

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE CONCEPT OF MORALITY AND
POLITICS IN ARISTOTLE'S PHILOSOPHY.**

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TITLE PAGE

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APPROVAL PAGE

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my darling husband, Mr. Uchenna Austin Abone, and to my wonderful kids, Kosi, Kaima and Kamsi Uchenna.

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Nwolu, Kelechi Mathilda.

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ABSTRACT

Morality entails everything about man's action, what he ought to do and what he ought not to do. Like moral standards and moral values, morality forms part and parcel of the life of every social group and civil society. Man as a social and rational being, is naturally moral and political. Politics on the other hand entails everything about the political life in the society. This includes who should, and how the ruler ought to rule. "The *Concept of morality and politics in Aristotle*" is a fresh and specific approach adapted by the writer to have a philosophical and a critical view of Aristotelian morality and politics. Aristotle argues that there is an end which stands above other ends in relation to human function. He calls it happiness- the highest good. Medieval philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas and Saint Augustine call it *summum Bonum*. This is not in contradiction with the Aristotelian notion. Aristotle views the end as generality by postulating that everyone pursues it, both in the political life and in the moral life. For the excellence of the individual equals that of the state. For even the state should aim at providing the ultimate happiness for its citizens. For an individual does not seek morality in a vacuum but in a political society. The state should aim at achieving the ultimate happiness for its citizens. In this regard, this work sets out to discover the relationship of morality to politics and to show the relevance of morality in achieving a sound political system in Aristotle.

NWOLU KELECHI MATHILDA

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The political situation in some societies today has grossly degenerated. The democracy which we practice in our country is not encouraging. We see democracy only in theory but in practice, we experience tyranny. In January, 2012, the government of Nigeria decided to impose fuel subsidy on its citizens. This they did, without considering the public opinion. The citizens of Nigeria did not think it will lead to a better life for them. Moreover, the people were not properly consulted. This stirred up a kind of rebellion among the people against the government. This act opposes the political and moral theory of Aristotle. Because for him, a state can only be good if its rulers seek the welfare of the people they govern, by striving to attain the good life for the individuals. In his moral philosophy, Aristotle posits that every action should have an end. And that end Aristotle calls happiness. When a ruler imposes laws which does not uphold equality and justice, and does not aim at the highest good of the citizens, that leader cannot be said to be a good leader.

A cursory look at the concept of morality and politics appears unambiguous. When, however, critically surveyed, it cannot but reveal its ambiguity. The equivocal nature of the concept has ardently led great thinkers in the course of centuries to develop different theories and views about it. Morality is primitively conceived as consisting in obedience to a tribal custom which is ultimately regarded as essential for the individual. The atomist such as Democritus maintains morality is dominated by the idea of happiness which can only be achieved through the moderate cultivation of culture as the surest way

of attaining the most desirable goal of life.¹ Socrates posits that no one is intentionally vicious. This means that whenever we do something wrong -- including something morally wrong. It is out of ignorance rather than evil. In his ethical perspective, Aristotle holds a crucial idea known as eudemonism (happiness) according to which the good life is the happy life.

Aristotle in his ethical theories views morality as teleological. Under this teleological conception, morality is looked upon as a fundamental conception; morality is looked upon as a fundamental matter of self-expression or self realization.

Thus, he primarily asserts in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that "every art and every inquiry and similarly every action and pursuit is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good is rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim."²

More so, having stated that all actions aim at an end, Aristotle delves into distinguishing the two main kinds of ends. These two ends are instrumental end and intrinsic end. The former implies actions which are carried out as means for other ends while the latter indicates actions which are done for their own sake. The goal is action for its own sake for which any other activity is only a means. For Aristotle, this invariably must be the "good" of man, the supreme good which is eudemonia (happiness).

On the other hand, Aristotle in his politics as in ethics stresses the element of purpose. The state, like man, is endowed by nature with a distinctive function. Combining these two ideas, Aristotle says that "it is evident that the state is a creature of nature and that man is by nature a political animal"³. So closely does he relate man and the state as to conclude that "he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god"⁴. Not only is man by nature

destined to live in a state, but the state, as every other community, is established with the view to some good exists for some end. But unlike Plato, Aristotle did not create a blueprint for an ideal state.

The nature of the ultimate good for man in the community or state are also exposed in this study. Three things which make men good and excellent in the state include nature, habit, reasons and they must be in harmony. Just as in a state, the rulers should have no marked superiority over the ruled, equality should ensure that all citizens alike should take their turn of governing and being governed. So there should be the same treatment of similar persons as no government can stand which is not founded upon justice. And when a government is unjust, everyone in the country unites with the governed in the desire to have a revolution. And it not possible for the members of the government to out power all their enemies put together.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

In Aristotle's political theory, he posits that every state is a community established with a view to some good, for everyone always acts in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and the highest good.

Pertinent questions now arises: In his politics, Aristotle Posits that Aristocracy is a good form of government, but on the other hand, can't Aristocracy degenerate to oligarchy which is a perverted form of government? What is the relationship between politics and morality in Aristotle? And what is the relevance of morality to politics? For in his morality, Aristotle sees happiness as the highest good. But what brings this happiness

since it varies from individual to individual? Is the happiness of the individual synonymous with that of the state, and that of the state synonymous with that of the individual? Also Aristotle postulates that virtue is achieved by striving to arrive at the mean between two extremes. How do we arrive at this mean? And who determines the meanness of this mean? There are some vices which arriving at their mean will be difficult and impossible. How do we now determine the morality or otherwise of these vices. Finally, is it possible to have a sound moral value with an immoral political system?

Therefore, this work has set out to see the extent to which Aristotle defended his claim. This work explores the moral and political theories of Aristotle in order to see the relationship between them and to show the relevance of morality in achieving a sound political system in our society and in our democracy. This work also tends to show how the political and moral theory of Aristotle can influence or help us attain peaceful and harmonious co-existence in our society.

1.3 OBJECTIVE/PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This work sets out to explore and examine Aristotle's notion of politics and morality. It aims at discovering the best quality of a political system to be adopted, as man is by nature a political animal. And the quality of morality which the human person should adopt for the good of society and especially for his personal satisfaction and self-fulfillment for a good life and a happy living.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this work is the notion of morality as discussed in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and his notion of politics as discussed in *Aristotle's politics*.

Though references will be made to other works of Aristotle and other philosophers that relate to morality and politics.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This work will serve as material for prospective researchers and students on Aristotle's idea of morality and politics. It enhances the individual's desire in the quest for a good moral and political life and avails him the opportunity to adopt the quality of morality and which leads to an acceptable and a happy end. The ruler in a state should avoid tyrannical and despotic acts to achieve a happy end. It is also of great importance to the society.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

The method adapted for this research are historical, analytical, expository and critical. It is historical in the sense that, the views of past philosophers on morality and politics before Aristotle will be discussed. It is analytical because this work shall analyse in details, the relationship between politics and morality. The relevance of morality to politics will be exposed in order to achieve a sound moral value in the society. In its expository nature, this work exposes all the tenets of morality and politics as applied by Aristotle, and it will tend to answer some of the numerous questions concerned with it. A critique of Aristotle's view will also be done. Those critiques pointed out by other philosophers will also be studied in order to proffer some solutions to them.

END NOTES

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE – REVIEW

Man, as a rational being, is said to be a social as well as a political animal. He has the inherent tendency to live together with his fellow human beings in a close, contact group, known as society. Thus, he also has the urgent necessity to maintain peace, order, control and stability in the society where he lives with others, in order that he will enjoy life, liberty and happiness which are the ultimate ends of his brief earthly existence. Man also believes that he can only live his life fully in a well ordered and peacefully organized society. The principles for attaining this goal of man is/ are the central theme of Aristotle's moral and political thought. Hence, in this chapter, we shall be doing a brief exposition of Aristotle's concept of morality and politics, as well as that of other philosophers.

It is pertinent to note here, that there is no way we can talk of a society without mentioning morality, and vice ó versa. Blackstone who corroborates the view has this to say: "Political Philosophy is an extension or application of moral philosophy to the problems of political order"¹ Even Plato subordinates politics to morality. This idea is expressed by Dunning in his commentary on the dominant characteristics of Plato's political philosophy which are:- "its idealism and its subordination to ethical science"² Thus, any time you come across morality in this work, bear also in mind that we are invariably discussing society or politics as well; since both of them go pari-petru (hand-in-hand). Having established this fact (logic), we'll now begin with the main man, Aristotle.

