinking and procreating, we create "superfluous and artificial" desires. To the extent that they are superfluous and artificial, they necessarily fail to be satisfied. This, in turn, creates anxiety (p. 526).

We are never "at home: we are always outside ourselves. Fear, desire, hope, impel us towards the future; they rob us of feelings and concern for what now is, in order to spend time over what will be--even when we ourselves shall be no more. (Montaigne, 1991, p. 11)

Oberdiek (2001) points out, for Montaigne, the culprit is imagination (p. 73). We have a tendency to worry about the future. This tendency, which is caused by the natural faculty of imagination, fills us with all sorts of fears, desires, and hopes. These take us away from the here and now.

Another line of Montaigne's skepticism is found in his distrust in the capabilities of human reason. As Levine (1999b, p. 58) shows, Montaigne cites certain internal and external factors that cause our reasoning to be unreliable. Affecting the functioning of

human reason are distortions that are involved in our sense perceptions, the conditions of our bodies--being sick or healthy--and our emotional states. The fact that the same object is perceived differently by different people testifies to the distortions that are taking place in the processes of sense perceptions. Similarly, a person thinks and behaves differently in the face of the same situation when s/he is physically or emotionally ill. Thus, due to these internal factors human reason is vulnerable to err.

Two external factors that cause our understanding to be unreliable are time and place (Levine, 1999b, p. 58). Certain things have been perceived, interpreted, and acted upon differently in different historical times by the same nation or people. Things that used to be socially unacceptable may be welcomed today, and similarly, a person's point of view may change in time and things that were unacceptable and morally wrong once may be acceptable and correct today. We also witness that the same things may be perceived, interpreted, and acted upon differently in the same historical era by different nations. Who knows which action by the same nation at different times is correct, or which action by different nations at the same time is correct? Reason cannot answer these questions by itself. The senses are reason's best interpreters. In Montaigne's (1991) words, "knowledge is conveyed through the senses: they are our Masters. . . . Knowledge begins with them and can be reduced to them" (p.663). Yet, Montaigne also believes that "the senses are the proof as well as the main foundation of our ignorance" (p. 663).

Montaigne begins his examination of the senses by questioning whether human beings are furnished with all natural senses. Observing that there are animals without sight or hearing yet functioning perfectly, Montaigne (1991) asks: "Who can tell

whether we, also, lack one, two, three or more senses?” (p. 664). Since our senses provide us with the only tools in our search, we could never answer that question. Stated differently, our knowledge of our senses is provided by our senses themselves. We are not aware of our sense of hearing through our sense of sight or any other capacity, but by the sense of hearing itself. Therefore, if we were missing any senses we could not be aware of that situation.

This awareness should lead us to conclude that what we are perceiving through our senses may not be the whole picture. We should not be so presumptuous. As Montaigne (1991) states, “our senses are privileged to be the ultimate frontiers of our perception: beyond them there is nothing which could serve to reveal the existence of the senses we lack. One sense cannot reveal another” (p. 664). Another point about the senses made by Montaigne is that, as already noted, the senses are vulnerable to distortion. From seeing that there are animals with much better hearing or better sight than we have, we can infer that our senses are not perfect (p. 674). Also, sometimes the states of our souls influence how our senses work. Montaigne (1991) explains, “When we are moved to anger, we do not hear things as they are. . . .Love someone and she appears more beautiful than she is. . . .And anyone we dislike appears more ugly” (p. 673). Finally our senses contradict one another. How can we decide which sense information is closer to the truth?

In order to decide we need to have an adjudicative tool. However, how are we going to be sure that this adjudicative tool itself is correct? To prove that this tool has accuracy we need to have a demonstration, and to prove this demonstration we need another tool. Thus, we are in a cycle. Montaigne (1991) considers this cycle: “The

senses themselves being full of uncertainty cannot decide the issue of our dispute. It will have to be Reason, then. But no Reason can be established except by another Reason. We retreat into infinity” (p. 679). Through this reasoning, Montaigne poses a fatal challenge to both Plato’s and Aristotle’s epistemologies.

As can be remembered, for Aristotle induction--which is based on sense perceptions--would yield the first principles from which one could deductively derive the truth about phenomena. Montaigne disputes both of these stages. By criticizing the senses, he casts doubt on the ability of any person to reach the first principles through the inductive method. The senses are not perfect guides. We cannot rely on them in finding the first principles. However, Montaigne (1991) indicates that when we tell this to the dogmatists, “they have an axiom ready on their lips: Never argue with those who deny first principles” (p. 607).

On the other hand, by showing the vulnerabilities of human reason, Montaigne undermines the foundation on which Aristotle stands when Aristotle thinks that reason grasps the essences of the objects that are presented to it by the senses, and then deductively derives knowledge about particular phenomena from these essences. As for Plato’s epistemology, Montaigne is in agreement with it when it dismisses the senses as reliable tools in attaining knowledge. However, Montaigne disagrees with Plato as well, as soon as the latter claims that it is the reason that will deductively provide us with absolute knowledge. For Montaigne, “nothing can be known” or “all is in doubt.”

Although Montaigne claims that nothing about the eternal essence of things can be known by human beings, he does think that one can know herself/himself. As Levine (2001, 5) says, “this knowledge is experiential and only of subjective

phenomena as felt by a particular person at a particular moment in time” (p. 5). Since all knowledge a person can attain is limited to her/his subjective experience, it is futile to strive for grasping the transcendental truth. For Montaigne, the natural conclusion and, thus, a person’s interest is summed up in the Delphic injunction: know thyself. According to Levine (2001) Montaigne thinks that this is self-interest properly understood (p. 7).

The self has the ability to search itself without external interference. It is potentially the most joyful, and at the same time, the most frustrating activity for a human being. The reason for joy is that one discovers oneself--her/his individuality. The reason for frustration is that one may see the emptiness of the self in that there is not any end-point from which our desires, passions, wills come from (Levine, 2001, p. 7). As Screech (1991) states, Montaigne had realized that “no creature ever *is*: a creature is always shifting, changing, becoming” (p. xxxix).

In this understanding of self-interest we find one corner stone of Montaigne’s theory of toleration. Human beings who are aware of the natural limits conferred upon their ability to acquire universal truth will turn inward to search themselves instead. This requires a person to be alone. In order for one to discover herself/himself, one needs to have a private sphere in which one will be free from any outside intervention. Once a human being realizes that having a private sphere in which s/he can enjoy her/his individuality is the most valuable privilege s/he can have, s/he begins to respect the need of her/his fellow human beings for the same privilege.

Oberdiek (2001) points out, for Montaigne, that in this private sphere human beings can satisfy their animal needs--such as, eating, drinking, and procreating--and

enjoy mental tranquility (p. 73). The Pyrrhonist ideal of *ataraxia*, in which one frees herself/himself from anxiety that is caused by the futile attempt to attain absolute knowledge through suspension of judgment (*epoche*), corresponds to individual self-interest. Individuals who realize their innate inability to attain truth and who understand that their self-interest lies in being left alone cannot be swayed by the calls for establishing universal justice by those who believe that they have found the truth. One who realizes her/his own weakness will tolerate weaknesses in others and approach them with neutrality. S/he will let others create their own subjective experiences and lead the lives that they desire. Since this toleration is based on self-interest properly understood, it rejects the Nietzschean definition of toleration as self-denial (Levine, 2001, pp. 7-8). As Levine (1999b) points out, unlike Nietzsche, Montaigne does not think that self-creation is a violent process in which suffering is inevitable. And since what a human being finds in herself/himself is ignorance and impermanence, s/he does not have anything to force on others (pp. 64-65).

Provided that one is granted a private sphere, s/he can be expected to obey to the laws that order the public sphere. Montaigne agrees with Hobbes that without law and order human behavior would descend into chaotic self-interest. Therefore, in order to secure continuous enjoyment of our individuality in the private sphere, we need to submit our loyalty to the state in the public sphere. Civil disobedience is not an option for Montaigne. Furthermore, by following the orders of the state, Montaigne (1991) does not believe that we sacrifice our individuality (p. 543); what we are doing is only role-playing. Our consciences do not have to be insulted by that: “all other virtues are born of submission and obedience, just as all other sins are born of pride” (p. 543).

The state cannot control the consciences of its subjects but only their external actions. When we obey the state, it is not our consciences but our knees that bend. Furthermore, for Montaigne, unlike Rousseau, in order to fulfill our individuality we do not need to be an active participant in the making of laws to which our knees bend. Rousseau (1998) believes that “obedience to a law which we prescribe to ourselves is liberty” (p. 196). In this regard, for Rousseau (1998) renouncing the right to participate in the process of making laws is “to renounce liberty and to renounce liberty is to renounce being a man, to surrender the rights of humanity and even its duties” (p. 186).

In the contemporary literature, this line of reasoning is found in the writings of the communitarians, who believe that a person’s individuality is a function of participation in the process of making the laws that rule that person. When Barber (1984) claims that “without participating in the common life that defines them and in the decision-making that shapes their social habitat, women and men cannot become individuals” (p. xxiii), he is inspired by Rousseau. However, Montaigne does not think that one needs to be a part of the decision-making process in order to be a whole individual. How can one, whose whole knowledge is limited to his individual experience, prescribe rules not only for herself/himself but for others as well? Would not prescribing a law that is binding for everybody be to claim the possession of the truth about the matter under consideration and would not that be presumptuous?

Perhaps, in addition to what Socrates said in the *Apology* as to why he did not participate in public life, here can be found another reason: As a person who believes that all that he knows is that he knows nothing, Socrates did not have anything to prescribe to others. As the “French Socrates,” Montaigne chose to follow the customs

and laws that were current in his own society. Given that it is impossible to enact absolutely just laws in the public realm, why bother with prescribing laws instead of following the ones that are already in place? However, since he believes that self-knowledge is possible, Montaigne prescribes rules for himself in his private sphere and lets others prescribe rules for themselves in their own private spheres. In that regard, what form the government takes does not bother Montaigne much. As long as government prevents anarchy--intolerance by members in a society towards itself--and does not attempt to regulate the consciences of its subjects--intolerance by the state itself--Montaigne is willing to submit his loyalty to that government.

¹ The other two are Cicero and Diogenes Laertius.

² Sebastian Franck, quoted by Henry Kamen. *The Rise of Toleration*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967, 77.

³ Sebastian Catellio, quoted by Henry Kamen. *The Rise of Toleration*.

PART II

PRUDENCE AND TOLERATION

As indicated earlier, another solution to the paradox of toleration can be found in the argument based on the principle of prudence. In its essence, prudence advises a person to take into account the consequences of acting intolerantly towards an object of toleration. A person who disapproves of a belief or an action may want to suppress it. However, a simple analysis of the costs and benefits prevents her/him from acting in an intolerant way. The disapproving person realizes that the cost of acting intolerantly is much more than the benefits that could be gained from repressing the object of toleration.

It is argued in this work that this simple calculation of costs and benefits does not necessarily lead to tolerance. Before one ends up with tolerance, a particular state of mind is required, one that will make the emergence of toleration possible. This particular state of mind is related to how one sees conflict.¹ If conflict is seen to be a deviation from the natural state of affairs, then it is hard to see the justification for toleration based on prudence. The reason is that a person who believes that conflict is a deviation from the natural state of affairs tends to reject conflict rather than accept it. In this sense, conflict is seen as something illegitimate. On the other hand, if conflict is seen as something natural that results from the pursuit of different interests of individuals, then it is easier to achieve toleration based on prudence. In this case, the person who thinks that conflict is unavoidable will seek ways to accommodate conflict. One way of accommodating conflict is, of course, toleration.

In the next two chapters, I will examine Plato's and Aristotle's moral and political philosophies to see how they approached conflict, and thus whether they had anything to say about the justification of toleration on the basis of prudence. It will be seen that neither Plato nor Aristotle welcomed conflict in the *polis*. Yet, their ways of dealing with conflict differed from one another. Whereas Plato believed conflict in the *polis* to be a deviation from the natural states of affairs and rejected it, Aristotle thought that conflict was an inevitable part of social life and sought ways for accommodating it. This is not to say that Aristotle had a fully developed theory of toleration. Rather, it means that Aristotle had concepts that might have provided the philosophical seeds of toleration that is based on prudence.

Perhaps the emergence of a fully developed theory of toleration that is based on prudence was made possible only after this aspect of Aristotle's thought was embraced and became dominant in the early modern times. In fact, a main feature of modern political thought comes from the legitimacy that conflict assumed during and after the sixteenth century. In Chapter 6, it will be shown that the early modern period witnessed the rise of an instrumental view of society. According to this view society existed for the satisfaction of individual needs--such as security, food, and comfort. In such a society, conflict was seen as a natural result of the pursuit of different interests by different individuals. In this regard, rejecting conflict would amount to rejecting society. Instead, the modern philosophers tried to find ways of accommodating conflict, and toleration was one of the ways that the modern philosophers developed to keep the society intact. In the last part of Chapter 6, this mode of thinking will be elucidated through a presentation of John Locke's theory of toleration. It will be argued

that in addition to his religious arguments, Locke advances prudential arguments for toleration.

¹ It is appropriate to indicate that conflict as used here does not mean open conflict involving armed struggle. Conflict is used to mean the clash of interests, religious and political beliefs and/or ways of life.

CHAPTER 4: THE ANCIENT WAY OF LOOKING AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY: THE MORAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF PLATO

“You forget that creation is not for your benefit: you exist for the sake of the universe.”

(Plato, *The Laws*)

Plato’s political philosophy stands on two main pillars. The first is his philosophy of knowledge; the second is his moral philosophy. I discussed his philosophy of knowledge--his epistemological views--in Part I. Here, I shall discuss his moral philosophy. In the presentation of Plato’s moral and political philosophy, I shall use three important dialogues: *The Republic*, *The Statesman* and *The Laws*. As will be seen, Plato’s moral and political views are to some extent different in each of these three works. For example, while Plato divides the soul into three parts in *The Republic*, he presents a twofold division of the soul in *The Laws*. In *The Republic* he entrusts the guardians with absolute power untrammelled by any law; in *The Laws*, he makes the law ultimate sovereign. It is obvious that these views are different from one another. What is not obvious is whether these differences in the works of Plato correspond to a change in his philosophy or not. Regarding this question there are two positions. The first position assumes the existence of a change in Plato’s thinking throughout these three works. For example, Morrow (1971) argues that Plato’s break in *The Laws* from his earlier writings is so radical that he would no longer agree, even in theory, with the proponents of supreme power unlimited by law (p. 145).

The second position concludes that the differences in these three works do not correspond to a change (Strauss, 1975; Saunders, 1975). According to this position, Plato always entertained the same moral and political views yet he presented different aspects of them in these three works. I will begin by presenting the first position that assumes the existence of a change. This assumed change in Plato's moral and political views is explained by either one of the following two factors, or by a combination of both of them.

The first factor concerns Plato's political experience in Syracuse. Plato went to Syracuse three times, and the first one took place in 387 BC. In that year, he met Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, in Sicily. However, this meeting did not go well since Plato did not conceal his views about the moral degradation of the tyrants. Dionysius sold Plato into slavery, but fortunately, Plato was able to escape and return to Athens. The only good thing that happened in Plato's involvement with Syracusean politics was his meeting Dion, the brother-in-law of Dionysius. Dion was interested in philosophy and was greatly attracted to Plato's ideas.

When Dionysius died twenty years later and was replaced by his son, Dionysius II, Dion invited Plato to Syracuse to teach the new monarch philosophy. At the beginning, everything seemed to be working out well. Dionysius II was unlike his father. He had an interest in philosophy and was eager to listen to Plato and Dion in political matters. However, the established power circle perceived a threat in this situation and managed to banish Dion from the court by securing his exile. Left alone, Plato realized that the best course of action for him was to return to Athens. Six years later, upon the news that Dionysius II had taken great interest in philosophy and was

willing to accept Dion's return to Syracuse, Plato once again was persuaded to go to Syracuse. However, he found out very soon that the interest that Dionysius II had in philosophy was still superficial, so Plato left Syracuse once again for Athens.

In 357 BC Dion waged an expedition to Syracuse with his supporters. Although his forces were greatly outnumbered by the forces of Dionysius II, Dion was victorious. However, this time due to the moral obligations stemming from his being the guest of Dionysius II, Plato did not get actively involved in this new state of affairs. Four years later, without achieving Plato's ideals, Dion was assassinated.

Thus, one line of argument attributes the assumed change in Plato's thinking to the intrigues of the court life and the immorality of the tyrants that he witnessed in Syracuse. After all he went through in Syracuse, Plato lost his faith in human beings and their potential for virtue, and he came to conclude that neither one person nor a group of persons could be vested with unlimited political power; human beings were puppets that were manipulated through the strings of their passions. Therefore, law, which is devoid of passion, must be sovereign (Klosko, 1986, pp. 185-188).

A second line of argument attributes the assumed change in Plato's thinking to his getting older. According to this view--which associates revolutionary ideas with youth--as Plato got older he became more of a realist and more conservative in his approach to politics. Morrow (1971) points out: "Thus in his old age, if not in his youth, Plato is at one with the tradition of his people in distrusting everything savoring of absolute and irresponsible power, and in placing the sovereignty of law at the very basis of political theory" (p. 146).

As I indicated above, there is also the position that Plato's views in his late works, such as *The Statesman* and *The Laws*, do not represent a change from his views in his earlier works. One example of this way of thinking is from Strauss (1975) who thinks that in *The Republic* Socrates establishes an ideal regime "in speech," whereas in *The Laws* the Athenian stranger establishes an ideal regime "in deed." As will be seen, the aim in *The Republic* is not to establish an ideal *polis* but rather to grasp the idea of justice. As Socrates indicates, justice is sometimes seen as a virtue in an individual, and sometimes as a virtue in the *polis*. Since the *polis* is a larger entity than the individual, it would be easier to look for justice in the *polis* than in the individual. On the other hand, in *The Laws*, the aim is to draft laws for a new *polis*. In this regard and contrary to the common view, Strauss (1975) argues that *The Laws* rather than *The Republic* is the most important political work of Plato. For Strauss, "*The Republic* does not in fact present the best political order but rather brings to light the limitations, the limits and therewith the nature of politics" (p. 1).

A similar argument can be found in Saunders (1975). In the introduction to his translation of Plato's *The Laws*, he points out that it makes much more sense to see *The Republic* as written with the intention of showing how unattainable the strict application of certain political principles can be. He also thinks that even as Plato wrote *The Republic*, he had in mind some kind of realistic political program which is similar to the one that is contained in *The Laws*. Saunders (1975) summarizes his view very well: "In short, Plato could perfectly well have written *The Laws* when he wrote *The Republic* and *The Republic* when he wrote *The Laws*, for they are the opposite sides of the same coin" (p. 28).

I will present my contention towards these two positions at the end of this chapter. Now, let us look at Plato's moral and political views as they are presented in these three works.

When presenting Plato's theory of knowledge, I had indicated that in associating the soul with intellectual activity, Plato follows the Socratic doctrine of "the caring of the soul" where the soul is identified with the individual's moral and rational "self." Thus, as in the case of his epistemological views, Plato's ethical views too are shaped by his views on the nature of the soul.

In *The Republic*, Plato (1991) divides the human soul into three parts: the rational, the spirited, and the appetitive part (*Republic* 440-441).¹ The rational part of the soul provides an individual with the ability to reason; the spirited part gives an individual the passions to lead an honorable life. The spirited part of the soul provides such passions as: the passion for excelling in public service, the passion for excelling in military art, and the passion for excelling in literature. Individual characteristics that are necessary to fulfill our passions--such as determination, persistence, and willingness--also spring from this part of the soul. Finally, the appetitive part is the part of the soul where an individual's "loves and hungers and thirsts" come from and where one "feels the flutterings of any other desire" (*Republic* 439). This part of the soul provides people with the urge to satisfy desires such as the desire for food and the desire for generation, which human beings share with animals.

This threefold division of the soul can be illustrated by an example from the act of drinking. Let us imagine that we are very thirsty on a hot summer day, and we can quench our thirst either by drinking water from the sink or by drinking a bottle of beer

from the refrigerator. Let us further imagine that due to the medicine we are taking we should not drink alcohol. Now, the desire to quench our thirst tempts us to grab a bottle of ice cold beer and drink it at once. The urge to drink beer springs from the appetitive part of the soul. However, when we think about the consequences of drinking alcohol with the medicine that we are taking and so decide to drink water from the sink instead, the rational and spirited parts of the soul are at work. In this process of drinking water rather than beer, the rational part of the soul reminds us of the incompatibility of the medicine and alcohol and leads us to decide to drink water. However, deciding to drink water and actually drinking the water are not the same thing; we need to have the will to do it. This is where the spirited part of the soul comes into the picture. The spirited part provides us with the willpower to follow through with the decision that the rational part of the soul made.

There is a natural alliance between the rational and spirited parts of the soul; they cooperate in controlling the appetitive part. However, the rational and spirited parts are of equal status. The rational part of the soul ranks highest and the spirited part is subordinate to it. The appetitive part is the lowest ranking part of the soul. Unless it is controlled and harnessed by the rational and spirited parts, it does harm to the soul (*Republic* 439-440).

There are three different virtues that correspond to each of the three parts of the soul. Wisdom is the virtue of the rational part of the soul, and is concerned with the knowledge of universals that are the true objects of knowledge. As will be remembered from Part I, Plato's highest object of knowledge is the idea of good. A person who has this knowledge is called "wise." Courage, on the other hand, teaches a person what to

fear and what not to fear, and in this regard, it belongs to the spirited part of the soul. The owner of this virtue is called “courageous” (*Republic* 441-442). Finally, temperance is the virtue of the appetitive part of the soul, and this virtue enables a person to control certain pleasures and desires; through temperance an individual becomes her/his own master. The definition of temperance, according to Plato, implies that there are two parts to the soul: a good part and a bad part. When the better part has mastery over the worse part, the individual becomes temperate; and when the worse part overwhelms the better part, the individual is called a slave of self and unprincipled (*Republic* 430-432).

Plato puts the virtue of justice at the top of a hierarchy of the virtues of the soul, and above the three virtues associated with each of the three parts of the soul. According to Plato, justice is the ultimate cause and condition of the existence of all other virtues (*Republic* 433). Put differently, justice is when the other three virtues stand together in harmony. For Plato, the creation of justice in an individual is the institution of natural order and government in the parts of the soul (*Republic* 444). Thus, when harmony among the parts of the soul is established--when the appetitive part is controlled by the rational part in cooperation with the spirited part--justice is attained in the human soul.

Having stated Plato’s views on the nature of the human soul and his moral philosophy, now we can discuss his political philosophy. The first thing that needs to be said about Plato’s political philosophy is that he thinks the *polis* arose out of the needs of humankind. According to Plato (1991), no one can meet his needs by himself. That is to say,

No one is self-sufficing, but all of us have many wants. . . .As we have many wants, and many persons are needed to supply them, one takes a helper for one purpose and another for another; and when these partners and helpers are gathered together in one habitation the body of inhabitants is termed a State. (*Republic* 369)

Hence, for Plato necessity is what brings individuals together in the first place. Plato informs us that the first necessity is food, because without food life and existence are impossible. The second and third necessities are shelter and clothing respectively (*Republic* 369). However, although physical and biological necessities bring individuals together under a *polis*, they are not the only things that keep them together; the rational calculation of the material benefits of social cooperation is not the only reason for humans to form societies. Had it been, Plato could not have argued that an individual derives happiness from the happiness of the whole, that is, the *polis*, rather than from the satisfaction of personal material interests (*Republic* 420).

In addition to physical and biological necessities that human beings have in common with other animals, they also have moral and intellectual necessities that emerge from their unique characteristic--the possession of reason. The hierarchical division of the parts of the soul, show that those necessities that belong to the higher parts of the soul have primacy over those that spring from the lower parts. Thus the necessities of the rational part are superior to the necessities of the spirited and appetitive parts; and those of the spirited part are superior to those of the appetitive part.

To know is the intellectual necessity that belongs to the rational part of the soul. In that regard, it is the highest-ranking necessity. The amount of knowledge that is necessary to live a primitive life may not be much, and leading a noble life might require a high level of intellectual attainment. For instance, using the allegory of the

cave we can see that life in the cave is a primitive life, while ascending out of the cave is indicative of a noble life.

Having reason as a distinguishing feature enables human beings to differentiate between right and wrong. This, in turn, creates the possibility of leading a moral life. According to this understanding, leading a moral life is a necessity for the spirited part of the soul. Thus, while reason relates what is right and what is wrong, the spirited part provides the will to choose the right course of action and abstain from the wrong one. So, although physical and biological needs bring individuals together in the *polis*, intellectual and moral necessities keep them together.

As indicated at the outset of this chapter, Plato's views on the soul shape his political philosophy. Plato thinks that there exists three distinct classes in the *polis*: the wise, the courageous, and the ambitious (*Republic* 441), and that they are parallel to the parts of the soul. The wise are those in whose souls the rational part is dominant over the rest of the soul. They are the lovers of knowledge, not the knowledge of the transitory but that of the permanent. Because they have been educated in dialectics, as explained in Part I, the wise are able to attain the idea of good, which corresponds to the attainment of the highest happiness.

The spirited part is sovereign in the souls of the courageous (*Republic* 429-430). They seek honor. Rather than a contemplative life that is thought to be the best life by the wise, the courageous pursue a practical life that provides the most opportunities to gain honor. This practical life, of course, consists in taking an active part in public life for in the public realm these individuals are provided with the most opportunities to distinguish themselves by their extra-ordinary deeds.² To be honored by fellow citizens

both in life and after death is the ultimate happiness for the spirited (Arendt, 1998, pp. 55-56).

The ambitious are those who are ruled by the appetitive parts of their souls. For the ambitious, happiness consists in the continuous enjoyment of bodily pleasures and the avoidance of pain. Therefore, the ambitious seek to accumulate more of those things that are conducive to the attainment of bodily pleasures--such as gold, silver, and other kinds of property.

How are these three classes going to be ordered in relation to one another so a just *polis* can be created? The answer to this question lies in Plato's theory of knowledge. There is such a thing as the Form of the *polis*, and it exists in the realm of reality. The knowledge of the Form of the *polis*, as in the case of other Forms, is accessible only to the wise. Because of their knowledge of the universals--that is the Forms--the wise deserve to be the rulers in the *polis* (*Republic* 484-485). The wise will order the institutions and relations in the *polis* according to the Form of the *polis*. Since the knowledge of the wise is absolute, their rule must be absolute as well. They should not be limited by conventional law that may either be customary law--that is law inherited from ancestors--or positive law--that is enacted on the basis of the whims of the multitude who only have opinions rather than knowledge. The wise will follow the natural law that is universal, and can be attained only through dialectic. Hence, Plato states in *The Republic* that

Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who pursue either the exclusion of the other one compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils. (*Republic* 473)

The courageous in the just *polis* will form the class of auxiliaries. Plato believes that women are as courageous as men, and, as a result, they qualify to be auxiliaries. Plato thinks that the difference between males and females is not a matter of nature but just a matter of degree. Accordingly, after due training and education women can perform the same duties as men do. Just as a female dog watches over the flock as well as a male dog, a woman can defend the regime as well as a man, the only difference being that the female is weaker than the male. But, their essences are of the same nature. In that regard, women will be educated the same as men. After completing the required education and training, the female and male auxiliaries will fight against enemies on the battleground shoulder to shoulder (*Republic* 451-456).

According to Plato, since no art can be pursued with success unless a person's whole attention is devoted to it, the courageous need to be only soldiers, and not carpenters or shoe-makers or farmers at the same time (*Republic* 374). The citizens who will guard the city from enemies will be trained from childhood onward in music and gymnastics. Before their bodies are made firm and strong, the souls of the auxiliaries need to be cultivated, and this is achieved through music. Plato thinks that it is the good soul that contributes to the creation of a good body rather than the other way around (*Republic* 403). The music that youth will be exposed to should be selected carefully, with those melodies that lead to softness and drunkenness banished. Only music that makes the souls of the auxiliaries firm can be played and listened to (*Republic* 398-400). Similarly, verses and proses that have references to the world below must be discarded since they would consolidate the fear of death in the souls of the auxiliaries (*Republic* 386-387).

Plato believed that the combined influence of music and gymnastics would bring the rational and spirited parts of the soul into accord. While, the rational part, reason, will improve and be exalted with noble words and lessons, the wildness of the spirited part will be moderated by harmony and rhythm. And these two parts, in turn, after having learned what their true functions are, will rule over the appetitive part which is moved by material and sensual pleasures (*Republic* 441-442).

To be a good guardian, it is not enough for a citizen to be both spiritually and bodily strong. A guardian also needs to be able to distinguish friends from foes. In order to do this one needs to also have wisdom. Thus, a guardian needs to be educated in philosophy (*Republic* 376). In fact, the wise who constitute the ruling class emerge from the ranks of the courageous. When they are young, spirited persons will serve as soldiers; when they are old, they will join the ruling class, provided they have mastery of dialectics³ (*Republic* 412-414).

An interesting aspect of the way of life of the guardians is that there is no room for the institution of marriage, or for families (*Republic* 457-458). In this way, according to Plato, the generation of future guardians will not be left to the whims of sentiments such as love. It is accepted that when young an individual is moved by sentiments rather than by reason. This tendency to be moved by desires leads young individuals to relationships that are less than perfect. The children that are born in these relationships³ would be less than perfect, but this undesirable state of affairs can be avoided if couplings among the guardians are arranged by individuals who act through reason.

The absence of family facilitates the best arrangement for coupling among the guardians. Since there is no marriage, there can be no commitment based on love. This way the rulers can always bring the best men and women together. In order to prevent any jealousy among the less deserving members of the guardian class, the couples will be matched through lot. However, in the ultimate interest of the *polis* the rulers are forced to cheat in this lot. Plato realizes this possibility and says: “We shall have to invent some ingenious kind of lots which the less worthy may draw on each occasion of our bringing them together, and they will accuse their own ill-luck and not the rulers” (*Republic* 460). The rulers will make certain that this lot will always bring the best couples together. In Plato’s words, the goal in this process is that “the best of either sex should be united with the best as often, and the inferior with the inferior, as seldom as possible” (*Republic* 459).

Another benefit that will be reaped from this arrangement is that each guardian will call the same women and children his; and this, in turn, will consolidate the feeling of unity among the guardians. Plato thinks that by abolishing the exclusive possession of wives and children, one reason for identifying self-interest with private interest would be eliminated. The ideal is the identification of self-interest with that of the *polis*. Likewise, Plato informs us that only those who equate the interests of the *polis* with their own, and guard these interests throughout their lives will be appointed as rulers (*Republic* 413).

If one obstacle in the citizens identifying their personal interests with that of the *polis* is the exclusive possession of women and children, another obstacle is the existence of private property. Thus, the guardians will have no private property. They

will live in barracks and eat at common tables. Food, clothes, and other material needs would be provided by the traders, who, unlike the guardians, could own private property and get married.

But, what is the process of determining to which class a person belongs? Of course, the wise rulers are the ones who will determine the distribution of the population among these three classes, and the distribution of the individuals will be done on the basis of merit. First of all, it will be determined whether a young person is spirited or not, and those who are spirited have the proper nature to be in the class of the guardians. When they are young they will be warriors. After being educated in music and gymnastics, they will later learn the art of war. As stated earlier, to be able to differentiate between friend and foe the auxiliaries need to have wisdom as well. Thus, they will be taught philosophy, and those who prove themselves to be worthy of the title of philosopher will join the rulers when they get older.

On the other hand, if a young person lacks spirit, then all this person can be is a trader. In this classification, the word “trader” stands for the whole array of producers of goods and services. So, a trader can be a carpenter, a builder, or a merchant. The only restriction is that a trader cannot be more than one thing at the same time, in other words a trader cannot be both a carpenter and shoemaker. The reason is that no art can be pursued with success unless a person’s whole attention is devoted to it (*Republic* 374). The traders can get married and have children.

One does wonder whether anyone will challenge the decisions of the rulers regarding her/his position in the community. Plato anticipated this challenge and developed the “royal lie.” According to Plato, “if any one at all is to have the privilege

of lying, the rulers of the *polis* should be the persons; and they, in their dealings either with enemies or with their own citizens, may be allowed to lie for the public good”

(*Republic* 389). The “royal lie” that Plato has Socrates explain in Book III of *The Republic* is as follows:

Citizens . . . you are brothers, yet God has framed you differently. Some of you have the power of command, and in the composition of these he has mingled gold, wherefore also they have the greatest honour; others he has made of silver, to be auxiliaries; others again who are to be husbandmen and craftsmen he has composed of brass and iron; and the species will generally be preserved in the children. (*Republic* 415)

However, there may be cases in which a golden parent will have a brass and iron son, or a brass and iron parent will have a golden son. Therefore, in order to determine what metal each child is made of, the rulers will observe them very closely. Upon close examination, if they discover that a guardian’s child does not have the same qualities his parents have, then he will be descended to the class where he belongs. In the same way, if a husbandman has a child who is made of gold, then this child will be ascended to the guardian class⁴ (*Republic* 415-416).

According to Plato, just as in the case of the human soul, there are four virtues in the *polis* with respect to the three classes: wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice (*Republic* 428-432). Each one of the first three virtues is associated with one class in the *polis*. Wisdom is the virtue of the wise, courage is the virtue of the courageous, and temperance is the virtue of the ambitious. As justice in the soul, justice in the *polis* is the hierarchical harmonious order amongst the three classes. Accordingly, in a just *polis* the wise must be the rulers, the courageous must be the auxiliaries, and the ambitious must be the traders. As Plato says:

There are three distinct classes, any meddling of one with another, or the change of one into another, is the greatest harm to the State. . . .on the other hand, when

the trader, the auxiliary, and the guardian each do their own business, that is justice, and will make the city just. (*Republic* 434)

Having stated the just state of affairs in a *polis*, Plato deals with the question of whether this state is attainable by human beings. Accordingly, Glaucon asks Socrates if such an order of things is possible, and how is it possible, if at all? In response to Glaucon, Socrates states that:

We are inquiring into the nature of absolute justice and into the character of the perfectly just, and into injustice and the perfectly unjust, that we might have an ideal. We were to look at these in order that we might judge of our own happiness and unhappiness according to the standard which they exhibited and the degree in which we resembled them, but not any view of showing that they could exist in fact. (*Republic* 472)

So, as a pure Form, the just *polis* is not expected to be achieved on earth. Rather, it will serve as an ideal towards which we can strive and against which we can measure our attainment of justice. Plato thinks that the single biggest step in the direction of approximating this heavenly order is the institution of a philosopher-king as ruler (*Republic* 473). A philosopher-king is a person in whom wisdom and political power are combined. Such a person is in a position to shape the existing social order according to the Form of a just *polis*, as much as possible.

Indeed, Plato (1957) in *The Statesman*--which belongs to the late period of Plato's writings--presents the ideal as rule by one person who has mastery in the art of ruling. The characters in this dialogue are Socrates, young Socrates, the stranger from Elea, and Theodorus; they attempt to define the statesman. Although present, Socrates is a peripheral figure in this dialogue. The main character is the stranger from Elea. The first definition of the statesman, developed by the Eleatic stranger with the help of young Socrates, draws upon the analogy of a shepherd and her/his herd. According to this analogy, just as a shepherd rears and nurtures her/his flock, a true statesman rears

and nurtures her/his subjects. Yet although a shepherd can claim to be the exclusive keeper and nurturer of her/his flock, a statesman can be subject to rival claims from those who also contribute to the rearing and nurturing of the society--such as farmers, merchants, and physicians (*Statesman* 267e-268a). The Eleatic stranger is dissatisfied with this analogy and tries to form a new definition. However, before coming up with a new analogy and thus with a new definition, he relates a myth.

The myth divides history into two main ages: the age of Cronus and the age of Zeus. In the age of Cronus God directly controlled the universe, and through his divine assistants, he manipulated human societies. Human beings were born out of the earth as fully grown and aged backwards until they mingled with the earth to provide the seeds of the next generation. During that time there were no problems of resource allocations; it was a time of abundance, so there were neither wars nor the need for politics. However, this heavenly age came to an end, it was the age of Zeus, and humankind appeared. God was no longer in charge; human beings were left alone. There was scarcity and, as a result, conflict. Fortunately, the gods sent humankind fire and knowledge of the arts so people could survive. In this age, human beings ruled themselves (*Statesman* 268d-274d).

The moral implication of the myth is that the rule of the philosopher-guardians--who were more than human--in *The Republic* is like the reign of Cronus. Thus, as an ideal, it sets standards that are too high. Perhaps anticipating that human beings would be frustrated by such high ideals, Plato begins to search for a new ideal that can be achieved by "human beings." This new ideal is rule by the "true statesman" (Klosko,

1986; Ostwald, 1957). The true statesman deserves her/his title because of her/his mastery of the art of ruling. But, what does the art of ruling encompass?