In his work, *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle³ makes us to understand that all human activities are goal-oriented. In other words, all human actions are directed towards the attainment of certain ends; every human action is a means to an end which is seen as a good. But some ends, says Aristotle, are sought only as means to further ends and not as ends in themselves. There is however, one end which is not a means to another end and

which is sought for its own sake. All other ends are sought because they lead to this ultimate end which does not itself lead to any other end. This, Aristotle says, is happiness. Happiness, according to him, is the end which is sought for its own sake, and whatever a person seeks as an end or as a good he seeks it as a means to happiness. This is the goal towards which all human activities are directed. Speaking further on this, Aristotle posits that all men seek happiness, but there is only one way to attain it, and that is through morality. Thus, the purpose of morality is happiness. That is to say, if you want to be happy, you must live a moral life; those actions that lead to happiness are good actions, while those that lead to unhappiness are bad actions

In his political philosophy, Aristotle⁴ also identifies politics as the science that studies the supreme good for man. According to him, it is political science that prescribes what subjects are to be taught in states and which of these the different sections of the community are to learn and up to what point, so as to produce a happy society at the end. This view which makes happiness the standard of morality is what is known in the ethical parlance today as Eudemonism. But what precisely is happiness? Aristotle⁵ defines it as "activity of the soul in accordance with virtue." In other words, happiness is an activity of the soul, and is inseparable from virtue. There are however, two types of virtues according to Aristotle: intellectual virtues, and moral virtues. Intellectual virtues include such acts/activities as: scientific knowledge, arts, practical wisdom, intuitive reason, theoretical wisdom, sound deliberation, understanding and judgment; whereas moral virtues include: justice, temperance, generosity, courage etc.

Like Buddha and Confucius in the East, Aristotle also talked about the doctrine of the golden mean, that is, the doctrine that virtue lies between two extremes, that virtue is a mean between excess and defect. For example, generosity is a mean (i.e., in the midway) between miserliness (an extreme) and extravagance (another extreme) etc. And

commenting further on the subject, Aristotle posits that virtue is the result of a habit, it is an internal disposition, a permanent state of mind inclined towards good actions which spring spontaneously from it. That is to say, virtue is the state of mind which spontaneously gives rise to good actions as a matter of habit. Hence, it is Aristotle's contention that virtue can only be acquired by constant and persistent practice through a long period of time; a person becomes virtuous by practicing virtue just as a person becomes a swimmer in no other way than by practicing swimming persistently and constantly until it becomes a habit, or what he calls, a second nature. Aristotle vehemently believes in the force of habit. In his view, a habit is a second nature which once acquired is almost impossible to change. A man, who has acquired a habit, he says, will almost certainly continue for the rest of his life to act in accordance with that habit. For this reason, Aristotle stressed the importance of acquiring good habits from the beginning. He does not believe in the possibility of a sudden radical conversion in which a long established habit is suddenly laid aside and a new beginning made. He does not believe that man can get rid of his "second nature" at all, much less doing so suddenly and radically.

Finally on this, it is worthy to note also that Aristotle described justice as the greatest of all virtues, and defined it as "what is lawful" or "what is fair and equal". He distinguished between two kinds of justice, namely: Universal justice, and particular justice. Universal justice, he practically equates with virtue "He who possesses it can exercise virtue towards his neighbor as well as in himself".

Having come thus far in the exposition of Aristotle's concept of morality and politics, it is also pertinent at this juncture to consider the "take" of other philosophers on this subject. Hence, we'll begin with the ethics of the ancient philosophers. And speaking on justice, one of the sophists, Thrasymachus, who is noted for his ruthless view on

justice, as we are told by Plato⁷ in the Republic, says being just is as useless as any other useless adventure. One gains nothing from being just; justice is not worth practicing. Injustice, according to him, pays more than justice. Unjust person, in his view, are superior to, and stronger in character than people who are just, only weaklings practice justice. He is also noted for the saying that "Might is right", meaning that the stronger is just, or unjust is always right; for in a state, the stronger establishes themselves in power and their interests become, justice, since they usually make laws to protect those interests which in the long-run appears just to the people.

In his moral philosophy, Socrates, though left no writing of his own, but from what could be gathered about him from the *Dialogues of Plato*⁸ (especially in the Symposium), Socrates agrees with Aristotle that happiness is the ultimate goal of life, and that the only path that leads to this goal is to have virtue. However, to have virtue, you must have knowledge. Thus, knowledge is virtue. Ignorance, he believes, is the cause of vices or evil in the society; for no man who really knows what is wrong would do it, no one ever does evil knowingly. In other words, if a man really knows what is right he would do it, and if he knows what is evil, he would refrain from it. Hence, virtue and good actions follow from knowledge; whereas wickedness or evil is due to ignorance. Simply put, knowledge is virtue; while ignorance is vice.

Plato⁹ (428- 347B.C.), the most intimate friend and disciple of Socrates also tolled the same line with his master (Socrates) in maintaining that the goals of human life is happiness, and that the only way that leads to it is through a virtuous life. Only a virtuous man, he says, can be happy. Plato also equates knowledge with virtue. A virtuous man, he says, is a wise man; but a wicked man is a foolish and ignorant man. A man who does evil, he says, does not really know what he is doing; for no man does evil knowingly. Hence, ignorance is the cause of wrong doing. Wisdom, according to Plato, is the virtue of the

rational part of the soul (reason), while courage is the virtue of the spirited part (the higher emotions) and temperance is the subordination of both the spirited and the appetitive parts (i.e both the higher and lower emotions) to the rule of the rational part (reason). Thus, Plato divided the soul into three parts, the rational part (reason), the spirited part (the higher emotions), and the appetitive part (the lower emotions). Justice in the soul, Plato says, is the general harmony that is produced in the soul when each of its parts is functioning properly, each playing its role. Just as he divided the soul into three parts, Plato also divided the society into three parts or classes: the guardian (the ruling class), the auxiliary (the soldiers), and the Artisans (the masses). The duty of the ruling class (the guardians is to guide and govern the state as a whole and to keep the other two classes under control. The duty of the auxiliaries is to defend the state; while the artisans (the masses) is to provide the material and the economic needs of the state. According to him, there is justice in society when each of these classes does its duty properly. Hence, justice becomes the harmony that is produced when each class fulfils its function efficiently. This is Plato's concept of justice.

Be that as it may, it is pertinent to note here also that, though Plato distinguished between different virtues, especially the four cardinal virtues (wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice), all virtues are nevertheless, fundamentally one; for they are different expressions of (or different ways of looking at) the rule of reason over the rest of man and all human activities. Hence, it is impossible, in Plato's view, to have one virtue and lack another, because to have one virtue is to have all; and to lack one is to lack all.

A critical look at the fore-going Plato's theory of morality/the state (politics), one would notice that it is to some extent in congruence with Aristotle's; and also a total negation of Thrasymachus's especially on the concept of justice.

Marcus Tullius Cicero(106-34 B. C.) in *On the Commonwealth* begins his theory of the state with a discussion of public duty and examples of such duty. Cicero argues that defending the commonwealth is the highest obligation individuals have. It is a duty second only to one's duty to the gods, which ranks it as even more important than duty to family or parents. This claim suggests some opposition between private and public lives. In fact, Laelius, of the characters in the book, indicates earlier in the dialogue that he is concerned with looking at the relationship between public and private lives, asking if what occurs beyond the home affects one's private life. Philus, another character, responds that the home is not just a structure of four walls but encompasses the entire universe. This point, a nod to stoic ideas about human membership in a large cosmic community, leads to consideration of the many different factors relevant to a discussion of public and private lives as well as the duties in each.

Eventually, Laelius stated that recent events regarding diverse views on public and private lives in Rome appeared to have created a divide, practically rendering two senates and two peoples. He asks how one can bring about a union of people and the senate¹⁰. Scipio, a third character, is then asked to explain the best constitution for a state and he offered a definition of a true commonwealth, "for what is the commonwealth except the people's affair? Hence, it is a common affair that is an affair belonging to a state. And what is a state except a considerable number of men brought together in a certain bond of harmony"¹¹. The reason why people come together is a social instinct natural in man. The formation of the commonwealth represents the fifth stage of society or union, evolving first, the man and wife relationship, then parent and child, the household, the city and finally, the state. Hence, as with both Plato and Aristotle, Cicero in his political theory sees the state as growing out of the family with the state and the duties to it being the most important of these relationships.

First, there is a life cycle to pure states, with all three governments eventually degenerating into corrupt forms. But adopting a mixed government can perhaps prevent this corruption from occurring, and thus halts or slows down the life cycle. Second, a mixed state achieves a balance between the values of monarchy and those of an aristocracy. Scipio considers the maintenance of equality in a democracy to be impossible or unjust because all are not equal,¹² but a mixed government, according to Cicero, combines the different virtues of reason, wisdom and freedom; it does not arouse a wild and untamed spirit in the citizens and achieves the balance of rights among the different classes of people in society.¹³

In Cicero's political and moral thought, despite the mixing of the different types of governments and their virtues, he prefers that reason and monarchy rule in the state with a king ruling along with the senate representing the aristocracy.¹⁴ Thus, Cicero describes the perfect institutions for the state. According to Cicero, Rome is the embodiment of the perfect state. Its government is superior because it is both the product of many generations of thought,¹⁵ and geographically situated in the best place a city can be. It is far enough away from the corrupting influences of the sea, it has hills for defense, and it is near enough to a river to have all its disadvantages. Cicero's description of Rome as the best political institution suggests that it is written substantially in defense of the political status quo and simply restating and defending traditional values of Roman political thought.