The new analogy, which Plato (1957) uses to define the art of ruling, is an analogy of weaving (*Statesman* 279a-283b). According to this analogy in order to attain the best social order, the true statesman intermingles citizens who have different natures just as a weaver weaves the warp and the weft to produce the best fabric. In the pursuit of producing the best fabric, the weaver makes use of the products of other arts, such as the art of spinning and that of carding. In the same way, the true statesman employs the help of other individuals with different skills.

The most important three helpers of the true statesman are the orator, the general, and the judge. The orator helps the true statesman with the art of persuasion; the general puts her/his knowledge of war at the disposal of the true statesman; and the judge will help the true statesman with her/his knowledge of implementing the law (*Statesman* 303d-305e). However, the art of the true statesman ranks higher than all these other arts. Her/his art involves proper use of all of the other arts. The true statesman knows when to employ the orator to persuade the masses. Similarly, the true statesman is the one who can decide whether war is justified or not. Finally, the true statesman is superior to the judge in that s/he enacts the laws that the judge enforces.

In implementing her/his art, the true statesman should not be limited by either law or custom. Because the law is general and rigid, it cannot provide us with the tools that are necessary to cope with specific problems that arise in human society. In Plato's words:

Law can never issue an injunction binding on all which really embodies what is best for each; it cannot prescribe with accuracy what is best and just for each

member of the community at any one time. The differences of human personality, the variety of men's activities, and the restless inconstancy of all human affairs make it impossible for any art whatsoever to issue unqualified rules holding good on all questions at all times. (*Statesman* 294a-b)

The best tool of the true statesman is her/his knowledge of ruling. Just as a physician is free to revise the prescription which s/he wrote in accordance with the course of a sickness, a true statesman must also be free to devise new rules as s/he sees fit. Similarly, just as a physician does not need the consent of the patient for the prescription that s/he writes, the true statesman does not need the consent of the ruled for the rules s/he enacts either (*Statesman* 293a-294b). Plato states:

They may purge the city for its better health by putting some of the citizens to death or banishing others. They may lessen the citizen body by sending off colonies like bees swarming off from a hive, or they may bring people in from other cities and naturalize them so as to increase the number of citizens. So long as they work on a scientific principle following justice and act to preserve and improve the life of the state so far as may be, we must call theirs the only true constitution according to these standards of judgment. (*Statesman* 293d-e)

Compared to the greater than human guardians of *The Republic*, the true statesman of *The Statesman* is certainly much more realistic. Yet, it would be difficult to find such a wise and powerful statesman, and some societies may never have one. What is the next best solution in the absence of the true statesman? Plato thinks that "the rule of law" provides the second-best solution (*Statesman* 297d-e). In this regard, the rule of law is superior to any sort of arbitrary rule. Just as the prescription the physician left behind can be implemented in her/his absence, the laws that reflect the wisdom of the true statesman can be preserved as well. However, this implies that at some time a true statesman must have existed.

One of the main features of *The Statesman*--which distinguishes it from *The Republic*--is the attention that Plato pays to actual states. In addition to the ideal regime

of the true statesman, Plato enumerates six other regimes. There are two sorts of one-person rule, monarchy and tyranny; two sorts of minority rule, aristocracy and oligarchy; two sorts of rule of the many, both being called democracy. In each of these pairs, the former is distinguished from the latter by the virtue of its being law-abiding. Interestingly, in the case of the rule of the many, Plato calls both law-abiding and arbitrary regimes democracy. Among the law-abiding regimes, Plato (1957) thinks, a monarchy is the best government and democracy is the worst. However, in the case of arbitrary regimes, democracy is the least harmful while tyranny is the most harmful (*Statesman* 300e-303b). As a matter of fact, this classification of regimes is not Plato's final thoughts on the topic. Indeed, Plato presents once again a different ideal regime in his last work: *The Laws*.

The dialogue takes place in Crete between three people: the Athenian stranger, Cleinas of Crete, and Megillus of Sparta. The main character of the dialogue is the Athenian stranger. Thus we can reasonably believe that he serves as the spokesperson for Plato himself. The aim of the dialogue is to draft laws for a future Cretean colony, Magnesia.

Since one of Plato's basic assumptions is that happiness comes through virtue, in drafting laws for Magnesia the Athenian stranger emphasizes the inculcation of virtue among the citizens. Unlike *The Republic* where there are three different virtues each of which corresponds to one class in the *polis*, there is only one virtue that is emphasized for the whole body of citizens in *The Laws*, and that is temperance. In a sense, the emphasis that was placed on the intellectual virtue of wisdom in *The Republic* shifts to the popular virtue of temperance in *The Laws*.

In *The Laws*, Plato (1975) distinguishes two sorts of emotion in the human soul: reason and passions⁵. We can describe these emotions as rational and irrational emotions respectively. Plato likens these emotions to the strings of a puppet. These strings pull us in opposite directions; we go back and forward between virtue and vice. We should constantly obey the string of reason, which is golden and holy, and resist the pull of the other strings, which are made of inferior materials. Corresponding to the golden string of reason in the human soul, there exists the golden string of law in the *polis*. Accordingly, law is a public decision about pleasures and pains (*Laws* 644-645). In achieving virtue and avoiding vice, the most important aide to a human being is the law. Compared to the human soul in *The Republic*, Plato in *The Laws* expresses a more pessimistic view of human nature. In *The Laws* the irrational part of human nature dominates the rational part. In *The Republic*, the members of at least one section of the society, the guardians, were able to check their desires through the cooperation of reason and spirit. However, in *The Laws* human beings are presented as creatures that are in need of constant control by the law. As Plato (1975) states, “it is vital that men should lay down laws for themselves and live in obedience to them; otherwise they will be indistinguishable from wild animals of the utmost savagery” (*Laws* 874-875).

The new ideal regime, which is based on the ideas about the human soul, as presented above, is grounded in the rule of law. In other words, the second-best regime in *The Statesman* becomes the best regime in *The Laws*. This new ideal is opposite to the ideal regime that is presented in *The Republic*. In *The Laws* Plato thinks that rather than bringing about justice and thus happiness to the *polis* and the individual, untrammelled rule of a person or of a group of persons leads the *polis* to destruction

(*Laws* 715). In contradistinction to his views in *The Republic* and *The Statesman*, in *The Laws*, Plato declares that no mortal soul can possess unlimited power without getting corrupted unless harnessed by unchanging laws (*Laws* 691).

At this point I should also indicate that Plato still thinks that the possession of knowledge is superior to the possession of law. Yet he does not see the emergence of the guardians as in *The Republic* or of a true statesman as in *The Statesman* as a likely possibility. Plato (1975) argues that:

If ever by the grace of God some natural genius were born, and had the chance to assume such power, he would have no need of laws to control him. Knowledge is unsurpassed by any law or regulation; reason, if it is genuine and really enjoys its natural freedom, should have universal power: it is not right that it should be under the control of anything else, as though it were some sort of slave. But as it is, such a character is nowhere to be found, except a hint of it here and there. That is why we need to choose the second alternative, law and regulation, which embody general principles, but cannot provide for every individual case. (*Laws* 875)

Since passions prevail over reason in the human soul, if the citizens are going to be temperate, reason needs to be supplemented by the force of law. Thus, citizens of Magnesia will subordinate their souls to the law. However, if the passions are dominant in the soul, how can we expect an individual to subordinate her/his soul to the law? If an individual were able to subordinate her/his soul to the laws, s/he could have subordinated it to the reason as well. Yet, one can say “in the case of subordinating one’s soul to the law there is an additional factor: the fear of punishment.” However, given Plato’s emphasis on virtue, compliance with the law merely out of fear would not be a satisfactory option (890-891).

Obedience to the law should come from the free consent of the individual; the citizen should willingly obey the law. How is this going to be accomplished? Plato’s answer is “through education.” The main premise is that education will teach citizens

to obey the law. Since happiness is attained only through becoming virtuous, and becoming virtuous is possible only by following the law, people must be educated to follow the law. To this end, education will begin even before the citizen is born; Plato does not leave anything to chance. The expectant mother would exercise and move constantly throughout the pregnancy. From the baby's birth until three years of age, s/he should always be carried so that s/he will be subject to constant movement, because Plato thinks that this constant movement is conducive to creating a courageous personality. Also, the external motion will drive away any internal motions that cause fear in the soul (*Laws* 789).

From three to six years of age, both boys and girls will play together at the village temples, and their games will be supervised closely. They will be kept in order and restrained by their nurses who themselves are subject to supervision. Once the children reach the age of six the sexes will be separated, however, the education of the girls will be the same as possible to that of the boys. From the age of six until the age of ten there will be simple physical training such as riding and wrestling, and from ten to thirteen the basic intellectual skills, such as reading and writing, will be taught. Between the ages of sixteen and twenty training in arithmetic and the military arts will take place. There is little room for change in the curriculum, since permanence rather than change is the aim. Even the games of the children must be fixed with each generation repeating the games that the previous generations played. In this way, all the generations will grow up in the same way and this will contribute to the stability of the *polis*.

Similarly, the laws of the *polis* will be fixed, because the stability of the laws will reinforce the respect that the citizens have toward them. As the Athenian stranger explains:

When the laws under which people were brought up have by some heaven-sent good fortune remained unchanged over a long period, so that no one remembers or has heard of things ever being any different, the soul is filled with such respect for tradition that it shrinks from meddling with it in any way. (*Laws* 798)

The most important institution to secure the stability of the laws is the body of magistrates that are called *nomophulakes*. The term literally means “guardians of the laws.” The first and foremost duty of the *nomophulakes* is to oversee the enforcement of the laws (*Laws* 754-755). The members of the body of *nomophulakes* are at least fifty years old and they can serve until they are seventy years old. There are thirty-seven of them and they are selected through a system which combines both election and lot.

Another body of magistrates that has responsibility for the preservation, and when necessary, improvement of the laws is the “Nocturnal Council.” This council includes ten senior *nomophulakes*--Priests who have won high distinction, the Minister of Education, previous Ministers of Education, and some citizens who have traveled abroad. All of these members must also be at least fifty years old. Each will bring to meetings a young citizen of their own choice between the ages of thirty and forty. This council meets on a daily basis at dawn and daybreak, which are convenient hours for the busy officials. The main purpose of these meetings is to contemplate about the nature of the laws of the *polis*. Thus the members of this council are expected to be familiar with legal and political philosophy (*Laws* 951-952). One of the duties of the Nocturnal Council is to deal with dissidents. Those citizens who challenge the legitimacy of the

laws are subjected to solitary confinement for five years, and during these five years, only the members of the Nocturnal Council can visit them. After five years of contemplation, if the dissident still continues to disagree, s/he is put to death (*Laws* 908-909).

Another means that secures the compliance of the citizens to the laws is religion. Different from *The Republic*, in *The Laws* Plato sees religion as a necessary element in the creation of a virtuous society. One main benefit of religion is that it can be used to scare human beings into being virtuous. People might break the law when they think they are not being observed, especially if they think there is also no god or gods to see them. Yet if they believe that a god or gods exist and control everything, they would know that their wrongdoing would not go unpunished. It is of crucial importance to secure among the citizens the belief that a god or gods exist, and that the laws are the creation of this or these deities. In Book X of *The Laws*, Plato tries to prove that a god or gods exist and that laws are their creations. The atheistic view that a god or gods do not exist must be refuted because it undermines one of Plato's basic premises: that absolute moral standards that are laid down by a higher power exist and that they can be known. The atheistic view depends on a doctrine that makes a distinction between "soul" (*psyche*) and "design" (*techne*) on one hand; and "matter" (*soma*), "chance" (*tuche*), and "nature" (*phusis*) on the other. According to this doctrine, the order that exists in the universe developed spontaneously. In other words, the cause of all great things in nature is nature itself. Originally, there existed four primary elements: earth, water, air, and fire; and through random combinations of these elements were created secondary physical bodies--the earth, sun, moon, and stars. That is to say, neither

intelligent planning, nor a deity, nor art but nature and chance were responsible for the emergence of the universe (*Laws* 889-890). The moral implication of this view is that “goodness according to nature and goodness according to the law are two different things, and there is no natural standard of justice at all” (*Laws* 889). All the existing moral rules are made by human beings, and as a result, arbitrary.

Plato’s response to this corrupting doctrine starts from the observation that in nature no inanimate thing moves itself; movement is always due to an external cause. Only living things can move themselves, and they owe this ability to the soul. Thus, the soul comes before matter. As the Athenian stranger puts it, “[the] soul is the master, and matter its natural subject” (*Laws* 896). Similarly, at the very beginning of the universe there must have been a prime soul that started the whole process. This soul is the primary force--God. The order that we see around us is the result of an intelligent design rather than that of blind chance. Indeed, Plato thinks that both reason in the human soul and reason in the *polis*, the law, are the reflections of this eternal reason (*Laws* 893-900). This belief is so fundamental in stimulating the citizens to virtuous behavior that if some of them cannot be convinced about the truth of these statements, they should be put to death (*Laws* 908-909).

Going back to the discussion about Plato’s different views in the three dialogues that were followed in this chapter, the point that I would like to emphasize is that, for the purposes of this study, we do not need to arrive at a conclusion about his views. As I indicated at the outset of this part, in this and the following chapters, the aim is to analyze Plato and Aristotle’s moral and political views to see how they approached conflict.

Conclusion

The presentation of Plato's moral and political views shows that, despite the differences of his views in each work, he consistently holds a certain position towards conflict. This position emphasizes the harmony that exists in the nature. According to Plato, the creation of justice in individuals and society requires us to follow the order that is contained in nature. There is no room for conflict in this order. As Black (1992) points out, "conflict is never natural, never really necessary or justifiable, except in perverted forms of society" (p. 170). Thus, to the extent that Plato places justice above all other virtues, he rejects conflict among the parts of the soul and among different classes of the *polis*. In this regard, it is not misleading to say that we cannot find a foundation in Plato's moral and political philosophy to justify toleration on the basis of prudence.

¹ I am using Benjamin Jowett's translation of *The Republic*. (New York: Vintage Classics Edition, 1991). B. Jowett prefers to use the word "concupiscent" instead of "appetitive." However, since it is more commonly used in translations, I will employ the latter word to render the meaning that B. Jowett wants to render by the former one.

² When the citizens are young, they will distinguish themselves in the battlefield. When they are old and mature, they will distinguish themselves in the political arena by their actions to secure the public good.

³ Although Plato makes women a part of the auxiliaries it is not clear whether he also wants them to be the philosopher-rulers of the *polis*. Stated differently, although women are welcomed to the class of courageous, it is not clear whether they can be the part of the class of the wise as well. Since the rulers emerge out of the class of the courageous, one is led to think that women can also be rulers.

⁴ This discussion of vertical mobilization is limited to *male* children between different classes in the *polis*, and the above presented discussion of marriage and the common *possession of women* and children among the guardians leads one to think that females are not on equal standing with males in the guardian class. Thus, probably for Plato females will not be among the rulers.

⁵ It is reasonable to think that "passion" in the twofold division of reason and passion in *The Laws* corresponds to "desire" in the tripartite division of reason, passion, and desire in *The Republic*.

CHAPTER 5: THE ANCIENT WAY OF LOOKING AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND
SOCIETY: THE MORAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF ARISTOTLE

The Individual as a Political Animal

In the *Historia Animalium*, --*The History of Animals*-- Aristotle (1910) classifies human beings under the general category of gregarious animals. The characteristic feature of gregarious animals is that they live together in herds, swarms, and in other forms of communities. Some of the gregarious animals like bees and ants share a common good and work towards it. Aristotle calls these kinds of animals “political animals.” There are others among gregarious animals like cows and pigs that do not pursue a common good but seek more individual interests. For Aristotle human beings combine the characteristics of both groups; that is, they use their community to obtain both individual and communal interests (487b-488a).

As social animals, the first community human beings come to enjoy is the household. For Aristotle, the household is the community that makes living possible. At this point, I would like to explain that by community (*koinon*) Aristotle means every kind of sharing that brings individuals together. As Yack (1999) puts it, “wherever individuals hold something in common (*koinon*), whether it be a home, a contract or a goal, Aristotle sees a community.” The subject of this sharing can be goods--such as pleasure, property, or virtue--or an activity--such as politics, trade, or

worship. The household as a community is a product of nature (*phusis*) and consists of two components. These components are the union of husband and wife and the union of master and slave. The union of husband and wife comes into being for the sake of procreation, and according to Aristotle (1997) this union is not a result of deliberate choice, but like other animals, husband and wife “have a natural desire to leave behind something else like themselves” (*Politics* 1252a29-30). The second union in the household, the union of master and slave, is for the sake of survival. This is not a deliberate choice either, but the result of nature. Aristotle believes master and slave form a natural couple because the master has the capacity to deliberate on matters that pertain to household management, and the slave has the capacity to carry out what s/he has been told to do by the master (*Politics* 1252a24-34).

The second level of social organization is the village. Aristotle says:

as soon as several households have come together into a community for other than the needs of the day, then there is a village. By nature, in fact, the village seems to be principally an offshoot of the household, namely the children and the children of the children. (*Politics* 1252b15-18)

Despite the fact that the village comes into being for the sake of a purpose that is greater than meeting daily needs, it is not yet the highest form of community where human needs can be satisfied to the fullest extent.

The highest level of human community according to Aristotle is the *polis*.

Given Aristotle’s teleological approach, the *polis* is the goal of the preceding communities, the household and the village. In addition to the material and biological needs of our bodies--food, clothing, shelter, security and generation--we human beings also have other needs with respect to our souls such as friendship (*philia*) and leisurely activities including music, literature, and philosophy. While our bodily needs can be

satisfied to some extent in the lower levels of communal development, namely in the household and the village, to satisfy the needs of our souls a higher level of social cooperation must be arrived at; and this higher level of cooperation is attained in the *polis*. Additionally, as a community that is made of many individuals with different skills, a *polis* can fulfill the basic needs in a much better way than a household or a village. Thus, the *polis* is a community where the “multiple needs” of human beings can be satisfied.¹ In Aristotle’s words:

When the community made up of several villages is complete, it is then a city, possessing the limit of every self-sufficiency, practically speaking; and though it originates for the sake of staying alive, it exists for the sake of *living well* (italics mine).² (*Politics* 1252b27-30)

By stating that in the *polis* the needs of both soul and body are satisfied at a higher level, it is not claimed that Aristotle thought that the needs (or goods) of our souls and those of our bodies were of equal importance. On the contrary, he believed them to be unequal. However, he did not sacrifice one to the other as the contemporary communitarians would be willing to do³ (Terchek, 1997, p. 63). In order to understand better the status of those different goods in Aristotle’s philosophy, we need to comprehend his view of human goodness. By a close examination of human goodness, as it is presented in *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*), we can grasp also what “living well” means for Aristotle.