Cicero also addresses some stoic themes about law and justice. A true commonwealth, he urges, is a government that produces harmony, but harmony is obtained only when the state is a true people's affair, that is, when it binds the people together according to the law. Good laws protect the equal rights of all, although the notion of equality must respect the differences among groups and classes in society¹⁶. Moreover, a commonwealth seeks concord or balance, much in the same way music

requires harmony; and the only time concord can be achieved is when justice is the aim of the laws.¹⁷ He argues that the search for justice should pertain only to society and not all of nature. He asks whether justice and customs are not the same thing to all peoples, suggesting that perhaps justice and laws are conventional.¹⁸ This question is similar to one posed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, when Aristotle asks whether the duties of the good man and good citizen coincide. Philius says that if justice were natural, then nature would have laid down our laws; all peoples would be subject to the same laws, and the same people would not be subject to different times. He asks the question: "if it be the duty of a just man and a good citizen to obey laws, what laws should he obey?"¹⁹ Laelius responds that law is not conventional. We next consider the moral/political philosophy of some medieval philosophers.

In the medieval period, Saint Augustine of Hippo (354- 430A.D.), finds more satisfaction in the Aristotelian happiness in his ethical theory. This could be probably, as a result of his religious orientation. He reinterprets Aristotelian happiness. While Aristotle conceives happiness as the "Supreme Good" Saint Augustine associates and calls God the "Summum Bonum". In Augustine's view, God is the author and foundation of morality. He bases his argument on the belief that God is "the creator of good things"²⁰. As a creator of good things, God should be "the supreme and the best good."²¹ Thus God is the foundation of every good.

For Augustine, there is no special or isolated subject about moral theory. The climax or the highest point of everything is in morality. According to him, morality clarifies the sure road to happiness, which is the supreme aim of human behaviour. In his moral philosophy, Augustine brings to light his major insight about the nature of human knowledge, God's nature and the theory of creation. His theory provides a novel estimate of what constitutes true happiness and how it can

be achieved. He maintains that true happiness requires going beyond the natural to the supernatural. Augustine stresses that human nature is made in such a way that it can be the good by which it is made happy. This implies that, to attain happiness, man has to go beyond the natural to the supernatural, from the material world to the intelligible world. The understanding of this fact propels Augustine in his *Confessions* to make a religious and philosophical assertion; you arouse him to take joy in praising you, for you have made us for yourself.²² With human nature we cannot achieve anything unless with God to whom everything is at his command, Augustine postulates.

Remarkably, Saint Augustine states that the aim of living a happy life can only be achieved through the total submission of one's will to the will of the supreme being- God. This comes to light when he states that our heart is restless until it rests in you.²³ Sequel to this, it becomes obvious that for Saint Augustine, to be happy implies to be in union with God, and to be in union with God means living a virtuous and moral life. It is therefore expedient that for Augustine, our search for happiness which results from virtuous life is not by accident. It is rather a consequence of our incompleteness and finitude. It is only in God that we find complete happiness because he is the author and finisher of our life. He is the creator and the primordial ground for moral life.

Assuredly, Augustine's notion of morality agrees with Aristotelian view which asserts that happiness is an activity of the soul which conforms to virtues. Virtue according to Augustine, through the power of reason enables one to control one's aspirations and actions or to determine the golden mean.

St. Augustine in the *City of God*, also offered a ready access to what a state ought to be. He made the love of God as the central principle of morality. He stated that God created all things to be good and man would have remained immortal if not that the first two human beings fell from grace through disobedience. In the long run, two cities emerged from two different loves.

According to Augustine, two groups namely, man and other created spirits form the state. Both strive towards God with their will. They can also live both in conversion and aversion to God by looking upwards and downwards. All men seek peace either in good way or bad way. The two nature of man gave rise to the two cities. "The earthly by love of self, even to the contempt of God, the heavenly by love of God even to the contempt of self."²⁴ Augustine's state may be define as a product of the interplay between the two competing values of these two loves and the two cities. For him, earthly city is characterized by injustice while the heavenly city is characterized by peace. The best conduct is to turn one's mind towards God, towards the heavenly city. Augustine contends that a true republic is formed only when it is united by the shared love of Christ.²⁵ As a Christian philosopher, he claims that no other commonwealth united for any other type of love is real or true commonwealth.

Augustine's distinction between the ideal and eternal republic and its faint representation found in earth as it emerges in his discussion of the city of God versus the city of man is a distinction that sounds Platonic. In fact, Augustine argues that Platonists have positions that are "closest approximation" to the Christian position.²⁶ The true republic is the city or kingdom of God, a commonwealth not found on earth, while the city of man is what has emerged on earth through history as a result of human sin and the fall from God's grace in Eden. The origins of these two cities are critical to understanding Augustine's political philosophy and visions of the state as found in the *City of God*.

Because of the fall of man from grace, humans are not naturally sociable. Rather, they are self ó interested and need the state to compel order, obedience and social co-operation. Without the state, anarchy would result. In other words, Adam and Eve's sin and the fall from grace destroyed the cosmic order of the universe, and the original harmony in nature and among humanity. From this original sin emerges the distinction of two cities, each with its own political and moral values and loves that hold them together:

Adam was therefore the father of both lines of descent that is of the lines whose successive members belong to the earthly city, and of the line who are attached to the city in heaven. But after the murder of Abel, there were two fathers appointed, one for each of those lines of descent. Those fathers were Cain and Abel : and their sons, whose names have to be recorded, indications of these cities began to appear with increasing clarity in the race of mortals.²⁷

The two cities were created by two kinds of love: the earthly city was created by self- love reaching the point of contempt for God, the heavenly city by the love of God carried as far as contempt of self. In fact, the earthly city glories in itself, the heavenly city glories in the Lord.²⁸ Rome, according to Augustine, was founded on the sin of self- love, the root of envy, which it considers the worst of all loves. Thus, the quarrel that arose between Remus and Romulus demonstrated the division of the earthly city against itself, while the conflict between Cain and Abel displayed the hostility between the two cities themselves, the city of God and city of men. Thus, wicked fight among themselves and likewise the wicked fight against the good and the good against the wicked.²⁹

Referring to the story in Genesis, Augustine describes how the two cities emerged after Adam through the lineages of his two sons, Cain and Abel. Each city has unique characteristics, the city of God represented by Jerusalem, and the city of man represented by Babylon and Rome. Thus, one important idea arising from Augustine's reading of

Genesis is that the state is a product of sin, which produced a disharmony among individuals and renders political organizations imperative. A second important idea is that the state's origin is located at a certain point in God's plan for the universe. For Augustine, the state emerges in time; that is, time commences with the fall from grace.³⁰ Both the Greeks and Romans see time as a cyclical pattern, but Augustine rejects the cyclical idea. Thus, Augustine's Christianity affects a major change in political and historical thinking as he advances the notion that history has a purpose moving humanity in a direction towards something. The final goal of history is the eventual destruction of the city of man and the triumph of the city of God, and the end of history when Christ returns for the final judgment.³¹

Augustine notes the importance of justice in a true commonwealth and that justice is found where God, the one supreme God rules an obedient city according to his grace forbidding sacrifice to any being save himself alone; and where in consequence, the soul rules the body in all men who belong to this city and obey God, and the reason faithfully rules the vices in a lawful system of subordination. Remove justice and what are kingdoms but gangs of criminals on a large scale?³² But true justice is found only in that commonwealth whose founder and ruler is Christ.

Augustine has a pessimistic theory of the state and its morality as resulting from sin and its consequent disharmony. He also has a theological and extremely eschatological conception of the end of the state since it certainly disagrees with the self-sufficiency and perfection of the earthly state as against Aristotle's argument.

The ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas(1225- 1274 A.D.) is basically Aristotelian though with Christian orientation. He was indeed an expert on Aristotle and wrote some commentaries on Aristotle. In his Summa Theologica, St. Thomas Aquinas³³ agrees with

Aristotle that all human activities are directed towards good. He also agrees with Aristotle that man's highest good is the intellectual contemplation of the highest object i.e God. However, while Aristotle was talking of rational contemplation of the Unmoved Mover (God) by philosophers in this earthly existence, as the highest good for man; St. Thomas Aquinas is talking of the Beatific Vision of God in heaven, not only by philosophers but even by simple-minded people who lived good lives during their earthly existence. In other words, the highest good for man, according to Aristotle, is the philosophical contemplation of God by philosophers here on earth. But for St. Thomas Aquinas, the highest good for man is the mystical contemplation (the Beatific vision) of God in heaven by anybody who has lived a good life here on earth.

St. Thomas Aquinas³⁴ also agrees with Aristotle that virtue is a mean between two extremes, and that it is a habit formed by repeatedly and persistently performing the same kind of good actions. Once the virtuous habit is formed, the performance of that kind of good actions becomes easier. St. Thomas Aquinas also assigns an important role to reason in morality, for virtue is the rule of reason over the passions. Morality, according to him, is mainly the function of reason; for it is because man is a rational being that he is a moral being. Animals for example, are not rational and are consequently amoral. He distinguishes between two functions of reason, namely: the practical function and the speculative function hence, St. Thomas Aquinas speaks of practical intellect and speculative intellect. The function of the speculative intellect is abstract reasoning, as in metaphysics, mathematics and logic, and the function of practical intellect is to guide and direct human behaviour towards good and away from evil. Like the stoics, St. Thomas Aquinas takes "right reason" as the moral standard. This means that those actions that conform to "right reason" are good, while those that are opposed to "right reason" are evil actions. This is also similar to Aristotle's theory of practical wisdom. But the problem is

that, this does not help very much in real life situations, for it is not easy to know what precisely 'right reason' is in any given situation.

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469- 1527), an Italian Political thinker, is world-famous for his 'immoral' philosophy now known as 'Machiavellianism' in ethical circle. He presents a dual theory of the state as found in his *The Prince* and *Discourse on the First Decade of Titus Livinus*. This is because he argues that 'all states and powers under which men have been governed are either republics or principalities'³⁵ In his book, *The Prince*, Machiavelli³⁶ maintains that the most important thing a ruler ought to do is the preservation and stability of the state which, of course, means also the preservation of himself in power. The ruler, in Machiavelli's view, is above morality; he can do anything to preserve himself in power and preserve the stability of the state, provided he succeeds 'what matters is to successfully achieve one's ends. Hence, the end justifies the means.

Virtue, for Machiavelli means something different from what we ordinarily consider as virtue. He has no use for the Christian virtues of humility, self-denial, meekness, patience etc. These, for Machiavelli, are not virtues; virtues for him means vitality, energy, strength of character, ambition, ability to achieve one's aims, desire for fame, courage, patriotism, ability to win power and preserve it etc. These are Machiavellian virtues. These, he said, are the kind of virtues needed in a state; these, and not the Christian or the Aristotelian kind of virtues are what a ruler should encourage in his state, for they lead to success. *The Prince* presents a kind of state called the principality which is formed where the nobles have the opportunity of one person as prince since the people are not capable of self-government because they lack freedom. But 'since the desire to acquire more is admittedly a very natural and common thing'³⁷, as witnessed in the nobility to dominate, it follows that in this form of the state, a perpetual subjection and all forms of cruelty to the people are employed whether morally justified or not to

sustain the state of the prince. The principality is further divided into a hereditary and a new principality. For the hereditary principality, the princely families are long established as rulers; for the new, they are completely new and are like limbs joined to the hereditary state of the prince who acquires them. There are also ecclesial principalities of the religious institutions, so powerfully mature; no matter how the rulers act and live, they safeguard his government. Ecclesial powers, according to Machiavelli, possess state and do not defend them; Subjects and do not govern them. And though their states are not defended, they are not taken away from them, and their subjects being without government do not worry about it, neither can nor hopes to overthrow it in favour of another. So these principalities alone are secure and happy.

The *Discourse on the First Decade of Titus Livinus*, on the other hand, argues for a republic and explains that republics are free states as different from principalities, which are not free states. The republics rank higher in their organization and structuring than the principalities. They bear high advantages also, but only a people with higher degree of virtue can form a true republic. This is so because it implies a constitution, self-government unlike a principality where the prince or tyrant must subjugate the people because they lack virtue and cannot govern themselves. In the republic, the people, according to Machiavelli, are more stable and prudent than the princes. The people can judge better and external forces of corrupt judgment influence them less than the princes. In their election, they make better choices than princes who would be easily lured to choose dubious characters³⁸. Even on the question of law, although the prince could make better institutions, statutes, etc, but the people would keep them better. Thus, the virtue of a good people is always higher than that of the prince. They are free³⁹

It is freedom, according to Machiavelli, that makes a state a republic and it is the virtue of a people that makes them free. Freedom of the state, therefore, means not only

independence from external domination; it involves also the internal freedom of the people. The ancient Roman republic was earlier a free state but later became unfree when the emperors and Caesar's started to concentrate political powers in their hands and discarded the people's constitution.

On the other hand, the freedom of a state is not a mere liberality; it is rather in the people's self-government. Self-government is not simply representative democracy but the people accepting with virtue the challenges of guiding their lives according to legal and institutional structure of the state. They freely and spontaneously without compulsion keep order.

It is, therefore this ability or power to control the force that governs the universe that makes them conform to laws and institutions; it builds up for them a constitutional system of a republic. This ability once achieved in a people as a free state, aims at two ends, namely: to expand their state always and to protect their liberties⁴⁰. Another characteristic that differentiates the republics from the principalities is that of the common good. The common good is only respected in the republics and not in the principalities because the prince is prone to protect the private interest of the few when it conflicts with that of the generality of the people. Machiavelli wrote only shortly after the invention of the printing press, and he was one of the very first to write for mass audience. Although his works are formally addressed to princes, their real audience are the citizens of a democratic republic, and by implication he invited not only princes but also citizens to understand that reality was something constructed by free persons, not given by God. The Machiavellian conception of state and morals is far from what Aristotle think the state to be. In Aristotelian state, the individual will and welfare were taken into consideration because the state aims at the highest good of every citizen.

The dawn of the social contract philosophers saw Thomas Hobbes(1588-1679. A.D.), Bringing into light the anarchical and inimical condition of the state of nature. In the state of nature, man is psychologically motivated by his desire for pleasure and all his actions are aimed at self-preservation and self-satisfaction. Hobbes views man's action in the state of nature as amoral. Thus he asserts, "the notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have no place there. they are qualities that relate to men in society not in solitude."⁴¹

In other words, man originally lacked morality and justice. To curb this unwholesome situation and hostile conditions which surround man's environment and threaten his self-preservation and self-satisfaction in Hobbes's state of nature, the need for a sovereign state arises. The sovereign state is to bring to control man's lawlessness and in so doing establish morality among men. The sovereign state therefore becomes the foundation of morality in Hobbesian thought.

Furthermore, in *The Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes in his political concept of the state, begins his discussion with the state of man in the pre- civil community; and he explains this state in purely mechanistic terms. Because of the equality of ability and the lack of regulation force in this state of nature, there was total confusion. Thus, life in this state was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."⁴² It was a state either of actual war or in perpetual preparedness for war where there was no sense of right or wrong, justice and injustices; and the only thing that keeps men in check is fear of death.⁴³

In the description of the consequences of life in a state of nature, Hobbes shows his clear hostility to this condition. To enable people to secure their lives and possessions, they must escape from this uncertain and fearful state. To give up one's natural right to self- defense in exchange for peace is a rational exercise in securing power since peace

will assure a future where each will be most able to pursue self-interest in a non-violent environment. The surest basis for peace, given Hobbes's view of human nature, is the greatest of human powers: equal individuals united by a voluntary consent through a covenant, or political contract must freely consent to surrender their natural right to self-defense. This right is transferred to a common power, to a sovereign authority that is placed in one man or one assembly of men empowered to act in those things which concern the common peace and safety in the name of the whole people.⁴⁴

The sovereign, according to Hobbes, is at the heart of government and this sovereign must be able to use force because people do not change their bestial nature when leaving the state of nature; hence covenants without the sword are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all.⁴⁵ The sovereign must also be one since multiple powers are contrary to the basis of a valid contract, as they cannot provide one clear voice to settle disputes; and the very consequences the contract were instituted to prevent are bound to occur. The sovereign authority assumes what was in nature, an individual right, namely, to determine the circumstances under which force is to be used, and other means necessary for the pursuit of peace. This then is how a commonwealth is instituted:

A commonwealth is said to be instituted when a multitude of men do agree and covenant, everyone with everyone, that to whatsoever man or

assembly of men shall be given by the major part the right to present the person of them all- that is to say to be their representative- everyone as well as he that voted for it as he that voted against it. Shall authorize all the actions and judgements of that man or assembly of men in the same manner as if they were his own, to the end to live peaceably among themselves and be protected against other men⁴⁶.

Once a commonwealth is instituted, the minority is obligated to follow the will of the majority in submitting to the sovereign whom Hobbes equates with the state. Hobbes clearly conceives the state as well as government as an artificial creation with a practical purpose. It is a complex machine made up of similar machines of individuals propelled by personal motives reacting to each other in a different manner than they would in the state of nature. It is a means not an end and its good is relative to how well it achieves its pragmatic purpose of civil peace. Although its source is artificial, its purpose is essential because the state is a basic necessity and a symbol of our victory over nature.

Hobbes presents a tyrannical structure of the state where all the citizens are at the whims and caprices of the sovereign as it moves from the fear of anarchy in the state of nature to a resolution of tyranny in the commonwealth.

David Hume (1711- 1776) differs greatly from Aristotle's concept of morality. In his work, *ŃA Treatise of Human Natureö*, David Hume, unlike Aristotle and Plato who advocate that the soul of man (i.e reason) should rule, guide and dominate every man's activity, posits that morality is not based on reason. In his words, Ńreason is not concerned with morality but with speculative truths such as those of mathematics and physicsö.⁴⁷ Morality, he claims is based on sentiments, natural feelings, natural tendencies and the passions. These are what move a man into action and they determine his choice of actions. Reason cannot move a man into action; the role of reason in morality, he claims, is simply to help the passions; for reason is the slave of the passions.

Speaking on virtue, David Hume also maintains, that the criterion of virtue is utility. In other words for anything to be considered as a virtue it must be useful and it must promote man's well-being, otherwise it does not deserve to be called virtue. Here again, we see another sharp distinction between Aristotle's concept of virtue and that of Hume. While Aristotle equates happiness with virtue; Hume equates utility with virtue.