The Purpose of the Individual: Living Well.

The two main questions that are addressed in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* are: "What is human goodness and how can it be attained?" As in all of his investigations Aristotle begins to analyze the concept of human goodness by giving the conventional definitions of it that are widely held in society. Thus, Aristotle (1976) proceeds by stating that "every art and every investigation, and similarly every action and pursuit, is considered to aim at some good. Hence Good has been rightly defined as 'that at which all things aim' " (NE 1094a1-4). Since all human activities aim at the Good, and since living in itself is an activity, then, "living well" must necessarily mean a life in accordance with the Good. Therefore, in order to live well, we need to know what the Good is.

The Good is the thing that we choose for its own sake, and all other ends are chosen for the sake of the Good. According to Aristotle, this constitutes supreme good. Then, Aristotle shows that supreme human goodness is commonly equated with happiness. Regarding supreme human goodness, Aristotle states, "there is pretty general agreement. 'It is happiness', say both ordinary and cultured people" (NE 1095a15-18).

However, as Terchek and Moore (2000, p. 906) rightly indicate, "Aristotle is not satisfied with allowing conventional belief to stand untested; he subjects it to the scrutiny of reason in order to move us beyond our uncritical assumptions" (p. 906). Aristotle's dissatisfaction with the conventional belief about human happiness stems

from the fact that there is disagreement as to what happiness consists of. He argues that the answer given to this question by ordinary people differs from the answer that is given by the wise. For the majority of people, happiness consists of something obvious and familiar such as pleasure, money, or fame. On the other hand, some of the wise have the view that “over and above these particular goods there is another which is good in itself and the cause of whatever goodness there is in all these others” (*NE* 1095a27-29).

In order to eliminate the ambiguity surrounding the nature of happiness, Aristotle examines the definitions of happiness provided by both ordinary and wise people. Aristotle begins by differentiating three sorts of life: the life of enjoyment, the life of politics, and the life of contemplation (*NE* 1095b14-1096a3). The life of enjoyment is concerned with earthly pleasures such as the pleasures of taste and touch. Leading such a life is considered to be the attainment of supreme human goodness by the masses and the most vulgar. Yet a quick glance at the lives of animals reveals that the life of enjoyment cannot be the supreme human good. The reason is that animals, which are lower than human beings, also share in the life of enjoyment so this cannot be supreme human happiness.

Considering next a life of politics, can this life be the one that leads to the attainment of happiness? In order to answer this question, we need to know the concerns involved in a life in politics. Aristotle argues that, broadly speaking, honor forms the primary goal of political life. However, because to some extent it is dependent more on what other people give than on one’s own merits, honor cannot be the Good. If honor is something that is mostly given by others, it can be taken away

from the person who is honored. Aristotle believes that happiness must be something that is dependent more on oneself and owned by oneself.

At this point, I must point out that Aristotle does not think that the attainment of happiness is totally dependent on one's actions. In addition to one's efforts to attain happiness, one needs to have external and bodily means. Here Aristotle follows Plato's threefold division of goods: external goods, goods of the soul, and goods of the body (*NE* 1098b10-15). External goods--such as wealth, friends, good children and other things of that sort--are what Aristotle has in mind. But, "the goods of the soul are good in the strictest and fullest sense, and we rank actions and activities of the soul as goods of soul" (*NE* 1098b14-16). Finally, bodily health and physical appearance form the goods of the body.

Going back to the discussion of whether honor is happiness or not, Aristotle also argues that if honor were happiness then one would be happy even while sleeping--that is while inactive--or while bearing "the most atrocious suffering and misfortune" (*NE* 1095b31-1096a2). Due to these features of honor, it cannot be the Good, that is, happiness.

If happiness is gained neither by earthly pleasure nor by honor, then is it achieved through a life of contemplation? Interestingly, Aristotle postpones the discussion of this sort of life to a later time. Rather, he continues by arguing that perhaps the answer to the question of "what is happiness?" can be found "by grasping what is the function of man" (*NE* 1097b25-26). Aristotle reasons that just as an eye, a nose and every other part of our body has a function, a human being who is the totality of all these parts must have a function too. Since it is shared by both the plants and

animals, living in itself cannot be the *proper* function of an individual. Similarly, a life based solely on senses does not qualify either because it is also something that human beings share with animals. Aristotle believes that “there remains, then, a practical life of the rational part” (NE 1098a3-4). Since the only rational animals are human beings, a life based on reason must be the proper life for them. Thus, for Aristotle, the function of a human being is to live a life based on reason. At this point, Aristotle defines happiness:

If we assume that the function of a man is a kind of life, viz., an activity or series of actions of the soul, implying a rational principle; and if the function of a good man is to perform these well and rightly; and if every function is performed well when performed in accordance with its proper excellence: if all this is so, the conclusion is that the good for man is an activity of soul in accordance with virtue, or if there are more kinds of virtue than one, in accordance with the best and most perfect kind. (NE 1098a12-18)

Aristotle further qualifies that happiness requires virtuous activity of the soul throughout a lifetime when he says, “One swallow does not make a summer” (1098a19-22).

Since “virtuous” activity of the soul throughout the lifetime is the precondition for attaining happiness, the next thing to be examined is “virtue.” However, before turning to an analysis of virtue, I would like to explain very briefly that Aristotle emphasizes that happiness is not just a state of mind but involves the virtuous *activity* of the soul. He makes a distinction between the possession of virtue and the exercise of virtue. According to Aristotle, it is possible to possess virtue without actually employing it in one’s dealings with others. While the possession of virtue is a *state* of mind, exercise of virtue is an *activity*, and as long as that state of mind is not converted into real action, one cannot become a good person. Aristotle notes, “it is possible for

the *stateto* be present in a person without affecting any good result (e.g. if he is asleep or quiescent in some other way), but not for the *activity*: he will necessarily act and act well” (*NE* 1099a1-4).

Aristotle divides virtues into two aspects: moral and intellectual (*NE* 1103a3-10). This twofold division of virtues stems from his treatment of the human soul as the combination of two parts: rational and irrational (*NE* 1102a29-30). Thus, while the moral virtues like liberality and temperance belong to the irrational part of the soul, the intellectual virtues like wisdom and prudence belong to the rational part of the soul.

Furthermore, both the rational and irrational parts of the soul contain two different parts within themselves. The rational part is formed by scientific (or theoretical) and calculative (or practical) divisions, and the irrational part of the soul by vegetative and appetitive components. The scientific division of the rational part of the soul is concerned with the contemplation of objects that are devoid of change. On the other hand, the calculative division contemplates things that are variable (*NE* 1138b34-1139a15). Some of the intellectual virtues like wisdom are related to the scientific division, while some others like prudence are possessed by the calculative division.

Aristotle points out that the vegetative component of the soul is related to nutrition and growth. The functions of the vegetative component, specifically nourishment and growth, are commonly possessed by all living things. On the other hand, the appetitive component is where pleasure and pain reside in the soul. While pleasures induce us to act in a wrong way, pain leads us to refrain from fine deeds (*NE* 1104b9-11). This is actually where moral virtues come into play.

Moral virtues are concerned with pleasure and pain, and generally, in this sense, a moral virtue consists in acting in a right way considering pleasure or pain. For Aristotle, acting in a right way--being morally virtuous--lies in taking an intermediate course between two vices, one being excess and the other being deficiency. Thus, virtue (*arete*) is a mean condition. In Aristotle's words:

It is possible, for example, to feel fear, confidence, desire, anger, pity, and pleasure and pain generally, too much or too little; and both of these are wrong. But to have these feelings at the right times on the right grounds towards the right people for the right motive and in the right way is to feel them to an intermediate, that is to the best, degree; and this is the mark of virtue. . . . Virtue, then, is a mean condition, inasmuch as it aims at hitting the mean. (*NE* 1106b18-28)

For example, being a moral virtue temperance (*sophrosune*) is a mean that lies between the vices of licentiousness (*akolasia*) and insensibility (*anaesthesia*), which are respectively an excess and a deficiency of pleasure. However, this mean is not in relation to a *thing* but in relation to an *individual*. A mean in relation to a thing is the midpoint from the two extremes, and is one and the same for everybody. However, a mean in relation to an individual differs from person to person, and is a point that is neither excessive nor deficient. Aristotle illustrates the difference between the mean in relation to a thing and the mean in relation to people by using the following example:

If ten is "many" and two "few" of some quantity, six is the mean if one takes it in relation to the thing, because it exceeds the one number and is exceeded by the other by the same amount; and this is the mean by arithmetical reckoning. But the mean in relation to us is not to be obtained in this way. Supposing that ten pounds of food is a large and two pounds a small allowance for an athlete, it does not follow that the trainer will prescribe six pounds; for even this is perhaps too much or too little for the person who is to receive it. (*NE* 1106a34-b3)

The appetitive part of the soul fails to make just decisions concerning pleasures and pain, unless it is commanded in the decision by the rational part of the soul. The reason is that making a just decision necessitates deliberation, and being devoid of

reason the appetitive part cannot deliberate by itself. This deficiency of the appetitive part is covered by the calculative division of the soul. Although it is irrational, the appetitive part “does in a way participate in reason, in the sense that it is submissive and obedient to it” (NE 1102b31-32). Thus, if a human being is ever going to achieve moral goodness, the appetitive part of the soul ought to be under the control of the rational part at all times (NE 1119b16-19).

Having established what virtue is for Aristotle, now we can look at the specific instances of both moral and intellectual virtues. In addition to temperance mentioned above, Aristotle enumerates the following moral virtues: courage (*andreia*), liberality (*eleutheriotes*), magnificence (*megaloprepeia*), magnanimity (*megalopsuchia*), proper ambition, patience (*praotes*), truthfulness (*aletheia*) and wittiness (*eutrapelia*).

As a moral virtue courage is concerned with the right attitude towards feelings of fear and confidence. It lies between the vices of rashness (*thrasutes*), which is an excess in terms of self-confidence, and cowardice (*deilia*). Another moral virtue, liberality is concerned with getting and spending on a small scale. According to Aristotle, a liberal person is someone who makes the best use of her/his wealth, and this virtue is concerned more with giving and spending than with receiving. A liberal person receives money from her/his property. S/he does not get money for the sake of money, but rather in order to give it (NE 1119b20-1122a17). The excess of this virtue is prodigality (*asotia*) and the deficiency is illiberality (*aneleutheria*). Magnificence is also a virtue concerned with getting and spending money, however, unlike liberality, it involves grand scale expenditures. Being deficient in this sphere of action is named pettiness (*mikroprepeia*); being excessive is vulgarity (*apeirokalia*) (NE 1122a18-a32).

Magnanimity is concerned with honor and dishonor on a grand scale. Those who think they are deserving of all honors without actual effort are committing the vice of vanity (*chaunates*), and those who think that they are worthless in spite of the positive values they may possess commit the vice of pusillanimity (*mikropsuchia*). Aristotle explains, “a person is considered to be magnanimous if he thinks that he is worthy of great things, provided that he is worthy of them”(*NE* 1123a35-b1). Proper ambition is the mean condition regarding honor and dishonor on a smaller scale. The excess is ambition (*philotemia*) and the deficiency is unambitiousness (*aphilitomia*) (*NE* 1107b22-1108a1). A person who has goals that are too high in proportion to her/his level of goods (external, bodily, and those of soul) is suffering from ambition. On the other hand, a person who does not have any goal in life is not acting morally either. Human beings should have ambitions in accordance with the goods they enjoy.

The virtue associated with the feeling of anger is patience (*praote*), and the two vices are irascibility (*orgilotos*) and lack of spirit (*aorgesia*). Aristotle believes that:

The man who gets angry at the right things and with the right people, and also in the right way and at the right time and for the right length of time, is commended; so this person will be patient, inasmuch as patience is commendable, because a patient person tends to be unperturbed and not carried away by his feelings, but indignant only in the way and on the grounds and for the length of time that his principle prescribes. (*NE* 1125b31-1126a1)

The next moral virtue is truthfulness. It is concerned with telling the truth in self-expression; the excess is boastfulness (*alazoneia*), and the deficiency is understatement (*eironeia*). A boaster pretends to have distinguished qualities that s/he either does not possess at all or to a lesser degree than s/he claims. The opposite is an ironical person who understates her/his real value. A truthful person, however, neither exaggerates nor depreciates her/his value (*NE* 1127a14-b33).

Wittiness is the mean point with regard to conversational character. Some people go too far in being humorous and commit the vice of buffoonery. They try to be amusing even at the cost of humiliating themselves. This is an extreme and hence constitutes a vice. The opposite extreme is boorishness. A boorish person does not have any sense of humor; they neither joke with others nor tolerate the jokes of others. A witty person is one who knows how to exercise humor. The friendship of such a person is always welcomed, for s/he contributes to an important part of life through her/his witty conversation; s/he provides relaxation (*NE* 1127b34-1128b8).

As stated above, intellectual virtues belong to the rational part of the soul. According to Aristotle there are two basic intellectual virtues, wisdom and prudence. Wisdom is related to the scientific (or theoretical) part of the soul. A wise person is one who knows the first principles and what follows from them. Wisdom is concerned with invariable objects; it is scientific knowledge and intuition. Wisdom is not sought with a view to personal advantage since the objects of research of the wise person are not human goods. On the other hand, prudence is concerned with objects of research that are variable and as a result involves deliberation. Aristotle point out that “nobody deliberates about things that cannot be otherwise” (*NE* 1141b11-12). The objects that are sought by prudent human beings are human goods. Prudence leads people to conduct their acts in a right way. It determines which actions serve best the purpose of attaining happiness, and thus, prudence belongs to the calculative part of the soul.

According to Aristotle, if a person is going to perform to the fullest extent her/his function, s/he needs to make use of both intellectual and moral virtues. In a practical life, the intellectual virtue that is going to cooperate with moral virtues is

prudence. In the cooperation between prudence and moral virtues, the division of labor requires that moral virtues ensure the correctness of the end, and prudence that of the means (*NE* 1144a6-9).

At this stage, I would like to emphasize that Aristotle thinks intellectual virtues to be more important than moral virtues. Within intellectual virtues, those that belong to the theoretical part have priority over those that belong to the practical part. Thus, for Aristotle the life of theoretical activity--the life of philosophy--is the happiest life. Aristotle reasons that if happiness is the virtuous activity of the soul then it should be based on the highest virtue. It also follows that this virtue will be the virtue of the best part in the soul (*NE* 1177a10-13). So, since the theoretical part constitutes the highest part of the soul, happiness must be a life in accordance with the virtue of the theoretical life; this activity is contemplation. Aristotle presents this point in the following way: “the best and most pleasant life is the life of intellect, since the intellect is in the fullest sense the man. So this life will be also the happiest” (*NE* 1178a6-8).

How are the virtues that are so crucial for the attainment of happiness, and hence for living well, established in the human soul? Intellectual virtues owe their inception and growth chiefly to instruction; therefore they need time and experience (*NE* 1103a14-16). The moral virtues, on the other hand, are established by habituation; none of the moral virtues are engendered in us by nature. Nature forms individuals in a suitable way to acquire moral virtues. However, the establishment of these virtues as states of character is due to habit. According to Aristotle:

Anything that we have to learn to do we learn by [the] actual doing of it: people become builders by building and instrumentalists by playing instruments. Similarly we become just by performing just acts, temperate by performing temperate ones, brave by performing brave ones. (*NE* 1103a34-1103b2)

But are all people capable of habituating themselves to virtues?

Becoming virtuous through habit can be a difficult undertaking. It is quite possible that, in the absence of external obligation, a human being could easily give up the painful process of becoming a virtuous person. Also, human beings are social animals and they cannot live in isolation from society, and a person needs virtuous associates to conduct virtuous actions. A person cannot be virtuous by herself/himself. This is evident from Aristotle's belief that happiness is an *activity* of the soul. Aristotle (1997) states in the *Politics* that "happiness is perfect exercise of and use of virtue" (1332a7-a19).

Aristotle thinks that the moral development of a citizen is too important a matter to be left to the sole discretion of the citizen herself/himself. Hence, Aristotle (1997), in the *Politics*, charges the *polis* with the duty of inculcating virtues in citizens: "the city truly and not verbally so called must make virtue its care" (1280a34-1280b8). Similarly in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle (1976) states that "legislators make their citizens good by habituation; this is the intention of every legislator, and those who do not carry it out fail of their object" (1103b3-7). According to Galston (1991), a contemporary philosopher, "Aristotle. . .virtually defined the *polis* as a tutelary community, based on a shared moral understanding, and directed toward a specific way of life" (p. 80).

A statesman (or statesmen depending on the regime type) must first know what virtues a good person has in order to fulfill her/his responsibility of making citizens good. The statesman learns this through studying political science. In this direction, according to Aristotle (1976) a true statesman takes special pains to learn what human happiness consists of, that is, by studying political science (*NE* 1102a5-15). With a

knowledge of political science, a statesman can then be in a position to know which institutional arrangements in the regime as well as what kind of education and laws serve to create virtuous citizens. As a practical science, political science is concerned with the realization of human happiness, and, therefore, it aims at creating the conditions in which happiness can be obtained. In this sense, while moral science (ethics) searches for the characteristics of a happy person, political science seeks to materialize these characteristics in the citizens. Political science is the systematic study of creating virtuous citizens.

Once the statesman completes her/his training in political science, s/he can prescribe the laws and curricula of civic education that will make citizens virtuous. Laws that are enforced by the *polis* command citizens to act according to the mean in moral matters. By repeating just acts, citizens become just people. At the same time, civic education teaches citizens why they should act in the way that is prescribed by the laws. In this way, citizens consolidate their habits at a conscious level. Indeed, Aristotle indicates that in order for an act to qualify as a virtuous act, it should be entered into not only according to virtue, but also consciously and willingly. In this sense, for Aristotle, a person who acts according to the mean merely out of fear of punishment would not be a moral person (*NE* 1105a17-b18).