However, Hume dismisses celibacy, fasting, humility, penance, mortification, silence, solitude, self-denial, and the whole train of monkish virtues as useless. To him, these are not virtues at all because they serve no useful purpose.

Well, Hume is not the sole object of our consideration (or criticism) in this work, otherwise I would have said that his dismissal of the monkish virtues as useless because they serve no useful purpose depends on what he considers useful i.e his concept of usefulness, because I vehemently believe that the monk or the individual who indulges in such virtuous activities, indulges in them for a purpose (which are also useful to him), since every activity of man is tailored towards some end (happiness) which is good (useful) in itself. Hume's position, was no doubt, an attack on the monastic tradition which still flourished in Europe at his time.

Having done in this chapter, a survey of Aristotle's concept of morality and politics in line with other philosophers take on the matter; in the chapter that follows next, we shall do a thorough exposition of this subject matter.

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CHAPTER THREE

AN EXPOSITION OF ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPT OF MORALITY

3.1 A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ARISTOTLE

Aristotle was born in 384 B.C in the Macedonian town of Stagira on the Northeast coast of Thrace. His father, Nicomachus, was the physician to the king of Macedonia - Amyritus II. It is likely that the scientific, empirical flavor of Aristotle's philosophy, his attention to detail and his skills at classifying and analyzing the features of nature were inspired by his father's profession. When he was seventeen years old, Aristotle went to Athens to enroll in Plato's academy where he spent twenty years as a pupil and as a member.

In 348/47B.C, Aristotle left the academy and accepted the invitation of Hermeias to come to Assos, near Troy. While at Hermeias's court, he married this ruler's niece (hermeias) and adopted daughter, Pythias, who bore him a daughter. After his wife's death he entered into a relationship with Herpyllis, who bore him a son. He named the son, Nicomachus, after whom the *Nicomachean Ethics*, his book was named. Aristotle died in Chalcis of a digestive disease of long standing in 322BC.

3.2 ARISTOTLE'S METAPHYSICS

The natural law theory originated in Aristotle's idea that everything has a purpose, revealed in its design, and that its supreme "good" is to be sought in fulfilling that purpose. There are two things we need to know about natural law: first, it isn't natural, and second it isn't law. Natural law is not simply what nature does; rather it is based on nature as interpreted by human reason. It does not necessarily give you straight forward and

dogmatic answers to every situation. It involves a measure of interpretation and can be applied in a flexible way. It does not simply present a fixed law dedicated by nature. Aristotle argued that everything had a purpose or goal to which it aimed. Once you know what something is for, you know how it should behave and what its final "good" is. A knife is designed for cutting, if it does that well, it is a "good" knife. His idea of purpose leads into his idea of what is good. The good has been well described as that at which everything aims. The good for humans is eudaimonia, which is often translated as happiness, but means rather more than that. It includes the idea of living well and of doing well. Aristotle was also concerned to show that living the good life was not an individual thing, but that it involved living at one with others in the society. So a person can enjoy the good life by fulfilling his or her essential nature, and doing it within the society.

In Aristotle's philosophy, things have an essence- a real nature which defines what they are. If you understand what you are, you know what your life is for, how you relate to the rest of the world, thus he asserts, "for we call nature, the genesis of growing things, the primary immanent element in a thing, from which its growth proceeds; the source from which the primary movement in each natural object is present in it in virtue of its own essence"¹. The aim of life is to fulfill your essence. Natural law is therefore based on a rational interpretation of purposiveness within the world; it is not simply on an objective account of what is in fact the case. Being subject to divine rule is therefore, for Aquinas the means of achieving one's own final purpose or end. For Aquinas natural law is based on the conviction that God created the world, establishing within it, a sense of order and purpose that reflects his will. If everything is created for a purpose, human reason, in examining that purpose, should be able to judge how to act in order to fulfill itself and therefore find its own goal and ultimate happiness. Since natural law is based on reason, it

is in principles discovered by anyone whether religious or not. For the same reason it is universal, rather than limited to any one religion or culture.

Furthermore, Aristotle in his metaphysics (a term that indicates his writings coming after physics) developed what he called the science of first philosophy. Throughout his metaphysics, he is concerned with a type of knowledge that he thought could be most rightly called wisdom. But Aristotle went further to stipulate that the wisdom he meant is more than that kind of knowledge obtained from sensing objects and their qualities. It is even more than knowledge acquired from repeated experiences of the same kinds of things. Thus he asserts that, wisdom is similar to the knowledge possessed by the scientist who begins by looking at something, then repeats these sense experiences, and finally goes beyond sense experience by thinking about the causes of the objects of his experiences². Therefore, his first philosophy or what we now call metaphysics, goes beyond the subject matter of other sciences and is concerned with **first principles and causes**. These are the true foundations of wisdom, for they give us knowledge, not of any particular object or activity, but rather knowledge of true reality. The first principles and the causes are most knowable and from these, all other things come to be known. The problem of metaphysics therefore, is the study of Being and its principles and causes. To be, then, is to be a particular kind of substance. Also, to be means to be a substance as the product of a dynamic process. In this way, Aristotle is concerned in his metaphysics with Being i.e. existing substances and its causes i.e. the processes by which substances come into being.

Equally, Aristotle says that we know a thing better when we know what it is than when we know the colour, size or posture it has. The mind separates a thing from all its qualities and focuses upon what a thing really is, upon its essential nature. The central

concern of metaphysics is the study of substance, the essential nature of a thing. He admitted the existence of substance; for if there is no substance, then there is no being at all.³ Substance is what we know as basic about something, after which we can say other things about it. For whenever we define something, we get at its essence before we can say anything about it. Aristotle went further to consider what makes a substance, is it matter or form.

Also, Aristotle distinguished between matter and form. He nevertheless said that we never find matter without form or form without matter in nature. Everything that exists is some concrete individual thing, and everything is a unity of matter and form. Substance therefore, is a composite of form and matter. Aristotle rejected Plato's explanation of the universal forms, rejecting specifically the notion that the forms existed separately for individual things. This is because, when we use the words matter and form to describe any specific thing, we seem to have in mind the distinction between what something is made of and what it is made into. So what things are made out of (matter) exists in some primary and uninformed state until they are made into a thing. To know how one thing becomes another thing in Aristotle, we have to look at the nature of change.

Consequently, the development of potentiality to actuality is one of the most important aspects of Aristotle's philosophy. In the world around us, we see things constantly changing, and change is one of the basic facts of our experience. Everything in nature has its end and function, and nothing is without its purpose. The word change for Aristotle means many things including motion, growth, decay, generation and corruption. Some of these changes are natural, whereas others are the products of human art. In nature then, Aristotle sees change as involving causes, thus, we call a cause, that from which a thing comes into being, e.g. the bronze of the statue and the silver of the saucer, or the

form or pattern of a thing that from which the change or freedom from change first begins or the end that is for the sake of which a thing is⁴. The four causes are, **the formal cause**, which determines what a thing is, the **material cause**, or that out of which it is made, the **efficient cause**, by what a thing is made, and the **final cause**, the end for which it is made. Take a bronze statue for instance, its material cause is the bronze itself. Its efficient cause is the sculptor, insofar as he forces the bronze into shape. The formal cause is the idea of the completed statue. The final cause is the end for which the statue is made. The final end (purpose or teleology) of a thing is realized in the full perfection of the object itself, not in our conception of it. Final cause is thus internal to the nature of the object itself, and not something we subjectively impose on it. Aristotle was able to elaborate his notion that form and matter never exist separately. In nature, generation of new life involves who already possesses the specific form which the offspring will have (the male parent). There must then be the matter capable of being the vehicle for this form (this matter being contributed by the female parent), from this comes a new individual with the same specific form in this example, Aristotle indicates that change does not involve bringing together formless matter with matterless form. On the contrary, change occurs always in and to something that is already a combination of form and matter and that is on its way to becoming something new or different.

Subsequently, everything in nature has its end and function, and nothing is without its purpose. All things are involved in processes of change. Each thing possesses a power to become what its form has set as its end. That things have ends led Aristotle to consider the distinction between potentiality and actuality. This distinction is used by Aristotle to explain the process of change and development. If the end of an acorn is to be a tree, in some way, the acorn is only potentially a tree but not actually so at this time. A fundamental mode of change then is the change from potentiality to actuality. But the

chief significance of this distinction is that Aristotle argues for the priority of actuality over the potential. For he stated that, "actuality is prior to potentiality". Clearly it is prior in form, for that which is in the primary sense potential, is potential because it is possible for it to become actual. Far from the potential, the actual is always produced by an actual thing⁵. There is always a first mover which already exists actually. The self-contained end of anything, Aristotle called its entelechy.