Another science that is instrumental to helping the statesman in her/his task is psychology. Psychology is the science that searches the human soul. Since virtues reside in the human soul, Aristotle believes, “it is evident that the statesman ought to have some acquaintance with psychology, just as a doctor who intends to treat the eye must have a knowledge of the body as a whole” (*NE* 1102a17-19).

The Virtuous Regime

In the *Politics* Aristotle (1997) points out that in order to understand what a regime is, one must first understand what a *polis* is; and since a *polis* is a multitude of citizens, to understand what a *polis* is requires knowledge of what a citizen is (1274b32-1275a5). Therefore, before presenting the best regime in which real happiness--the virtuous activity of the soul--can be attained, I will present Aristotle's views on citizen, *polis*, and regime in general.

According to Aristotle (1997), a citizen is someone whose distinctive feature is his having a share in making decisions in the *polis* (*Politics* 1275a22-34). Basically, there are two sorts of decisions that are made in a city: deliberative and judicial. Deliberative decisions are concerned with making laws, declaring war and peace, allocating honors, and the like. They are about common concerns where there is more than one possible course of action. The citizens deliberate about the best way to proceed under the circumstances. This, of course, requires the virtue of prudence. As will be remembered, for Aristotle it is the practical (or calculative) part of our soul that is in charge of making decisions about practical matters. And the preeminence of the practical part--its virtue--is prudence.

Judicial decisions concern appropriate punishment for convicted criminals, solving disagreements that can emerge out of business transactions, or any other dealings between individuals. Thus, for Aristotle, "whoever is entitled to share in

deliberative or judicial office is a citizen in that particular city ” (*Politics* 1275b17-22).

Regarding the *polis* Aristotle states that

When the community made up of several villages is complete, it is then a city, possessing the limit of every self-sufficiency, practically speaking; and though it originates for the sake of staying alive, it exists for the sake of *living well* (italics mine). (*Politics* 1252b27-30)

On the other hand, “a regime is the way a city is arranged both with respect to its other offices and, above all, with respect to the office that has control over all the rest” (*Politics* 1278b8-15). Aristotle thinks that since the ruling body has control in a *polis* over all other offices, then the regime is the ruling body. According to Bates (2003),

In the Greek *polis*, as well as in Aristotle’s *polis*, political authority was unified under the regime. Although alternative views of the best way of life, different from the authoritative opinion about it, did exist in a *polis*, they lacked authority unless they overturned the regime in a revolution. (p. 116)

A ruling body may consist of one person, a few, or a majority. Depending on whether the ruling body pursues the common advantage of *polis* or the special advantage of itself, regimes become correct or incorrect, respectively. Thus, correct regimes are: monarchies, one person rule for the common advantage; aristocracies, rule by a virtuous minority for the benefit of all; and polities, rule by the majority of citizens for the common advantage. On the other hand, incorrect ones are: tyrannies, rule by one person for the benefit of the ruler himself; oligarchies, rule by a rich minority for their own benefit; and democracies, rule by the poor populace for their own advantage (*Politics* 1279a22-b11).

In connection with different regime types, Aristotle distinguishes between two different types: political and despotic. Accordingly, a type of regime that seeks the benefit of the ruled is political, and the one that seeks special interests is despotic.

Aristotle states that in the household, rule by the master over the slave is a form of despotic rule since it is for the benefit of the master. Similarly, the rule of a tyrant is of this type. On the other hand, the authority of the husband over the wife is a sort of political rule. In principle, political rule is to rule over those who are free and equal.

Having clarified the concepts of citizen, *polis*, and regime, now it is appropriate to examine the “best regime” in Aristotle’s political philosophy. Aristotle begins his examination of the best regime by first restating the end for which it exists: happiness--the virtuous activity of the soul. In another place, Aristotle consolidates this point by stating that “it is in the best regime that the citizen is the one who has the ability, and makes the choice, to be ruled and to rule with a view to the way of life that accords with virtue” (*Politics* 1283b35-1284a3).

At this point, I would like to draw attention to a debate regarding the selection of virtue that would lead to the happiest life possible. Aristotle thought that the rational part of the soul has precedence over the appetitive part, and, as a result, the virtues that belong to the rational part are more valuable. However, there is also another division between the theoretical and practical parts within the rational part itself. Their virtues are also different from one another. While wisdom--the virtue of the theoretical part--is concerned with the invariable, that is with what cannot be otherwise, prudence--the virtue of the practical part--is concerned with deliberation on variable things.

Aristotle reports that some argue that real happiness is contemplation. They also argue that since ruling one’s neighbor despotically is unjust, politics is not virtuous. As a result, they prefer to stay away from public responsibilities and devote themselves to philosophical inquiry. The life of Socrates is an example of this. Conversely, others

argue that since happiness is a virtuous *activity* of the soul, solitary contemplation cannot provide happiness because it is not an activity. Happiness requires being active, that is doing something, and for these people politics is an activity. To the extent that political activity is based on a practical intellectual virtue—prudence—happiness must be due to political activity. Aristotle finds both of these arguments partly right and partly wrong. The former group is right when they say that ruling one's neighbors despotically is unjust; however, they are wrong when they say that all rule is despotic since there is also political rule which is over the free and equal. On the other hand, the latter group is right to say that happiness is an activity but wrong to argue that only ruling, and not contemplation, is an activity (*Politics* 1325a16-b33).

For Aristotle, philosophical contemplation is also an activity. He says:

The practical life, however, need not be directed towards others, as some think, nor need those thoughts alone be active which are for the sake of what results from acting. Rather much more so are those that are ends in themselves and are kinds of study and thinking for their own sake. For acting well is an end, so some activity is an end, and we also say, even in the case of external actions, that those are most of all acting in the authoritative sense who are, by their thoughts, the ruling craftsmen. (*Politics* 1325b14-b23)

In this sense, the contemplative life can also be considered as a sort of practical life.

Those who think that a philosophical life can only be led by staying away from politics are wrong, because there is a kind of rule--political rule--that is compatible with leading a virtuous life. Therefore, in the best regime, philosophers will take an active part in political life. Of course, the happiest life is the life of contemplation, but not in solitude. By nature human beings are political animals (*Politics* 1278b17-b30). They are so constituted by nature that they cannot live, or live well, outside of society (Strauss, 1953, p. 29). These considerations lead to the conclusion that in Aristotle's

political philosophy the best regime is an aristocratic one.⁴ The main reason is that aristocracy is the only regime that has virtue as its distinguishing characteristic. It is true that all other regimes may have some of the virtues to some extent, but an aristocracy is the regime that is solely based on virtue. And, having a ruling aristocracy fits Aristotle's (1997) opinion about who will become the citizens of the best kind of regime and what their virtues will be:

The best city will not make citizens of mechanics, but if they are citizens, then the virtue of a citizen. . . must not be predicated of every citizen, nor indeed of the free only, but only of those who are released from works of necessityConsequently the vulgar mechanic and the laborer must be citizens in some regime but could not be in certain others--for example, in any regime called an aristocracy and where the honors of office are given in accordance with virtue and merit. For it is impossible to practice the works of virtue while leading the life of a mechanic or laborer. (*Politics* 1277b39-1278a21)

There is no reason for vulgar mechanics or laborers to not have moral virtues such as temperance, courage, and truthfulness because of the nature of their work. However, it becomes clear that the virtues Aristotle has in mind when considering the best regime are mainly the intellectual ones, because these virtues--wisdom on which philosophical contemplation is based and prudence which is the basis for political activity--can only be performed through leisure. It should also be stated that in the best regime citizens have moral virtues as well; it is possible to become morally virtuous without becoming wise, but it is not possible to be wise without first becoming morally virtuous.

The next point that I am going to discuss involves Aristotle's question of how does the best regime in particular and a regime, in general, avoid dissolution? I will argue that Aristotle thinks that justice and friendship are the two pivotal virtues that keep the *polis* and its specific regime together.

Justice is a communal virtue on which all other virtues arise (*Politics* 1283a31-42). As in all of his other investigations, Aristotle (1976) begins his examination of justice by first reviewing the commonly held opinions about it. He comments that justice is an ambiguous concept (*NE* 1129a26). People commonly describe as unjust the person who breaks the law and who gets more than her/his share. Without rejecting this common designation, Aristotle draws our attention to a nuance of difference between these two ideas. Although these two actions--breaking the law and getting more than one's share--can be related to one another, they are not the same. Aristotle calls the first person "lawless" and the second person "unfair." So, both lawless and unfair people are unjust. Aristotle reasons that the contraries of these *states*, being law-abiding and fair, must be just (*NE* 1129a30-35).

Aristotle also comments that unfair people do not always get more than their share. Sometimes, a person gets less than what s/he deserves. In this latter case, the unfair person gets less of the evil that s/he needs to survive. When an unfair person gets more than her/his share, it is the external goods such as wealth and honor that the unfair person gets more than her/his share of. However, since, in a sense, the lesser evil is considered to be good, an unfair person in general can be described as one who wants to get more of the good things than her/his share (*NE* 1129b1-10).

Aristotle also indicates that since a law-abiding person is considered to be just, then lawful things should be just. He states:

The laws prescribe for all departments of life, aiming at the common advantage either of all the citizens or of the best of them, or of the ruling class, or on some other such basis. So in one sense we call just anything that tends to produce or conserve the happiness (and the constituents of the happiness) of a political association. (*NE* 1129b14-19)

The laws command citizens to act on the basis of virtues such as courage, temperance, and truthfulness, and to refrain from vices such as cowardice, licentiousness, and understatement. When a person obeys these laws that prescribe moral virtues, s/he is law-abiding, and, therefore, just. In this sense, justice and virtue are the same thing. Aristotle thinks that justice is complete virtue because it covers all other virtues and it is in relation to somebody else (*NE* 1129a29-31). As Aristotle's states: "it is complete because its possessor can exercise it in relation to another person, and not only by himself. I say this because there are plenty of people who can behave uprightly in their own affairs, but are incapable of doing so in relation to somebody else" (*NE* 1129b35-1130a1). Aristotle thinks that this is "universal justice" and it is the same as virtue. On the other hand, Aristotle also points out that there is another kind of justice that is a part of virtue, and he calls this second form of justice "particular justice." He clarifies the distinction between universal and particular justice by looking at their contraries: universal injustice and particular injustice.

The distinguishing feature of particular injustice is the fact that it involves the element of personal gain unlike universal injustice where there is no personal gain. In the case of universal justice a just person is one who obeys the laws that command virtuous action; when a person fails to obey the laws, s/he commits universal injustice. However, in failing to obey the law, s/he might not have acted this way for personal gain. For example, in a war one might surrender out of cowardice, which is against the law that prescribes people to act courageously in a war. The vice that is committed by surrendering is cowardice. However, if the act of surrendering is done with a personal gain in mind--for instance for money or honor that is offered by the enemy--then this

constitutes an example of a particular injustice. The person who surrenders for personal gain does not surrender out of the vice of cowardice but that of “injustice” (*NE* 1129b32-33).

According to Aristotle, particular justice is of two types: distributive and rectificatory. Distributive justice is concerned with the allocation of commonly possessed assets in the *polis*⁵, and it is based on a geometrical proportion. According to this proportion, the equals will get equal shares from the thing that is distributed, and those who are unequal will have unequal shares. In Aristotle’s words, “it is when equals have or are assigned unequal shares, that quarrels and complaints break out” (*NE* 1131a22-24). Absolute equality constitutes injustice because it does not take into consideration the differences of people with regard to the thing.

Rectificatory justice, on the other hand, rectifies inequitable transactions between two parties through an arithmetical proportion. Since transactions that are the subject of this kind of justice are of two types--voluntary and involuntary transactions--rectificatory justice has also two parts. Some of the voluntary transactions are selling, buying, lending at interest, pledging, and depositing. Since the initial stage of the transaction is voluntary, these are called voluntary transactions. Involuntary transactions have two types: secret and violent. Theft, adultery, poisoning, and testifying falsely are examples of secret involuntary transactions. Assault, forcible confinement, murder, and robbery provide us with some of the violent involuntary transactions (*NE* 1131a1-10). The main principle in rectificatory justice is to compensate, in the same amount, the party that was affected adversely by the unfair

party. Rectificatory justice has nothing to do with the merits of the parties. Aristotle explains:

It makes no difference whether a good man has defrauded a bad one or vice versa, nor whether a good man or a bad one has committed adultery; all that the law considers is the difference caused by the injury; and it treats the parties as equals, only asking whether one has committed and the other suffered an injustice, or whether one has inflicted and the other suffered a hurt.

Accordingly, the judge tries to equalize the inequality of this injustice. . .the judge tries to equalize them with the help of the penalty, by reducing the gain. (NE 1132a2-11)

In addition to the principles of geometrical proportion (which provides the basis for distributive justice) and arithmetical proportion (which is the rule for rectificatory justice,) Aristotle mentions a third principle in connection with justice: proportional reciprocity. While geometrical proportion and arithmetical proportion facilitate distributing the commonly held assets among the citizens and solving the debates about the sides of a transaction respectively, proportional reciprocity makes the transaction between the parties possible in the first place. In fact, before a dispute in a transaction can arise, the transaction itself must take place. In order for a transaction to occur, the people involved in the transaction should be able to equate their commodities. They need to do this simply because the exchange usually does not take place between two people in the same profession with the same goods--for example rather than between two shoemakers, the transaction could be between a shoemaker and a farmer. That is to say, a person enters into an exchange only with those who have the things that s/he lacks. Thus, the parties involved in a transaction need to know the relative values of their goods and services, and they should agree before the transaction the worth, for instance, of a pair of shoes in terms of wheat or corn. In order to make the comparison of different goods and services possible, money was invented. Money provides a

“standard by which all commodities are measured. This standard is in fact demand, which holds everything together” (*NE* 1133a27-28).

These comments of Aristotle may easily lead one to think that Aristotle was the pioneer of the theory of price mechanism, which roughly states that the price of a commodity is determined by the demand for it in the market. However, this is not what Aristotle had in mind. For Aristotle, money is the instrument for overcoming the difficulties of a barter economy. In a barter economy, in order for an exchange to take place, both parties have to demand one another’s services or goods. Going back to the example of the shoemaker and farmer, if the shoemaker does not need corn, or does not think that s/he can use it in the future to exchange it for something else, the farmer would be deprived of the services or goods of the shoemaker. Aristotle describes this situation as “the inequality of demand.” In a situation of the inequality of demand, the demand of one side is not counterbalanced by the demand of the other side, and as a result, the exchange does not take place. To prevent this from happening, money enters into the transaction.

Regarding the function of money, Aristotle states that “what money does for us is to act as a guarantee of exchange in the future: that if it is not needed now, it will take place if the need arises; because the bearer of the money must be able to obtain what he wants” (*NE* 1133b10-13). Aristotle’s idea that to secure constant exchange the money value of everything must be fixed in advance, takes him further away from the liberal price theory which states that the price of a commodity is subject to change depending on the demand in the market towards it (*NE* 1133b14-16).

To clarify the process of securing justice in exchanges, Aristotle gives the following example: “A stands for a house, B for ten *minae*, C for a bed. Then supposing the value of the house to be five *minae* or its equivalent, A is half of B, and C, the bed, is one tenth of B, so it is easy to see how many beds are equal to a house, viz. five” (NE 1133b23-26). As an example, if the carpenter gives the house builder five beds or its money equivalent, five *minae*, in exchange for a house, then their exchange is just. Thus, for Aristotle, when the parties in a transaction reciprocate in proportion to the value of their commodities, justice in the exchange is secured.

Before starting the discussion of justice and Aristotle, it should be remembered that I stated that justice was one of the two pivotal virtues (the other being friendship) that keep a *polis* together. Up to this point, I presented Aristotle’s views on justice in the abstract. However more specifically, Aristotle did not mention whether the individual who obeys the laws, who does not take more than his due, and who reciprocates fairly with others in her/his exchanges is a citizen or not. S/he was an individual in the abstract. But, in reality some of the individuals are citizens and some of them are not. When an individual does the deeds of justice as a citizen, the resulting state is not “justice in the abstract,” but “political justice” in a specific *polis*. As

Aristotle puts it:

Political justice obtains between those who share a life for the satisfaction of their needs as persons free and equal, either arithmetically or proportionally. . . . justice is only found among those whose mutual relations are controlled by law, and law is only found among those who are liable to injustice; for legal justice consists in distinguishing between what is just and what is unjust. (NE 1134a26-31)

According to Kraut (2002), for Aristotle, “political justice in the broad sense consists in promoting the good of the whole community by means of laws and rules--that is, by

making law, adjudicating disputes, and obeying the laws and norms of the community” (p. 151).

Aristotle argues that political justice is one of two kinds: natural or legal. The natural one is the same everywhere and is present regardless if it is accepted or not; it represents justice. The laws of natural political justice are immutable, and it is attained when the dictates of reason are followed. In this regard, since the best regime is the only regime in which reason alone rules, natural political justice takes place only in that regime; “everywhere there is only one natural form of government, namely that which is best” (*NE* 1135a4). On the other hand, to the extent that a particular city’s laws are established through convention, they are changeable. Aristotle observes that “laws that are not natural but man-made are not the same everywhere, because forms of the government are not the same either” (*NE* 1135a2-4). According to Aristotle, although the laws of legal political justice are changeable from one place to another, once laid down, they are binding (*NE* 1134b21-22).

The Cement of the Polis: Political Friendship

If justice is crucial in preserving the existence of a *polis*, friendship is indispensable for it. According to Aristotle (1976), lawgivers attach more importance to friendship than to justice because concord (or unanimity) in a *polis* is something akin to friendship (*NE* 1155a1-30). In order to prove the primacy of friendship over justice, Aristotle claims that while genuine friends do not need justice among themselves, just people are still in need of friends: “[I]ndeed friendliness is considered to be justice in the fullest sense” (*NE* 1155a27).

In Aristotle’s philosophy, concord (or unanimity) in a *polis* is usually rendered as “political friendship” (Barker, 1997, p. 253). It is important to understand that political friendship is not the same thing as simple friendship.⁶ While the latter is between individuals and involves a high level of affection and intimacy, the former is among citizens and cannot be expected to have the same level of affection as friendship in the primary sense. In fact, even in a relatively small social organization like a *polis*, it is unrealistic to expect that each and every citizen will be friends in the primary sense with every other citizen. However, to the extent that it is similar to friendship in the primary sense, Aristotle analyzes the concept of political friendship under the discussion of friendship in general.

Since friendship is similar, and in that sense, conducive to building political friendship among the citizens, statesmen should aim at improving friendship. Aristotle informs us that securing concord and eliminating faction, which is enmity, are the

primary objects of lawgivers (*NE* 1155a20-30). In this regard, knowing what constitutes friendship is instrumental for a statesman in the performance of his duties.