As such, Aristotle started his theory of the soul by saying that, "the knowledge of the soul admittedly contributes to the advance of truth in general, and above all, to our understanding of nature, for the soul is in some sense the principle of animal life". "Soul" is defined by Aristotle "as the substance in the sense which corresponds to the account of a thing"⁶. That means that it is what it is to be for a body of the character just assigned. Suppose that a tool, e.g. an axe were a natural body, then being an axe would have been its essence, and so its soul; if this disappeared from it, it would have ceased to be an axe except in name. Also suppose the eye were an animal- sight would have been its soul, for sight is the substance of the eye which corresponds to the account, the eye been merely the matter of seeing, when seeing is removed, the eye is no longer an eye, except in name, no more than the eye of a statue or of a painted figure. The soul is therefore an actuality in the sense corresponding to sight and the power in the tool. The soul and the body, constitutes the animal.

Therefore, Aristotle sees the soul as the perfect expression or realization of a natural body. It follows that there is a close connection between psychological states and physiological processes. Body and soul are unified in the same way that wax and an impression stamped in it are unified. Aristotle discussed the soul abstractly without any regard to the bodily environment; this, Aristotle believes, was a mistake. At the same time,

Aristotle regards the soul or mind not as the product of the physiological conditions of the body, but as the truth of the body- substance in which only the bodily conditions gain their real meaning. The soul manifests its activities in certain faculties or parts which correspond with the stages of biological development, and are the faculties of nutrition (peculiar to plants), that of movement (peculiar to animals), and that of reason (peculiar to humans). Sense perception is a faculty of receiving the forms of outward objects independently of the matter of which they are composed, just as the wax takes on the figure of the seal without the gold or other metal of which the seal is composed. As the subject of impression, perception involves a movement and a kind of qualitative change, but perception is not merely a passive or receptive affection. It in turn acts, and distinguishes between the qualities of outward things, becomes a movement of the soul through the medium of the body.

Human Rationality

The human soul combines in itself all the lower forms of soul, the vegetative, nutritive, and sensitive, having in addition to these the rational soul. The rational soul has the power of deliberation. Here the mind not only discovers what truth is in the nature of things, it discovers the guides for human behavior. Without the body, the soul could neither be, nor exercise its functions. This is in sharp contrast to Plato's explanation of the body as the prison house of the soul. By contrast, Aristotle says that the body and soul together form one substance. The rational soul of man, as the sensitive soul, is characterized by potentiality. Just as the eye is capable of seeing a red object but will only see it when it actually confronts a red object, so also, the rational soul is capable of understanding the true nature of things. But reason has its knowledge only potentially, it must reason out its conclusions, the human rationality distinguishes man from other lower

animals and plants. For Aristotle, rationality enables man to act morally, to strive to attain his end as human being, to organize man in a society and to make something out of life. Animals have souls but man's soul is higher and can organize political life. Man is a social being and his existence in the society makes morality necessary. It is morality that determines how man lives in the society. With these, we shall proceed to look at Aristotle's conception of morality.

3.3 ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPT OF MORALITY

3.3.1 Habit As A Pre- Requisite For Morality

In Ome, ethics and morality serve the same purpose. He sees ethics as, a habitual way of acting (that is, acquired habit). Morality itself has bearing with the Latin word *mos* meaning custom or behaviour. Consequently, from the etymological point of view, *ethics* and *morality* serve the same purpose, and it is for this reason that in their substantive forms, the words are often interchanged⁷. Ethics or morality can be generally seen as a science of human conduct. An action can become a moral issue when it affects the life of other people positively or negatively. Therefore, morality has to do with the rightness or wrongness of actions.

Equally, Aristotle's most complete work on ethics is called the *Nicomachean Ethics* (which refers to the name of both his father and son). It stands as one of the greatest classics of moral philosophy and is still influential. In Aristotle's view, ethics constitutes a body of objective knowledge. In this sense it is a science of correct conduct that guides us towards the goal of achieving human excellence. For this reason, he starts out the *Nicomachean Ethics* by explaining:

Our discussion will be adequate if it has as much clearness as the subject matter admits of, for precision is not to be sought for, alike in all discussion, many more than in all the products of the craftsí . For it is the mark of an educated man to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subjects admits.⁸

Aristotle's theory of morality centers around his belief that man as everything else in nature, has a distinctive end to achieve or a function to fulfill. For this reason, his theory is rigidly called teleological. He begins his *Nicomachean Ethics* by saying that "every act and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good" ⁹. If this is so, the question for ethics is, what is the good at which human nature aim? With this in mind, Aristotle set out to discover the basis of morality in the structure of human nature.

Morality in Aristotle's view has to do with developing habit. The types of habit here include: the habit of right choice, the habit of right thinking and the habit of right behavior. Habit as the name implies comes from the Latin word *habes* meaning "to have" or "to possess". By implication, whatever one has or possesses is a habit. Aristotle observes that "neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do virtue arise in us, rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit. Habit is an emanation of an action which is frequently repeated. Aristotle contends that it is a lasting disposition by which one is induced to act in certain ways. Though Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* holds that "it is easier to change a habit than to change one's nature"¹⁰, he however, admits that "even habit (itself) is hard to change just because it is like nature"¹¹. As a quality which is difficult to change, habit is positional in the general category of quality. For the sake of clarity, habit has been classified into two major types "entitative" which is the habit of having. This includes habits which modify a person, like beauty, health and strength. The second is operative habits which is habit of

acting. The operation of power in man is influenced by this kind of habit. Essentially morality involves action, for nothing should be regarded as 'good' except it functions properly. Aristotle through his analogy of the Olympic game infers that 'the good person is not the one who does a good deed here or there, now and then, but the one whose life is good'¹². Inferring from the foregoing, it becomes imperatively clear that in Aristotelian morality, one must form a good habit and be persistent in it in order to actualize it into action by so doing brings into reality the general law of morality which enhances one to act virtuously and accordingly with right reason.

3.3.2 Virtue As A Pre- Requisite For Morality

Aristotle begins the description of virtue or excellence by considering the three things that are found in the soul. They are: passions, faculties and state of character. According to him, virtue must be one of these and must be a state of character. He illustrates that virtue or excellence is that which: Brings into good condition the things of which it is the excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well; e.g. the excellence of eye make both the eye and its work good; for it is by the excellence of the eye that we see well.¹³

This implies that the outcome of virtue is good work. Virtue makes its possessor good. Hence, Aristotle posits that one's virtue also will be the state of character which makes one good and equally enhances one to doing one's work very well. By implication being virtuous consists in performing good actions consistently through a habitual attitude which cannot produce a vicious action. Aristotle's notion of virtue generally portrays virtue as excellence-*arête* in Greek. The Greek *arête* has a wider connotation based on the fact that it is applied to different things in reference to all kinds of excellence. This is obvious in MacIntyre's assertion:

The word *arête*, which later comes to be, translated as *virtue* in the Homeric poems used for excellence of any kind; a fast runner, displays the *arête* of his feet and a son excels his father in every kind of *arête*-- as athlete. This concept of virtue as *excellence* is more alien to us than we are apt at first to recognize. It is not difficult for us to recognize the central place that strength will have in such a conception of human excellence or the way in which courage is of the central virtues, perhaps the central virtue.¹⁴

Similarly, in Aristotelian view, *virtue* concerns the functional excellence of any person, animal or thing.¹⁵ For instance, the virtue of a flute player is the quality to excel and display very well; the virtue of a horse is the quality of it to run victoriously in a horse race; in the production of sound, the virtue of musical instrument is the quality to produce a desired sound. Aristotle contends that the possession of virtues goes hand in hand with virtuous activity. For him, virtuous activities are indications of a virtuous man. The inactiveness of a virtuous man silences his virtue for the state of mind (virtue) may exist without producing any good result, as in a man who is asleep or in some other way, quite inactive.¹⁶ To be a virtuous person therefore, the need to activate and functionalize one's duty is indispensable. Aristotle observes that virtue is of two kinds namely; moral and intellectual virtues. The former is the result of habit from which the name is derived. It is a slight modification of the term *ethos* which means *custom*. The development and growth of the latter are mainly traceable to instruction which requires time and experience. The fact that moral virtue is the resultant effect of habit and a modification of *ethos* prompted Aristotle to remark:

This fact makes it obvious that none of the moral virtue is engendered in us by nature, since nothing that is worth what it is by nature can be made to behave differently by habituation. For instance, a stone which has a natural tendency downwards, cannot be habituated to rise, however, often you try to train it by throwing it into the air; nor can you try to train fire to burn downwards; nor can anything else that has any other natural tendency be trained to depart from it¹⁷.

Aristotle's illustration implies that one can only become virtuous by willingly doing virtuous act. Virtue is therefore, a mean between opposite vices, and there are no simple rules to decide what is appropriate.

For him, intellectual virtue pre-supposes moral virtue, which is divided into practical and theoretical wisdom. While the practical concerns the question of proper conduct, the theoretical wisdom is concerned with intuitive knowledge of concept including the truth and what emanate from them. Theoretical wisdom according to Aristotle is the highest virtue one can acquire. No wonder it is said that the life of a theoretical philosopher is the best life one can lead. Since it is expedient that acquisition and development of moral virtue is by practice, it becomes important that Aristotelian morality cannot be justifiably discussed without making a due reference to moral virtue.