According to Aristotle, friendship “is a kind of virtue, or implies virtue, and it is also most necessary for living” (*NE* 1155a4-5). Friendship is built upon mutual affection (*philia*). The object of affection between friends might be either what is useful, or what is pleasant, or what is good. Corresponding to these three objects of affection, Aristotle enumerates three kinds of friendship: friendship based on utility, friendship based on pleasure, and friendship based on goodness (*NE* 1155b16-1156b35).

If the friendship is based on utility, the affection that is felt in the relationship by the individuals is not due to the personal qualities of one another but rather to the benefits that are obtained through the relationship. The benefits that constitute the object of this kind of friendship are material things that improve the conditions of the body rather than that of the soul. For instance, for Aristotle, between the parties of a simple economic transaction such as the buying and selling of a house there is friendship based on utility. At this point, it is important to keep in mind that every sort of sharing involves community (*koinonía*) and Aristotle says that “in every community there is supposed to be some kind of justice and also some friendly feeling” (*NE* 1159b26-28).

Friendship based on pleasure values that which gives pleasure to both parties in the relationship. The object of pleasure might be beauty, a sense of humor, or any other thing that is pleasing to the individuals involved. Friendships that are based on utility and pleasure are always unstable, because their objects--benefits and pleasures--are

impermanent things. So these friendships are accidental, because the person loved is not loved for her/his actual nature, but merely because s/he provides some benefit or pleasure. Consequently such friendships are easily dissolved if the parties do not continue to show the same kind of qualities, because if they cease to be pleasant or useful the friendship comes to an end (*NE* 1156a15-22).

On the other hand, friendship based on goodness is the perfect friendship. In this friendship, rather than seeking personal benefit or pleasure, the parties involved desire the goodness of the friend for the friend's sake. This is the friendship of the good persons (*NE* 1157b24-35). "Accordingly the friendship of such men lasts so long as they remain good; and goodness is an enduring quality" (*NE* 1156b11-12). Indeed, Aristotle claims that this is friendship in the primary and proper sense, and it is hard to find this kind of friendship, because it is hard to find good men (*NE* 1156b23-25). All other relationships are called friendship only by analogy (*NE* 1157a30-35), and although friendships based on utility and pleasure "appear to be friendships in virtue of their similarity to friendship based on goodness" (*NE* 1158b6-8), they are not.

Aristotle also informs us, as I stated above, for Aristotle every kind of friendship emerges in a form of community. Friendship is something communal and involves association with others. However, Aristotle distinguishes two different forms of community. Some communities are based on relations and others are based on an explicit or implicit compact, so some friendships are between relations and some of them are between the members of some kind of association. The friendship (*philia*) between a father and his sons, or a friendship between brothers are examples of friendships between relations. Friendships between fellow-citizens, fellow-tribesmen,

or fellow-voyagers, are the examples of friendships between the members of an association (*NE* 1161b11-15).

Another distinction that Aristotle draws in connection with friendships concerns the relative positions of the parties, one to another, in a friendship. In some friendships the parties are equals and in others one of the parties is superior to the other. The duties of the parties in a friendship are determined by their relative positions to one another. “Those who are equal must exhibit this equality by contributing an equal amount of affection and of the other grounds of their friendship, and those who are unequal by making a return proportionate to the other party’s superiority” (*NE* 1162b2-4).

But where does political friendship fit in this classification of friendship? Is it a friendship in the primary and proper sense, that is, friendship based on goodness; or is it a secondary form of friendship based on utility or pleasure? To answer these questions it is necessary to take a closer look at the concept of political friendship.

Aristotle sees that political friendship (or concord) seems to be a friendly feeling. That is to say, between the sides in a political friendship, the affection (*philia*)-which is the basis of friendship--is present. This is similar to agreement of opinion; yet, it is more than that. As Aristotle puts it, agreement of opinion “might be present even in people who did not know each other” (*NE* 1167a21-22). Another reason why political friendship is more than agreement of opinion is that political friendship does not include agreement of opinion on each and every subject; for instance the parties might disagree on the structure of heavenly bodies. Rather, agreement is primarily limited to the matters that are concerned with the “material” interests of the *polis* and its citizens. Aristotle observes:

There is said to be concord in a state when the citizens agree about their interests, adopt the same policy, and put their common resolves into effect. Thus concord is concerned with practical ends, and among these only with such as are important, and can be achieved by both parties, or by the whole body of citizens. For example, a state exhibits concord when the citizens unanimously decide that offices shall be elective, or that an alliance shall be made with Sparta. . . . Thus concord is evidently (as the word is actually used) friendship between the citizens of a state, because it is concerned with their interests and living conditions. (*NE* 1167a25-b4)

Political friendship does not aim at creating a citizenry that is united on the basis of a moral or political ideology. It only requires the citizens to be open to consensus regarding the actions that need to be taken about commonly accepted goods. “The purpose is to obtain outcomes all agree to be good and avert those generally recognized as bad, rather than the victory of an abstract conception of justice” (Barker, 1997, p. 253).

The question of where political friendship fits into the classification of different forms of friendship now can be answered. To the extent that political friendship is concerned with practical ends that improve the interests and living conditions of the citizens in the *polis*, it is a friendship based on utility. Similarly, Terchek and Moore (2000, p. 909) indicate that Aristotle considers political friendship to be a matter of utility rather than friendship based on goodness.⁷ Furthermore, Aristotle thinks that we cannot be intimate friends with many people, and intimacy is one of the distinguishing features of friendship based on goodness. Aristotle (1976) says, “it is not hard to see that one cannot be intimate and share oneself, with a large number of people. Besides, they too must be friends with one another, if they are all to live as a group, and it is difficult to have this state of affairs when the numbers are large” (*NE* 1171a3-5).

Political friendship involves many people, namely fellow-citizens.

At this point, I argue that the virtue of political friendship lies in its making less than perfect regimes viable, but what do I mean by that? As will be remembered, Aristotle divided regimes into different kinds on the basis of the number of the persons forming the ruling body and on the basis of the intent of the regime--whether the regime pursues common advantage or private interests. Thus he grouped monarchy, aristocracy, and polity among the proper regimes that pursue the common advantage of the *polis*; and tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy among the perverted regimes that want to further the private interests of the ruling body. I also argued that to the extent that aristocracy is based on virtue, it is the best regime according to Aristotle. To a large extent, in such a regime political friendship is not needed. The reason is that--as I indicated while presenting the different forms of friendship--the form of friendship between good men is friendship based on goodness. In this friendship, the parties reciprocate on the basis of virtue, and, therefore, hope for goodness for the other. Since in an aristocracy there are several good men, it is possible for them to be intimate friends. Also, because they are totally virtuous and friends with one another on the basis of goodness, they would not disagree on any important matters concerning the *polis*. So, political friendship, which requires citizens to be ready to agree on practical ends that concern the common advantage of the *polis*, is not that important in an aristocracy. The members of the ruling body in an aristocracy are friends based on goodness, and there is no room for disagreement in their relationship with one another. In other words, their friendship already includes political friendship; they partake in living well.

However, in Book VI of the *Politics*, Aristotle states that “getting the best regime is perhaps impossible for most people” (1288b23-24). In fact, as I indicated earlier, the virtues that Aristotle has in mind concerning the best regime are mostly intellectual ones, namely wisdom and prudence. These virtues can be possessed only by a small minority of people. Moreover, the multitude may not be persuaded by the claims of the virtuous minority that their rule over the multitude is best for the sake of the *polis* as a whole. In short, although possible, it is not easy to establish an aristocracy that is ruled by several good men on the basis of virtue. Therefore, according to Aristotle, the good legislator and politician “should not study merely the regime that is best but also the regime that is possible, and likewise also the regime that all cities find easier and have more in common with” (*Politics* 1288b37-39).

As previously noted, in the best regime Aristotle thinks that farmers, craftsmen, and sailors should not be granted citizenship, because they do not have the leisure that is required to be devoted to the cultivation of virtues, especially the intellectual ones. However, as Barker (1997, p. 251) indicates, Aristotle mitigates this severe stance by his pragmatic approach to politics. This practical approach advises that a regime should be arranged in such a way that it will make living possible for the majority of people whose standards of either intellectual or moral virtue do not rank very high. In this sense, perverted regimes (or constitutions) become viable.

The two primary imperfect regimes are democracy and oligarchy. In a democracy the many--who are poor--rule, and in an oligarchy the few--who are rich--rule. The beneficiaries of their constitutions are the interests of their own class. In a democracy the poor majority and in an oligarchy the rich minority rules at the expense

of the other class, so both of these regimes represent extremes that are vices. The application of the doctrine of mean to these perverted forms of constitution would yield a just regime. For Aristotle, the less the interests of the other class are jeopardized in a regime, the closer that regime gets to a just one. Indeed, as both democracy and oligarchy proceed toward including the opposite class, they merge into a middle ground regime called “polity” by Aristotle. He classifies this constitution among the perfect ones albeit the least desirable.

As Aristotle (1997) puts it, “Polity is, to speak simply, a mixture of oligarchy and democracy” (*Politics* 1293b32-33). According to Aristotle, in order to create a polity, there are three main strategies for mixing democracy and oligarchy with one another. The first strategy advises the legislator to combine the legislation of both democracies and oligarchies. Aristotle illustrates this strategy using an example that involves payment and penalty associated with participation in public deliberation. Accordingly, in a democracy, in order to encourage the populace to participate in decision making, an incentive in the form of a payment is provided. Also in a democracy, to keep the rich away from the assembly, no penalty for a failure to participate is imposed upon them. Contrarily, in an oligarchy in order to prevent the rich from failing to participate in decision making, there is a high penalty imposed upon them if they do not attend the assembly. However, in an oligarchy, in order to depoliticize the multitude, neither a penalty for not attending nor a payment for attending the assembly is imposed upon the populace (*Politics* 1294a35-1294a41). So to fulfill Aristotle's first strategy to create a polity, some legislature is taken from both regimes, and he says “To take both is to take something common and a mean between

them, and hence something that, as mixed from the two, is proper to polity” (*Politics* 1294a40-1294a41). Thus, in a polity there will be both payment and penalty with regards to the participation in decision-making; while the populace will be paid for participating, the rich will be fined for not participating.

Aristotle’s second strategy “is to take the mean position between the arrangements of each” (*Politics* 1294b1-2). The example that Aristotle gives is concerned with the property qualification for membership in the assembly. In democracies, there is either a minimum requirement or none at all. On the other hand, in an oligarchy the property requirement is high. So, in a polity there should be a property requirement neither too low nor too high, something that corresponds to the mean position.

The third strategy Aristotle talks about consists of selecting some aspects from both. Thus, while one feature of a polity would come from democratic policies a different feature of it would come from oligarchic policies. For example, in a democracy there is a minimum property qualification or none, and in an oligarchy there is a high one. On the other hand, the offices are filled in a democracy by lot and in an oligarchy by election. Thus, by combining the feature from democracy that is concerned with property qualifications--no property requirement at all or a low one--with the feature from oligarchy concerning elected offices, we would have a polity (*Politics* 1294b6-13).

One of the outstanding strengths of a polity is in its ability to secure stability in the *polis*. By mixing two hostile classes, the many with the few, a polity aims at creating a regime of compromise. Unlike democracy and oligarchy, in which only one

class can have the power, a polity provides two classes, the democrats and the oligarchs, with the opportunity of participating in the decision-making process concerning common matters. In this regard, in opposition to both democracy and oligarchy that are exclusive of one another, a polity is an inclusive regime. As Newell (1991) states, a polity “is the most inclusive and stable of constitutions because it blends the principles of democracy and oligarchy that, between them, include the most people and are the source of the most explosive and prevalent of conflicts, namely, rich versus poor” (p. 204). Similarly, Yack thinks that by leaving open fundamental questions, a polity makes the resolution of political disputes through compromise possible. As a result, the conflict among the various factions of the *polis* is prevented from taking a destructive turn.

It is evident that this regime is made possible because of Aristotle’s concept of political friendship. Unlike Plato’s “principle of unity,” which requires citizens to have agreement even in ethical matters, Aristotle’s concept of political friendship expects citizens to be ready to agree only about the public concerns that matter for each of them, regardless of their being a democrat or an oligarch. As Barker (1997) puts it, political friendship:

does not require citizens to be united in moral or political ideology, only that they should be ready to reach consensus on particular actions to institute commonly recognized goods. The purpose is to obtain outcomes all agree to be good and avert those generally recognized as bad, rather than the victory over an abstract conception of justice. (p. 253)

Conclusion

In light of above discussion, I argue that Aristotle's concept of political friendship and the regime that he called "polity" that is based on political friendship, provides the seeds for toleration based on prudence. This claim is made with the recognition that Aristotle did not have an explicit theory of toleration. Aristotle was able to develop this idea through criticizing his teacher, Plato. Yet, Aristotle did follow his teacher on many points. Aristotle definitely operated within the paradigm that Plato perfected. In that regard, perhaps, the full-blown theory of toleration on the basis of prudence could emerge only after this paradigm was left in favor of a new paradigm in the early modern era.

As will be remembered, the classic paradigm, which was excelled by Plato, emphasized order and purpose in nature. The harmony that existed in nature was not the result of chance but that of intention. Therefore, society must have followed the order and harmony that existed in nature at large. Since conflict (or disharmony) in its essence is against nature, it should not be welcomed in society either. Hence, Plato insisted on having moral and ideological unity among the citizens excluding any conflict of interest. Yet Aristotle thought that this was too much to expect from ordinary human beings. If they were philosophers, that might have been reasonable. Most human beings are not philosophers and can achieve only a modest level of virtue. Thus, Aristotle felt compelled to set forth a regime that will make life possible for ordinary human beings with different moral and ideological views. By mixing oligarchy and democracy Aristotle came up with polity.

This new arrangement provided both the oligarchs and democrats with concrete stakes in the continuation of the regime. In addition to the concrete stakes such as elective offices for the oligarchs and the right to vote in the assembly for the democrats, Aristotle provided the concept of political friendship to secure the peace and stability in the regime he called polity. This concept suggests that if the citizens with different world views want to stay in peace together, they should not insist on creating a morally and ideologically homogenous society. Rather they should be ready to neglect the differences amongst themselves and must focus only on the matters that concern everybody regardless of whether one is oligarch or democrat. This is a prudent approach to politics. To the extent that toleration that is based on prudence also recommends tolerating the differences for the sake of preserving peace and stability in the society, it resembles Aristotle's concept of political friendship. In this sense, to present Aristotle as the classical pioneer of toleration based on prudence would not be an exaggeration.

¹ I borrow the phrase "multiple needs" from Ronald J. Terchek (1997).

² Although Aristotle thinks that the *polis* is higher and more important than household and village, he still finds these latter sorts of community indispensable. As Salkever (1990, pp. 59-72) indicates, while the *polis* makes "living well" possible, the household makes "life" possible.

³ The dualities between body and soul, and between household and the *polis* in Aristotle's thought led some communitarian thinkers like Hannah Arendt to conclude that the *polis* is the community where people experienced solely their political nature beyond their daily needs. They claim that after overcoming biological and economic necessity in their households, individuals enjoy their freedom through political participation as citizens in the public realm (Yack, 1993, p. 9). Likewise, contemporary communitarians believe that freedom ultimately means "the ability to realize a *responsible* selfhood, which is necessarily a cooperative project (*italics mine*)" (Sullivan, 1982, p. 7).

⁴ In the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1160a31-b16), Aristotle states that the best regime is a "monarchy." Similarly, in the *Politics* (1284a3-1284a11), he states that "if there is a single individual or several individuals. . .so outstanding in the excess of virtue that neither the virtue nor the political power of all the others is commensurable with theirs. . .or his. . .then such should no longer be regarded as part of a city. For they would be wronged if they were thought to deserve equal shares when they are so unequal in virtue and political power. Such would reasonably be like a god among human beings." Aristotle reasons that thinking of sharing power with someone who surpasses everybody else in respect to virtue is

like thinking of sharing the power with Zeus. Since this is ridiculous, “consequently, such as these will be perpetual kings” (1284b25-b35). However, from our further reading of the *Politics*, especially Book 3.15, where Aristotle discusses the difficulties surrounding the total kingship, it can be understood that it is almost impossible to find one person surpassing all other persons in every virtue. Therefore, to chose monarchy as the best regime is almost impossible. Aristocracy, which is ruling by several good people on the basis of virtue, is, in practice, the best regime. So, in the *Politics*, Aristotle states that “if aristocracy is to be regarded as rule by several persons who are all good men, aristocracy would be more worth choosing for cities than kingship” (1286b3-22).

⁵ Aristotle’s notion of distributive justice should not be confused with the contemporary notion of social justice, which aims at redistributing the wealth created by a society on the basis of a criterion such as need. For Aristotle, the assets that are subject to distributive justice are commonly held things, such as, the honors, the booty gained at a war, and other things of that sort. It aims at distributing these on the basis of merit. In the case of the contemporary notion of social justice, many times, the resources that are distributed among the needy are created by progressive taxation that is levied on privately owned movable or immovable property (Sahin 1997).

⁶ From now on I will employ the phrase “friendship in the primary sense” to render the meaning “friendship in the simple sense,” which is mutual affection between individuals.

⁷ Terchek and Moore use the phrase “true (or moral) friendship” in order to refer to “friendship based on goodness.” In order to maintain consistency in my presentation, I am using the latter phrase.

CHAPTER 6: MODERN THOUGHT AND THE EMERGENCE OF TOLERATION
ON THE BASIS OF PRUDENCE: THE CASE OF JOHN LOCKE

“Modern political theory” has emerged from the ideas about individuals and societies that were developed from the 16th century onward. Beginning with Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), a series of “political thinkers” such as Michel de Montaigne, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), and John Locke reject the classical scheme that emphasizes “virtue” as unrealistic (Strauss, 1989, p. 39). This rejection of the classical paradigm by the modern thinkers is primarily based on their ideas about the nature of human beings. The pioneer of this new mode of thinking--the Florentine thinker Machiavelli--thinks that people are essentially wicked and motivated only by the pursuit of personal gain. For Machiavelli, human nature is an unstable amalgam of stupidity, cupidity, and malice. Machiavelli (1998) argues:

One can say this generally of men: that they are ungrateful, fickle, pretenders and dissemblers, evaders of danger, and eager for gain. While you do them good, they are yours, offering their blood, property, lives, and children . . . when the need for them is far away; but, when it is close to you they revolt. (p. 66)

For Machiavelli, human beings value temporal things so much that they “forget the death of a father more quickly than the loss of a patrimony” (p. 67).

This pessimistic view of human nature leads Machiavelli to think that human society is not a natural entity but rather a product of convention. Human beings did not join into societies as a result of their natural sociability but rather as a result of calculating the material benefits they would reap by doing so. The principal benefits

that can be enjoyed by living in society, according to Machiavelli, are security and protection. In that regard, for Machiavelli, human beings are political not in order to improve their natures in society as the ancients believe, but because of their love for power and reputation, and people have an innate desire to control and dominate others. As can be remembered, for the ancients an individual's end (*telos*) dictated the way s/he should live her/his life. On the other hand, Machiavelli believes that necessity rather than a moral purpose--such as achieving one's *telos*--determines the right course of action in both private and political life. As Strauss (1953) points out, for Machiavelli, "Classical political philosophy had taken its bearings by how man ought to live; the correct way of asking the question of right order of society consists in taking one's bearings by how men actually do live" (p. 178). Machiavelli (1998) expresses this point in the following way:

many have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen or known to exist in truth; for it is so far from how one lives to how one should live that he who lets go of what is done for what should be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation. (p. 61)

In a similar fashion, Michel de Montaigne thinks that human nature is closer to animal nature than it is to the nature of the moral beings defined by the ancients. The ancients see people as beings who try to achieve their purpose, namely leading a virtuous and moral life. The ancients believe that due to the possession of reason and the ability to speak, human beings are superior to all other social animals and, therefore, have to lead a moral life. Montaigne (1991), as indicated while presenting his defense of toleration on the basis of skepticism, believes that not only are human beings not superior to animals, they are worse than animals in terms of controlling their desires (p. 526).

Following Machiavelli and Montaigne, Thomas Hobbes too subscribes to a pessimistic view of human nature. He too emphasizes the animal aspects of human beings rather than the distinctive feature of reason. According to Hobbes, human beings are motivated not by a moral ideal that can be found out by reason, but by a psychological cause, the desire for self-preservation (Sabine, 1959, p. 460; Strauss 1989, p. 49). People seek shelter in a *commonwealth*, not because of a natural sociability of human beings, but because they fear violent death. Security and protection--rather than a novel environment in which human beings can improve their nature--are the primary benefits that a society provides. For Hobbes *felicity* constitutes the aim of life. Unlike classic philosophers who believe that happiness primarily consisted in *virtue*, Hobbes (1997) thinks that “*continuall successe* in obtaining those things which a man from time to time desireth, that is to say, continuall prospering, is that men call FELICITY” (p. 37).

In order to achieve felicity, what human beings need is not virtue but power. Hobbs (1997) says, “The POWER *of a Man*, (to take it Universally,) is his present means, to obtain some future apparent Good” (p. 48). Therefore, the general inclination of people is “ a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death” (p. 55). Yet Hobbes does not think that this desire for more power is always caused by desire for more intensive pleasure. Human beings may be satisfied with the level of delight that they have already attained. The cause of anxiety among people is that they cannot guarantee the continual enjoyment of this delight, therefore, in order to assure future satisfaction they seek more power. Hobbes (1997) observes, “The Greatest of humane Powers, is that which is compounded of the Powers of most men,

united by consent, in one person, Naturall, or Civill, that has the use of all their Powers depending on his will; such as is the Power of a Comon-wealth” (p. 48). In this regard, the state is not a school where virtue is taught but a means to guarantee continuous felicity.

In response to the claim of the ancient that an individual’s end is to grasp the meaning of the hierarchical harmonious *cosmos* and thus to know her/his proper place in that order, Hobbes asserts that there is no natural harmony between the human mind and the universe (Strauss, 1953, p. 175). Behind his assertion lies his faith in the Newtonian paradigm, a mechanical explanation of the universe. According to this paradigm, the universe is understood as a collectivity of bodies that are in constant motion without an aim. This position stands in radical opposition to the Aristotelian understanding of the universe according to which all things move towards some goal and then come to a rest. In this sense, Hobbes rejects the existence of an end towards which human beings strive. For Hobbes (1991), “there is no such *Finis ultimus*, utmost aim, nor *Summum bonum*, greatest good, as is spoken of in the books of the old Morall philosophers” (p. 55).

Thus, modern political philosophy forms a radical break with the ancient political philosophy in terms of the main assumptions about individuals and societies, and, as a result, the institutions that are built upon these main assumptions. For the moderns, the natural state of human beings is not one of harmony and peace, but rather of chaos and misery due to their wickedness and selfishness. Human society is not a reflection of the harmony that exists in the universe, but is a riot against nature; and nature does not present a conducive environment in which the most basic human desires

can be continually satisfied. Society is the invention of human reason in order to satisfy human desires. Peace, which is *sine qua non* for the continual satisfaction of human desires, does not come naturally; conflict is what comes naturally. Peace is what human beings want, and the conflict that is detrimental to peace is his natural condition.

According to the moderns, this is humankind's dilemma. To attempt to eradicate the conflict is futile. The only way out is to accommodate and to ameliorate conflict so that it will not hinder society from serving its main purpose: continual satisfaction of human desires. Toleration, which is a deliberate decision to refrain from prohibiting, hindering, or otherwise coercively interfering with conduct of which one disapproves, provides a means for controlling conflict. To the extent to which it inflames conflict, intolerance belongs to the state of nature. Toleration is conducive to peace, and peace is the necessary condition for the satisfaction of human desires--the most basic of which is the desire for self-preservation.

In terms of looking at individual and society, John Locke agrees on most points with his modern predecessors. In the following section, his defense of toleration on the basis of prudence is presented.

The Prudence Argument in John Locke's Defense of Toleration

John Locke lived from 1632 to 1704. The main work in which he presents his defense of toleration is *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689). It was written during his exile in Holland between 1683 and 1689, and it first appeared in Latin under the title of *Epistola de Tolerantia*. One interesting fact about *Epistola* is that Locke never

admitted that the work belonged to him. It is believed that it was addressed to a friend of Locke's, Philip van Limborch who was a professor of theology in the Remonstrant seminary in Amsterdam. The English translation appeared at the end of the year 1689. The translator was William Popple, another of Locke's friends, who also wrote an introductory note to the translation (Cranston, 1991, p. 85).

In order to understand *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, one needs consider the historical context in which it was written; seventeenth century Britain and Europe provided the context. Both in Britain and in Europe, the seventeenth century witnessed great religious turmoil. In France, for instance, the limited religious toleration that was provided by the Edict of Nantes in 1598 came to an end by 1685 when the edict was revoked. In Britain, Henry VIII broke with Papal Rome by establishing a national church. That led to a period of strife during which the British people were subject to the imposition of different beliefs by rulers who had various religious convictions. The clash involving the Anglicans, the Catholics, and the Puritans, and the arbitrary acts of the Stuart dynasty led to the Civil War of 1642 to 1649. In 1688, yet another revolution followed. During the intervening period the dissenters were subject to oppression, and many of them, including Locke, were forced into exile (Mendus, 1989, p. 23).

Against this background, the purpose of Locke's letter becomes clear: to address the issue of religious intolerance. In order to justify religious toleration, Locke employs two sorts of arguments: secular and religious. His secular arguments anticipate his great book, *Second Treatise of Government*, which was published in 1690, one year after *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. His religious arguments rest on his Protestant faith. Locke's (1980) secular argument in favor of toleration is based on one of his basic

assumptions about the nature of government: government derives its legitimacy from the consent of the constituent members of the society (p. 52). Indeed, for Locke the government owes not only its legitimacy, but also its very existence to the consent of the individual members of society. According to this line of reasoning, prior to the emergence of society, human beings lived in what Locke calls “the state of nature” where individuals enjoyed inalienable rights to live, to be free, and to have property. Locke collects these rights under the general name of *property* (p. 66).¹

In the state of nature, individuals are subject to the law of nature whose principles are nothing but the dictates of reason. Due to the absence of a political body, everybody has a right to enforce the law of nature, and each individual has a right to defend her/his inalienable rights against transgressors. Furthermore, each individual has a right to punish those who breach the law of nature. Yet, only those whose rights are harmed have a right to get a compensation (pp. 10-11).

For Locke, such a state of nature, however free, becomes full of fears and continual dangers. In the absence of a law enforcement authority, some individuals may think that breaking the law of nature is more profitable than obeying it. Furthermore, when it comes to deciding about their own rights, human beings cannot be expected to be fair judges. They may tend to punish inequitably those who break the law of nature by inflicting harm upon the property of the lawbreakers. Therefore, except for the right of self-defense, individuals unite in civil society through giving up their right to implement the law of nature by using force (Locke, 1980, p. 47). Thus, the main reason for individuals to erect a political body is to secure their basic rights from the uncertainties of the state of nature. As a result, the main function of the government

is to protect the *property* rights of its constituent members. In Locke's (1980) words, "the great and *chief end*, therefore, of men's uniting into common-wealth and putting themselves under government, *is the preservation of their property*" (p.66).

In *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, Locke (1980) explains that "[t]he commonwealth seems to me to be a society of men constituted only for the procuring, preserving, and advancing their own civil interests" (p. 18). He defines civil interests as "life, liberty, health, and indolency of body; and the possession of outward things, such as money, lands, houses, furniture, and the like" (p. 18). Therefore, any attempt by the government or anybody else to order a person's life, either in religious matters or in any other private concerns is unjustified. In Locke's (1990) words,

The whole jurisdiction of the magistrate reaches only to these civil concerns; and that all civil power, right and dominion, is bounded and confined to the only care of promoting these things; and that it neither can nor ought in any manner to be extended to the salvation of souls. (p. 19)

Furthermore, for Locke (1990), it is impossible for individuals to bestow their consent on a government that considers itself responsible for the salvation of the souls of its citizens. The main reason for this is that "no man can so far abandon the care of his own salvation as blindly to leave it to the choice of any other, whether prince or subject" (p. 19). Neither the government nor a particular church can exclusively claim to know the religious truth.

However, it must be noted that for Locke toleration that is shown to the citizens is not an absolute one, but rather a qualified one. The main qualification is that the actions and beliefs that are the objects of toleration cannot be those that disturb the public order. Locke (1990) states, "those things that are prejudicial to the commonweal of a people in their ordinary use, and are therefore forbidden by laws, those things ought

not to be permitted to churches in their sacred rights” (pp.48-49). By the same token, whatever is permitted in public or private realms should be allowed in churches too. As Locke puts it, “if any man may lawfully take bread or wine, either sitting or kneeling, in his own house, the law ought not to abridge of the same liberty in his religious worship” (p. 48).

Thus, the government should tolerate those religious practices that do not pose any threat to the public realm. However, there may be some religious sects, although their practices do not form any threat to the civil liberties of the citizens, their allegiance to a foreign government can undermine the authority of the government. These religious groups will not be tolerated (Locke, 1990, pp. 63-64). In Locke’s England the most important group that is excluded from toleration by this principle is the Roman Catholic Church. Since Roman Catholics first and foremost owe allegiance to the Pope in Rome, the government cannot trust its Catholic citizens to stay neutral if it would clash with the Catholic Church. Since this amounts to having enemy’s soldiers within your own land, so Roman Catholics should not be granted toleration.

The atheists are also omitted, and the reason for not extending toleration to this group is not religious, but secular. Because they do not believe in god, the Atheists lack a foundation on which a moral system can be built. For Locke, it is only possible to be moral by believing in god, however, everybody does not have to believe in the same god. As long as people have fear of a god, they can be trusted to keep their promises. But, how can one expect an atheist to keep her/his promise? Since s/he does not have a fear of god, s/he may cheat as soon as the government turns its back. “Promises,

covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist” (p. 64). Therefore, atheists will not be tolerated.

One of the religious arguments, by Locke, for toleration is related to the nature of faith that has a nature that cannot be compelled by outward force. The government can force individuals to observe certain outward practices. But it cannot control their minds. As Locke (1990, 20) puts it, “confiscation of estate, imprisonment, torments, nothing of that nature can have any such efficacy as to make men change the inward judgment that they have framed of things” (p. 20). Faith is dependent on inner persuasion. At this point, I must indicate that Locke does not think that people should not have anything to do with the souls of their fellow citizens. On the contrary, he thinks that people should be concerned about the salvation of their fellow citizens, and, in fact, this is one of the greatest duties of a Christian. Locke (1990) states: “Any one may employ as many exhortations and arguments as he pleases, towards the promoting of another man’s salvation. But all force and compulsion are to be forborn” (57). All that is available to those who are concerned with the salvation of others is peaceful persuasion.

Another religious argument for toleration advanced by Locke is concerned with the belief that there is only one true path to God. Among many different paths, nobody is infallible as to which path is the true one; everyone needs to decide for herself/himself which is the true path. As long as individuals are not forced to believe in a certain path, they will be able to find the correct way by themselves. According to Ten (1986), Locke here is referring to the free market of ideas (p. 103). As Locke (1990) maintains:

For truth certainly would do well enough, if she were once left to shift for herself. She seldom has received, and I fear never will receive, much assistance from the power of great men, to whom she is but rarely known, and more rarely welcome. She is not taught by laws, nor has she any need of force to procure her entrance into the minds of men. Errors indeed prevail by the assistance of foreign and borrowed succors. But if truth not make her way into the understanding by her own light, she will be weaker for any borrowed force violence can add to her. (p. 56)

Therefore, having the monopoly of force does not give a government or a prince the ability to ascertain the correct path. Neither any particular church nor any ordinary person has the perfect knowledge of this path.

The argument that nobody is infallible in ascertaining the true path to salvation and therefore everyone should be left alone in finding this path to salvation by herself/himself may look like an argument for toleration based on skepticism. In fact this is a misconception. As Tarcov (1999) indicates, Locke seems to presume that true religion is Christianity (p. 182). The problem is that within Christianity there are different interpretations regarding the true path to salvation, and which one of these different interpretations is the true one is not self-evident. Locke claims that any person may error in trying to find the truth. Since a person herself/himself is the one who has the responsibility for choosing a certain path, the right to make the decision regarding the true path must also belong to individual.

According to Locke, if a government decides to impose its opinion regarding the only path to God onto its citizens, that decision may leave some of its subjects in a precarious situation. The reason is that some citizens may believe that the path the government chooses and imposes goes straight to hell. Given that everybody has an immortal soul that is capable of eternal happiness or misery, the first obligation of each individual is to gain the favor of God. Furthermore, the consequences of following a

certain path are born by the individual herself/himself, not by the government or any body else. Therefore, following the true path as determined by the individual is of utmost importance to each person. Those citizens who think that the government's opinion as to the correct path to God is erroneous will have to make a decision. They will either obey the command of the government and forget about their eternal happiness or, given that the highest duty of human beings is to honor God, they will insist on their own path and will take up arms against the government (Locke, 1990, p. 21). There is no doubt that the second course of action by the citizens would amount to returning back to the state of nature which is full of fears and dangers.

In this regard, if sincere inner belief--that is faith-- cannot be brought about by outward force, all that intolerance will bring to a commonwealth is destructive conflict and misery. Locke (1990) argues: "No peace and security, no, not so much as common friendship, can ever be established or preserved amongst men, so long as this opinion prevails, 'that dominion is founded in grace, and that religion is to be propagated by force of arms' " (p. 31). If we do not want destructive conflict to be the dominant feature of our lives, we should learn how to live with those who think, believe, and worship differently from us. In other words, we need to exercise toleration based on prudence. For Locke, "it is not the diversity of opinions, which cannot be avoided; but the refusal of toleration to those that are of different opinions, which might have been granted, that has produced all the bustles and wars, that have been in the Christian world, upon account of religion" (p. 71).

The main reason for religious groups to be seditious is not because religion inspires them to do so, but rather because of their sufferings and oppression at the hands

of the government. “But oppression raises ferments, and makes men struggle to cast off an uneasy and tyrannical yoke . . .there is one thing only which gathers people into seditious commotions, and that is oppression” (Locke, 1990, p. 67).

When the government extends toleration to those with different religious views and protects their civil liberties neutrally, it will find out that they are no longer a threat to civil society.

Take away the partiality that is used towards them in matters of common right; change the laws, take away the penalties onto which they are subjected, and all things will immediately become safe and peaceable: nay, those that are averse to the religion of the magistrate, will think themselves so much the more bound to maintain the peace of the common-wealth, as their condition is better in that place than elsewhere; and all the several separate congregations, like so many guardians of the public peace, will watch one another, that nothing may be innovated or changed in the form of government: because they can hope for nothing better than what they already enjoy; that is, an equal condition with their fellow-subjects, under a just and moderate government. (Locke, 1990, p. 68)

In conclusion, Locke presents a pragmatic case against religious intolerance. It is not based on the belief that diversity is a good in itself and therefore religious diversity should be tolerated. Rather, Locke finds intolerance irrational and thus imprudent. For Locke, prudence dictates man of reason to be tolerant towards the differences that do not disturb the public order.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation asked one particular question: “Did the two most prominent figures of the classic philosophy, Plato and Aristotle, have anything to contribute to the development of the concept of toleration?” This question is important because it is widely believed that the concept of toleration is a product of modern times and the ancient philosophers are believed to have nothing significant to contribute to the development of this concept. For example, Levine (1999b) claims that “no philosophers in ancient Greece or Rome explicitly argued for toleration as a political principle” (p. 7). Thus, the writings of classic philosophers are neglected when a discussion of the evolution of toleration is undertaken. In this study, this widely held view was questioned. At the beginning, it was argued that although Plato and Aristotle did not have an explicit theory of toleration, there might be some notions in their thoughts that have provided modern philosophers with a basis for arguing for toleration.

The close examination of the writings of Plato and Aristotle revealed that although not in the philosophy of Plato but in that of Aristotle, we can find the seeds of toleration. However, in stating this, I am not claiming that Aristotle had a direct effect in the emergence of toleration in modern times, but rather, his writings may have had more general and indirect effects. These effects can be better understood if we think about the immense influence of the classic philosophers on the development of western philosophy. It is well known that modern philosophers read the classic philosophers very carefully. In some respects, modern philosophers advanced their own views

through rejecting the views of classical thinkers. Yet in other respects they were heavily influenced by classic philosophers and built their own views on the foundations laid down by the classics. In this regard, I argue that modern philosophers built the case for toleration through following the path that was first traveled by Aristotle.