3.3.3 Moral Virtue As A Pre-Requisite For Morality.

Moral virtue is not a passion or a faculty. It is rather a state of character. It is a disposition to choose the mean. For Aristotle, moral virtue comes from habit. He opines that "the moral virtues, then, are engendered in us neither by nor contrary to nature; we are constituted by nature to receive them, but their full development in us is due to habit."¹⁷ From the Aristotelian view, it becomes obvious that the acquisition and development of moral virtue is by practice, that is, by habit which reflects constancy. Moral virtue is made

up of three main virtues namely, the virtues of fortitude, temperance and justice. Fortitude is a moral virtue which enables us to perform our actions in the right way. It facilitates our actions with ease in the domain of irascible appetite. Temperance is the virtue of the irrational parts. It concerns itself with both pleasure of the mind and that of the body. It is in fact, a means with regard to pleasure. It guides and controls our passions and emotions. The virtue of justice enables one to give and get what one rightly deserves. As a matter of fact, justice is a virtue which perfects the will and enables it to order our acts in relation to our fellow men. In general, the moral virtues of fortitude, temperance and justice concern good living directly because they operate together in concomitance with prudence in order to establish the possibility of the knowledge of our actions and how to effectively carry them out.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that Aristotle's morality is in consonance with the moral virtue which emanates from repeated good acts that reside in the appetitive part of the soul. Buttressing this point, Kadankavil stresses that these good habits "direct the activities of the will and govern the passions of the sense-appetite."¹⁸ Moreover, the Aristotelian notion of morality is clearly expressed in his stand that virtue lies in the middle. This is to posit that in quest of a moral life, one must strike the balance by avoiding the extremes of deficiency and excess, the deficiency being avarice and the excess being prodigality. This is the interpretation of the Aristotle doctrine of the mean which says that in "medio stat virtus" - that is, virtue stands in the middle. By implication, for one to be moral, one must apply moderation in one's actions.

In Aristotle's view, virtue is a state of character which is concerned with choice. It is a mean between two vices, that which depends on excess and that which depends on defect. Moreover, while virtue is a mean, vices respectively fall short of or exceed what is

right in both passions. Virtue finds and chooses that which is intermediate. In support of Aristotelian position, Aquinas affirms that virtue is a habit of choosing the mean appointed by reason as by a prudent man. Moreover, building on the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean, Fagothey expresses that:

Moral virtue is a habit of choosing the mean between the extremes of excess and defect in action, and this mean is determined by right reason, that is, reason under the impulse of desire for the end and guided by the intellectual virtue of prudence.²⁰

Consequently, moral life, according to Aristotle, is the life which has the ability to aim at the intermediate. It is worthy to note that the mean is not absolute. It is always relative or proportionate. It differs for different people. One might, therefore, ask; can there be a common mean for every human act? In response to this, Aristotle categorically posits that it is not possible. This is because there are some human acts which have no mean at all. For instance, murder, theft, adultery, and malevolence. According to deontological moral theories these acts are bad by their very nature. Aristotle affirms:

But not every action nor every passion admits of a mean; for some have names that already imply bad names, e.g. , spite shamelessness, envy, and in the case of actions-adultery, theft, murder; for all of these and suchlike things by their names that they are themselves bad and not the excesses or deficiencies of them. It is impossible then, ever to be right with regard to them; one must always be wrong.²¹

Aristotle's affirmation that the deficiency of some actions does not lie in their excesses implies that whoever indulges in them is vicious irrespective of his or her intention and the circumstances at the material time. For Aristotle, therefore, moral virtue is morality. It is the virtue at the middle which varies from one person to the other. Moral

virtues are developed when a person possessing rational control of his behavior introduces measure, harmony and order into his social mutual dealings.

3.3.4 Morality vis-a-vis Rationality

Man has a unique and distinctive mode of activity. In order to discover this uniqueness in man's activity, Aristotle delves into the analysis of human nature. He confirms that man is the master of his own passions. His *telos* does not imply mere life or life of sensation alone. This is because vegetables, plants and even animals possess such characters. Far from this, man is exceptionally characterized by an active life of the element which has a rational principle. Unlike irrational animal, man makes a sensible deliberation about his choice and action. Thus:

The object of choice being one of the things in our own power which is desired after deliberation, choice will be deliberate desire of things in our own power; for when we have decided as a result of deliberation, we desire in accordance with our deliberation.²²

Furthermore, man's ability to deliberate and make choice is made possible by his rational power. When man's function and activity are rationally oriented, the good becomes the activity of the soul in accordance with virtue. Stating that practical reasoning is paramount to planning well about what is good and useful for living well or being happy. Aristotle avers that it is the function of (practical) reason to plan well concerning goods attainable by man. He admits that practical rationality makes our means right, in contrast to excellence of character or moral virtue which make the end right. Affirming Aristotle's opinion, Aquinas recognizes the evidence of the strong *prima facie* which practical rationality is confined in order to identify the meaning to ends.

Admittedly, it is not the will that plans but reason. Aristotle views reason as the ruling part of the human faculties while a moral agent is the originating cause of his actions. This implies that the power to do right or wrong lies in the hands of a moral agent who determines himself. "Now if it is our power to do noble or base acts, and likewise in our power not to do them, and this was what being good or bad meant, then it is in our power to be virtuous or vicious."²³

Moreover, describing the nature of the soul, Aristotle categorizes it into two parts, namely; the rational and the irrational parts. The two are in opposition of each other. The irrational part is further subdivided into the vegetative and the appetitive parts which are resisting and opposing to the rational part. Hence, "the conflict between the rational and irrational element in man is what raises the problem and subject matter of morality."²⁴

Aristotle maintains that there is only one supreme end which perfects the human agent. It is happiness. Owing to this, the human good, human happiness can neither consist in the activity of the vegetative power nor in that of the sensitive powers but in rational activity, in the excellence of that activity. Aristotle notes that the human good must consist of excellence or virtuous rational activity. The virtuous rational activity is the activity of reason itself and acts of other faculties that are under the control of reason. Through this rational activity, the human agent reaches the highest good (happiness).

3.3.5 Morality As Self-Realization

Also, Aristotle's conception of morality can be teleological considered as a fundamental matter of self-realization. It focuses on the proper goals or ends of human activity. Man realizes himself when he achieves the ultimate aim. This ultimate aim is what Aristotle calls "the supreme good". Hence he opines that "for this reason the good

has rightly been declared to be that act which all things (men) aim at²⁵ One may ask, what really is the nature of this 'good' which human act aims? In answering this question, Aristotle states:

If, then there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for at that rate the process would go on to infinite, so that our desire would be empty and vain) . Clearly this must be the good and chief good.²⁶

By implication, in order not to have a fruitless end, Aristotle advocates that our actions should aim at some good. We must strive to determine that which is desired for its own sake. For Aristotle, every individual has in him the principle of good or right. This principle according to him, can only be realized and brought to manifestation through the study of human nature. The principle also can be attained through man's actual (moral) behavior in day-to-day life activities. Aristotle maintains that the 'good' is the cultivation of the fulfillment of the faculty of man especially reason. Aristotle describes a good person and what people take to be the ultimate good for human beings by empirical investigation and observation of human behavior. Man's behavior habit has standard precept by which it can be evaluated or judged as either good or bad, right or wrong. His ultimate good is usually furnished by such a standard. This ultimate good of man consists in a manner of harmonious act of man with his nature, that is, living a virtuous life under the guidance of right reason. Aristotle goes further to identify the ultimate good as happiness. For him, happiness is that good which man seeks by nature. It is self-sufficient and the end of man's action. In fact, it is the final. Happiness is 'some kind of activity of the soul in conformity with virtue'²⁷ Where virtue consists 'in doing the right thing in the right way, to the right

person, to the right degree that is, it involves the ability to determine the golden mean, which lies between the extreme of deficiency and extreme as excess.²⁸

The happy life for a man therefore is life of discipline and conscious following of a rule. This is a virtuous art. According to Aristotle, virtue is required for the realization of happiness. Virtue is a whole, while happiness requires completeness of virtue as well as complete life time. Aristotle evidently conceives happiness as the foundation of morality. He calls it the end and the highest good. Little wonder, he considers the happy person as the only virtuous person.

3.4 MORALITY AND CUSTOM

Morality is primitively conceived as consisting in obedience to a tribal custom which is ultimately regarded as essential for the individual. It forms the basis for mutual understanding and co-existence. Its defined quality controls, moderates and directs people towards a harmonious co-existence in the society. As such, any society which is devoid of morality and moral value is prone to devastation and loss of human dignity. It is therefore not bizarre that in Hobbes' state of nature, anarchy, chaos, violence and survival of the strongest triumphed

Aristotle maintains that moral dispositions and principles are gradually formed and changed through historical experience and routine of customary conduct. Customary morality is one origin of moral consciousness in the case of human beings. According to Chukwujekwu, it "simply refers to the sense of right and wrong that people gradually developed with time as they live in groups and communities.²⁹" In other words, customary morality is traceable to the early practice of gregarious community of people. People lived in groups in order to meet up with their daily needs through the performance

of certain acts. This uninformative system of people's acts toward meeting their common need constitute people's custom and morality. By precept and by imitation, this customary system is being transmitted to succeeding generations. To this effect,

Kadankavil notes, that "almost all groups have accepted values .such as parental care, respect for the life of one's group, loyalty to one's group and some curbing of the sexual impulse and such other virtues as moral values."³⁰

Customary morality is therefore commendable in the area of stabilizing the character of the community members. This is what Aristotle meant when he postulates that moral dispositions and principles are formed and changed by customary conduct. The more people practice their custom, the more they are adapted to it for good living and the good of the community. The community directs and shapes people's lives through approval and encouragement of right thing, disapproval and punishment for the wrong.