Skepticism and prudence are the two secular bases on which toleration was justified in the early modern era. In this study, it was reasoned that if the concept of toleration was built on a foundation of skepticism and prudence, we should be looking into the writings of Plato and Aristotle in terms of these two concepts to see whether they had anything to contribute to the development of toleration. Thus, toleration based on skepticism and toleration based on prudence provided this study with the two realms in which the investigation of the potential contributions of Plato and Aristotle to the development of the concept of toleration was pursued.

In this direction, the first part of the dissertation was devoted to an examination of the relationship between skepticism and toleration. Initially it was indicated that there is at least an emotional kinship between skepticism and toleration. To the extent that skepticism claims that knowledge with certainty is an illusion, we can never know whether our moral values represent the absolute truth. Therefore, any use of force towards changing values with the purpose of making these values in accordance with our own, corresponds to an arbitrary action and thus constitutes injustice. In order to avoid committing injustice one should be tolerant towards differences.

Yet any defense of toleration based on skepticism is on unsteady ground. The simple reason is that a skeptical stance may also involve having to tolerate the intolerant. This is because: if we can never have the knowledge of the truth with

certainty, then how can we claim that what the intolerant person--whom we should be intolerant towards--does is wrong? As Dostoyevsky put it in *The Brothers Karamazov*, "if nothing is true, everything is permitted" (qtd. in Levine 2001, pp. 14-15); thus, skepticism does not necessarily lead to toleration. To base toleration on skepticism, skepticism needs to be interpreted in a certain way. Montaigne provides the best example of this sort of interpretation.

Since skepticism is an epistemological stance, to see whether Plato and Aristotle had anything to contribute to the emergence of toleration on the basis of skepticism, their theories of knowledge were examined closely in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. The examination of the theories of knowledge of Plato and Aristotle showed that neither philosopher was a skeptic.

Plato believes that the objects of knowledge exist and one can attain their knowledge in absolute terms. Plato calls the objects of knowledge "Forms." The Forms belong to the realm of reality, and they can be reached only through reason. The objects of sense perception are only shadows of these real objects of knowledge. The reason for this is that the physical objects are subject to constant change and, as a result, cannot qualify as the objects of knowledge, which must have a fixed nature.

In opposition to the skeptics who extend their observation--that senses cannot be trusted in providing knowledge--to all fields of thought including ethics and politics, Plato believes that we can attain knowledge of these fields in absolute terms. For Plato the idea of good, which is a moral phenomenon, exists at the peak of the world of reality. Plato believes that the method by which the idea of good can be attained is dialectic; and once the knowledge of the idea of good is attained, he thinks it is possible

to transfer this knowledge to the world of vision as much as is humanly possible. Thus, it can be safely stated that Plato is a dogmatist, and in this respect he does not have anything to contribute to the justification of toleration on the basis of skepticism.

Unlike Plato, Aristotle does not believe in the separate existence of the objects of knowledge, therefore Aristotle rejects the distinction that Plato draws between the world of reality and that of vision. For Aristotle, what we perceive through our senses corresponds to reality, which allows him to study the topics such as physics and biology whose subject matters are constantly changing. As will be remembered, for Aristotle physical objects consist of matter and form, with matter providing the individuating features of an object and form providing the universal essence of a thing.

In the quest for attaining the knowledge of the essences of physical things, sense perceptions are the departure points. For Aristotle, senses provide us with observations of particular instances of phenomena. However, senses are not able to lead us to the knowledge of the form of particular phenomena. The knowledge of the universal dimension of a thing, i.e. its form, is attained by reason. This whole process of accumulating the observations of phenomena through senses and deriving generalizations through reason from these observations is known as the method of induction. Aristotle calls the end products of this process, i.e. generalizations about phenomena, as 'first principles'.

In the next step, Aristotle deduces conclusions about particular phenomena from the first principles through the method of deduction. For Aristotle, the conclusions that are deduced from true first principles are necessarily true. This process is called syllogism. The following is the classic example of syllogism: Socrates is a man, all

men are mortal therefore Socrates is also mortal. In this respect, to the extent that Aristotle also thinks that knowledge exists and that it can be attained with certainty, he is a dogmatist too.

Yet Aristotle does not claim that knowledge based on certainty can be attained in each field of life. Ethics and politics are not included in the fields of thought in which certainty can be reasonably expected. For Aristotle, it is impossible to impose a standard of certainty on subject matter that does not permit it; for instance, to the extent that human behavior lacks regularity, it is one such type of matter. For this reason, the judgments of ethics and politics can be true only “for the most part,” so, in this regard to call Aristotle a dogmatist in all fields of thought would be unfair.

Aristotle does not claim that his arguments in the fields of ethics and politics are universally true. Yet, to the extent that Aristotle has a moral view that he thinks to be true, he is not a skeptic either. What distinguishes him from Plato in this respect is that Aristotle does not insist on the absolute rightness of his views as Plato does. In this area, Aristotle’s position comes very close to that of the mitigated skeptics who claim that knowledge can exist only in probabilistic terms. Thus, strictly speaking, to the extent that Aristotle is not a skeptic, one can reasonably think that he does not have anything to contribute to the development of toleration on the basis of skepticism either. However, since he thinks that his moral judgments hold only “for the most part,” we can find a basis for the toleration of differences in Aristotle’s epistemology.

In Chapter 3, ancient skepticism and its revival in the early modern period were presented. It was shown that the rediscovery of the ancient texts on skepticism in the early modern period was crucial in the theoretical defense of toleration on the basis of

skepticism. As indicated above, skepticism does not necessarily lead to toleration, because in the absence of any rationally grounded moral standards, one may easily end up with accepting a system in which only naked power decides what is right and what is wrong. To prevent skepticism from leading to this uncivilized state, it needs to be interpreted in a certain way; the French Socrates, Michel de Montaigne does this elegantly.

According to Montaigne, all that human beings can know is limited to self-knowledge, so any claim to know objects of knowledge external to our own self-existence is presumptuous. The greatest joy for a thinking human being, therefore, lies in discovering her/his inner world. As Levine (2001) indicates, for Montaigne, this is self-interest properly understood, and in order for an individual to experience this joy s/he needs a private sphere in which s/he can embark on the process of this self-discovery (p. 7). Stated differently, an individual must be tolerated in her/his journey of self-discovery in that private sphere.

The second part of this study consisted of an examination of the relationship between prudence and toleration. It was shown that by recommending to take the consequences of acting intolerantly towards the objects of toleration into account, prudence provides another secular ground for toleration. Yet, as in the case of skepticism and toleration, the relationship between prudence and toleration is not a direct and necessary one. It was argued that before one can end up with toleration based on prudence, one needs to entertain a certain attitude towards conflict.

If one sees conflict as never natural and legitimate; then toleration based on prudence is impossible to attain. This is because a person who believes that conflict is a

deviation from the natural state of affairs inclines to reject conflict rather than trying to find ways to accommodate it. On the other hand, when one sees conflict among human beings--caused by differences of interests, beliefs, and life preferences--as natural and in this sense inevitable, then that person looks for ways to accommodate conflict rather than to eradicate it. One way of accommodating conflict is, of course, toleration.

In this direction in the fourth and fifth chapters, I examined Plato's and Aristotle's moral and political understandings to see whether they had anything to contribute to the emergence of toleration on the basis of prudence. The analysis of Plato's moral and political philosophy revealed that, for Plato, the individual has a value only to the extent that s/he is a part of the larger organism: society. The relationships among the members of society are arranged after the model of harmonious order that exists in the universe. This order is a hierarchical one and it is not the result of blind chance, but rather it is a result of intelligent design. Being a part of the universe, a society can only imitate this divine plan that exists in the universe, thus, human relationships in the society should also be hierarchical.

In the universe, conflict does not exist. Every part of it has a mission and those parts fulfill their missions harmoniously. A just society emerges when the members of the society imitate this divine order in their relationships. Plato gave the responsibility of maintaining this just order in society to the "Guardians" in *The Republic*, the "true statesman" in *The Statesman*, and the "law" in *The Laws*. In such an understanding of the individual and her/his place in society, there is no room for "legitimate conflict," because conflict is against nature and thus corresponds to injustice. Justice must be established in society at any cost. It is evident that this consistent, yet rigid, philosophy

cannot provide a basis for the justification of toleration on the basis of prudence. In fact, toleration that is based on prudence is possible only by rejecting Plato's views.

Aristotle's philosophy also works within the classical paradigm. Aristotle emphasizes order in the universe, as did his teacher. As will be remembered, from the order that exists in the universe Aristotle derives the premise that everything has a purpose towards which it evolves. Nothing in the universe is the result of blind chance. According to this *teleological* view of nature, when something achieves its purpose it comes to a rest, and at this point of rest everything performs its function perfectly and in harmony with everything else. For Aristotle, when something performs its function excellently, virtue is realized.

This ideal state of affairs does not lead Aristotle to reject the existence of conflict among the members of society. Ideally, it would be desirable to have a society founded upon virtue in which there is no conflict at all, however, that would be a society of philosophers. But for Aristotle, there cannot be a society of philosophers because such a society would not be self-sufficient. Rather, a society needs to be made up of individuals with different skills, a society including ordinary human beings whose attainment of virtue would not be very high. Inevitably in such a society, individual interests would clash with one another causing conflict. Doing away with this conflict would require constant intervention by the rulers and so might not be feasible. Therefore, those who do not have virtue as their primary goal in life will have to be included in the political regime.

The resultant inclusive regime will be a mixed one including the oligarchs and the democrats--the rich and the poor. By mixing features of both oligarchy and

democracy in the same constitution, “polity” gives both the oligarchs and democrats a stake in the continuation of the regime. At the same time, Aristotle does not expect these two rival groups to agree on every aspect of life. As long as they work towards consensus about the common matters that concern the whole citizen-body, they may continue to have different ideological and moral views. As will be remembered, Aristotle calls this attitude “political friendship.”

In Aristotle’s concept of political friendship, we can find the seeds of toleration that make a common life possible among people with totally different worldviews. In principle, toleration does not require a person to accept and cherish the actions, beliefs, or practices of which s/he dislikes or disapproves. All that toleration requires is that one must deliberately refrain from interfering with the objects of toleration. The objects of toleration that cause dislike or disapproval belong to the private spheres of individuals. As long as those private beliefs and/or practices do not disturb the common interests of all, there is not any reason for not tolerating them. In other words, toleration expects citizens to be ready to reach consensus only in the matters that are concerned with the common interests. The differences of religious beliefs, of sexual orientation, or of moral views are irrelevant to the determination of common interests.

By preventing conflicting interests, worldviews, and religious views from becoming destructive, toleration contributes to civil peace that is conducive to the continual satisfaction of individual interests as well as those of the state. To the extent that political friendship secures political stability--by limiting the realm upon which citizens need to agree in the matters of common interests--it resembles toleration. In

that regard, it is not misleading to say that Aristotle's political views provided the modern philosophers with the intellectual seeds of toleration based on prudence.

The paradigm of modern political theory, with its emphasis on the instrumentality of society, legitimizes conflict. This paradigm was presented in chapter 6. According to this paradigm, what brings human beings into a society is not the pursuit of a universal ideal, but the pursuit of personal interests. For the moderns, society allows individual interests--such as security, wealth, comfort, and tranquility--to be better served. In this sense, the modern philosophers do not see society as a place where individuals are made virtuous citizens, but as a place where both individual and common interests are satisfied in the best ways. In this sense, the main task facing the political philosopher is to look for ways to keep society intact as long as possible.

In such an interpretation of society and state, conflict that results from the varying pursuits of interests by different individuals is seen as legitimate and inevitable. However, if legitimate conflict is not harnessed it can take destructive forms. Thus, conflict among individuals with different aspirations pose the most fundamental challenge to the modern philosopher involved in the task of keeping society intact as long as possible. If the philosopher is going to be successful in this task, s/he must find a way to prevent legitimate conflict from elevating to the level of destructive conflict. As an instrument of accommodating conflict, toleration provides the modern philosopher with a solution. Indeed, this is toleration based on prudence. A defense of toleration based on this line of reasoning is found in the thought of John Locke.

In terms of looking at man and society, John Locke is in accord with his modern predecessors on most points concerning man and society. Like Machiavelli and

Hobbes, Locke believes that what motivates human beings is a desire to preserve their lives. As Strauss (1953) indicates, Locke believes that reason teaches man that being master of himself and his own life, he has a natural right to the means of preserving it (p. 227). In this sense, the possession of property, which is conducive to self-preservation, is legitimate and forms the primary aim of man.

According to Locke, before the foundation of civil and political society, human beings lived in a state of nature. Here, individuals enjoy natural rights that consist of life, liberty, and property, which are provided by natural law. Locke collects these natural rights under the general name “property rights.” Natural law commands every individual to respect these rights. However, due to the presence of some individuals who do not obey the natural law, the state of nature is not conducive to peaceful living. In order to overcome this problem, individuals join into a civil society and establish a government whose sole duty is to protect the rights of its founders. In Locke’s words (1980), “The great and *chief end*, therefore, of men’s uniting into common-wealth, and putting themselves under government, *is the preservation of their property*” (p. 66). In this sense, political authority receives its legitimacy not from the hierarchical harmonious order that exists in the universe, but from the consent of individuals. The legitimate function of political authority is not to determine what duty suits the natures of the citizens, but to preserve the individual properties of the citizens.

Whenever a government goes beyond its duty and assumes the additional responsibility of ordering the lives of its members, the danger of going back to the hardships in the state of nature is created. The reason is that those members who do not think the same way as the government will take up arms against the government. The

destructive conflict--which is a feature of the state of nature--will dominate over legitimate conflict--which is a feature of civil society. Given this state of affairs, for Locke, prudence recommends tolerating those differences among the citizens that are not detrimental to public order.

Toleration does not require a person to welcome and/or celebrate the object of toleration that causes dislike, disgust, or disapproval; all that toleration requires is that a person refrain from prohibiting, hindering, or coercively interfering with the conduct of the object of toleration. Aristotle's political friendship also does not require a citizen to celebrate the political ideology of every other fellow citizen. One can be a democrat and dislike oligarchic values, or one can be an oligarch and be disturbed by democratic practices. Yet, in order for the *polis* to continue its existence, political friendship requires both the democrat and the oligarch to be ready to listen to the views of the opposite side in respect to the matters that concern all.

In light of the above presented discussion, it is not misleading to say that at least Aristotle had something to contribute to the emergence of the concept of toleration. Indeed, his concept of political friendship in a mixed regime provides the seeds of toleration on the basis of prudence. Thus, the widely held belief that the concept of toleration is a creation of modern philosophers and that classical philosophers have nothing to contribute to its emergence, and later to its development, is not correct.

This study showed that Plato advanced a moral and political philosophy that emphasizes unity and harmony both in the individual and society. Toleration, being a grudging virtue, could not flourish with such an understanding of the individual and society. Aristotle was aware of this precarious situation. He did not welcome conflict

in the *polis*, yet he did not try to get rid of it at all costs either. On the contrary, he looked for ways to accommodate conflict that is caused by political and economic differences in the *polis*. In this regard, Aristotle can be seen as the classic pioneer of the modern attitude towards conflict, which accepts conflict as inevitable and natural and thus legitimizes it. Furthermore, through his concept of political friendship Aristotle showed modern philosophers how to handle conflict peacefully. Thus, it is my claim that those philosophers such as John Locke--who built a case for toleration against religious persecution on the basis of prudence--were in fact weaving this thread of Aristotle's thought.

At this point it is legitimate to ask about Plato's role in the development of the concept of toleration. Obviously, Plato did not have a prudent approach towards conflict in the *polis*. Then in what way did he contribute to the development of toleration? Some may think that the dialogue form in which Plato presents his views is an indication of his tolerant attitude towards differences, but this is an illusion. It is true that by making his opponents explain their views in his dialogues, Plato displays a tolerant attitude. This attitude can be depicted as "philosophical" tolerance, which exists among philosophers themselves. The existence of this tolerant attitude, among the philosophers towards each other, does not necessarily mean that their views are also tolerant. Indeed, when we closely examine Plato's dialogues, the final messages are seen to be far from tolerant. It is my contention that if Plato has any impact on the emergence and development of toleration, it is an indirect one. It is indirect in that Aristotle developed his views by criticizing the views of his master. Thus, it is not

misleading to say that Plato contributed indirectly to the evolution of the notion of toleration.

What are the implications of Aristotle's views for the status of the concept of toleration today? In addition to providing the seeds of the concept of toleration that developed in the early modern era, can Aristotle's concept of political friendship provide us with any meaningful ground for justifying toleration today? One may think that political friendship can provide an alternative ground for the solution of the so-called paradox of toleration. Accordingly, being a citizen of a certain community makes a person a shareholder of the common good as well as the common responsibilities of that particular political community. This, in turn, creates a feeling of solidarity among the citizens. One can be expected to tolerate the different moral and ideological views of fellow citizens on the basis of this solidarity. Such a line of reasoning is set forth by Barker (1997):

From Aristotle's "political friendship" one may develop an "unprincipled" philosophical basis for tolerance. Affection for particular others who are our intimates makes us tolerant of them, for we prize them in their individuality, even when we do not share their values or approve their life style on philosophical grounds. We also tolerate those with whom we join in work ventures, entertainment or religious or philanthropic endeavors because we value both the goal and our shared activities with them. Going one step further, we tolerate the views of those with whom we share citizenship in a particular democratic community where the common good affects each citizen's good, and the good of each includes the common good. (p. 253)

Yet we should remind ourselves that tolerating the moral and ideological views of a friend or intimate is not the same as tolerating the moral and ideological views of a fellow citizen. As will be remembered, Aristotle distinguished between two sorts of community: community based on relations and community based on association. The household that includes parents and children is a community based on relation, the *polis*

that includes citizens is a community based on association. In these two sorts of community the levels of affection in friendship varies. Friendship that is involved in a community based on relation is much stronger than friendship involved in a community based on association. To that extent, whereas it might be easy for a person to tolerate her/his children for their different religious beliefs, it may not be as easy for the same person to tolerate the beliefs of a stranger, although the stranger is a fellow citizen. In this regard, Barker's leap--from tolerating a friend or intimate on the basis of the affection we feel towards her/him to tolerating a stranger on the basis of citizenship--which he bases on Aristotle's concept of political friendship, is bending Aristotle's concept too much to be legitimate.

¹For Locke, a person's property in the broader sense includes her/his rights to life, liberty, and property; the narrow sense includes movable and immovable goods. See John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, Ed. by C.B. Macpherson, (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 1980), p. 66.

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