Arguing against Socrates who posited that no person does evil willingly, Aristotle points out that the fact that wrong doers are punished by the law (unless when their action is under compulsion or when it is the state of ignorance for which they are not themselves responsible), implies that they are not unaware of the action. Again he adduces the logical argument the if no one can be said to be willingly evil or voluntarily acting wrongly, it follows also that no one can be eulogized or commended for acting virtuously either. If virtue is voluntarily practiced, vice is so too. If one can be commended or praised, one can also be culpable. Based on his psychological-epistemological convictions, Aristotle argues that the cause of free acts is man in the fullness of his function. For the fact that the cause has no antecedents which determines it, it becomes unconditional. Sequel to this, Mbukanma remarks, "A free cause, in its positive

character is an active rather than a passive power. This means that this power acts without being acted on, or that it has initiative instead of being wholly reactive."³¹

Aristotle's argument is that in so far as the creative is extended to alternative possibilities, its action becomes selective. It is not necessitated as it would be if it were determined by its own nature or when it is a cause by other causes to produce an effect only. Invariably, Aristotle's presumption here is that rational creatures, in their bid to making free decisions are not subject to compulsive urges. By implication, man's ethical conduct under normal circumstances is out of volition rather than compulsion.

Going further, Aristotle maintains that the future of any community depends on the ethical conduct of its members solidified by its custom. He developed the idea of self-realization which is based on the view that good life or happiness is the outcome of fulfilling one's character, personality or potentialities by responding positively towards their custom. According to him, the human person pursues a great variety of goals but seeks happiness- **the supreme end**. The activation of individual powers and talent is essentially indispensable for the pursuit of man's end. This end therefore, becomes the determinant of what constitutes happiness.

3.5 MORAL CHOICE AND REASONABILITY

Fundamentally, the notion of moral responsibility appeals to every system of ethics. This is because to claim that people ought to take certain actions presupposes a choice which determines the action taken and for which the individual is responsible. Despite variegated views among philosophers over theories of moral responsibility, the fundamental answer to how such responsibility arises is freedom of the will. Aristotle

contends that some voluntary actions are not really borne out of instinct or external forces. For him such actions are not done out of ignorance of the circumstances or the particular, situation, "for the principle that moves the instrumental parts of the body in such action is in him, and the things of which the moving principle is in a man himself are in his power to do or not to do."³² The philosophical divergences concerning the circumstances under which moral responsibility result from divergences in the particular accounts of that which is directly under volitional control, of the acquisition of knowledge of good and evil, and of the connection between knowledge and action.

Aristotle's notion of moral responsibility centers on the role of knowledge in taking the proper course of action. He maintains that a person is culpable, praiseworthy or responsible for an action when it is done voluntarily. He does not concur that ignorance is the cause of vicious act. In his view, he holds that the cause of wrong-doing in most cases is the desire for something which seems good, since a morally weak person has accumulated himself with thinking of the things that give immediate pleasure, he goes on to carry them out. For him, it makes no sense to suppose that the man who does unjust actions voluntarily does not want to be incontinent?

As for the suggestion that it is true opinion and not knowledge against which we act incontinently, that makes no difference to the argument; for some people when in a state of opinion do not hesitate, but think they know exactly. If, then, the notion is that owing to their weak conviction those who have opinion are more likely to act against their judgment than those who know, we answer that there need be difference between knowledge and opinion in this respect; for some men are no less convinced of what they think than others of what they know....it will make a difference whether, when a man does what he

should not, he has the knowledge but not exercising it, or is exercising it; for the latter seems strange, but not the former.³³

The consideration given to judgment, knowledge and opinion is not quite separate. They are the same; it is the apprehension of the right difference in the subject's mode of apprehension. However, Aristotle assumes that knowledge is stronger in conviction when compared with opinion which is weaker.

Moral responsibility according to Aristotle involves choice which has to do with human voluntary action. It equally involves the distinctive human ability to deliberate. Deliberation in this sense has to do with things that take place in a certain way for the most part, but in which the event is obscure, and with things in which it is indeterminate. In other words, when the habits and principles that we have formed do not adequately or clearly apply, deliberation becomes essential. Aristotle maintains that, in deliberation, we always assume the end and put into consideration how and by what means it is to be achieved. This is precisely because our deliberation revolves around things which are within our control and power. As such, determining the object of choice is not far-fetched because it is within our domain. The action involved in choice is thus "deliberate desire," for in order to have chosen a course of action we must desire it. Aristotle admits that we are responsible for the deliberation which leads to choice we make and consequently forms our actions because it is borne out of freedom of the will.

In any case, the ethical issue remains how we determine our moral choice. From Aristotle's position of voluntary and involuntary actions, it is comprehensible that some of our human acts are performed by choice while some are not by choice. Our "choiced" actions are borne out of deliberation while "unchoiced"- actions are "deliberation-free". Hence Aristotle postulates: When (1) the injury takes place contrary to reasonable expectation, it

is a misadventure. When (2) it is not contrary to reasonable expectation, but does not imply vice, it is a mistake. .when (3) he acts with knowledge but not after deliberation, it is an act of injustice..., but this does not imply that the doers are unjust or wicked; for the injury is not due to vice. But when (4) a man acts from choice, he is an unjust man and a vicious man.³⁴

It is important to note here that human actions are not actually necessitated to a great extent. Notwithstanding, there are certain cases which can be exempted, "hence acts proceeding from anger are rightly judged not to be done of malice aforethought; for it is not the man who acts in anger but he who enraged him that starts the mischief.

Interpretatively, the occurrence of misadventure (accident) or mistake or act of injustice does not necessarily imply that the moral agent is dubiously and unjustly bad-mannered. To this effect, Aristotle advocates that we should be tolerant when one is overpowered by excessive pleasures or pains.

Moreover, Aristotle affirms that there are some morally bad acts which can be excusable. For instance, in the case of weakness due to disease or ill-health, "involuntary acts are excusable, others not. For the mistakes which man makes not only in ignorance but also from ignorance are excusable³⁵". In making moral choice, however, one has to be careful so that one's choice will not negatively affect or injure the other for: If a man harms another by choice, he acts unjustly; and these are the acts of injustice which imply that the doer is an unjust man, provided that the act violates proportion or equality. Similarly, a man is just when he acts justly by choice; but he acts justly if he merely acts voluntarily.³⁶

Moral choice is therefore, more rewarding and justified when he bears no violation of equality or proportion. It is best when it is a deliberate appetite of things that lie in our power,

this will go a long way to enhancing and directing our aims in accordance with the right deliberation. By so doing, one will be fully responsible for one's action.

3.6 ARISTOTLE NOTION ON HAPPINESS AS THE HIGHEST GOOD

In the *Nicomachean ethics*, written in 550 BCE, Aristotle stated; that, "happiness (being well and doing well) is the only thing humans desire for its own sake, unlike riches, honor, health or friends"³⁷. He observed that men sought riches, or honor, or health not only for their own sake but also in order to be happy. Note that *eudemonia* the term we translated as "happiness", is for Aristotle an activity rather than an emotion or a state. Happiness is the characteristic of a good life, that is, a life in which a person fulfills human nature in an excellent way. The happy person is virtuous, meaning that they have outstanding abilities and emotional tendencies which allow him or her to fulfill their common human ends. For Aristotle, happiness is the virtuous activity of the soul in accordance with reason. Happiness is therefore the practice of virtue.

Common Understanding

Eudaemonology is the study of happiness. It is an area of study that has always been useful in attempt to understand the ultimate end of man and which has been variously conceived thus. "When we call someone happy, we mean by the word the sum total of all goods together with the exclusion of all evil".³⁸ Happiness for St. Augustine is the plenitude of all things to be desired. After due deliberations, and ethical discourse, Plato synthesize happiness with Justice, For him by implication; "the virtue of the soul is justice and injustice its defect". By implication, the just soul live well while the unjust man will not. For him, living well involves being happy. For Plato, only the just man is happy; in other words happiness for Plato is defined or translates into life in accordance with justice.

'Happiness can also be defined as desire satisfied by the conscious possession of the good' .³⁹ The root meaning of happiness can be seen from the view of a person favored by fortune, one to whom good things happen. Hence one may wonder, as Aristotle does, whether a man should be called happy until he is dead, since misfortune may befall him in his old age. The man who is excelling in business can said to be lucky, successful cheerful, and fortunate. To be "happy" is to be satisfied or contented with having a good measure of what one regards as important in life. Happiness typically has to do, with both situation and a state of mind. For example, at an extreme; a martyr can go happy to the stake, merely secure in the conviction of right. The new catholic encyclopedia defines happiness thus: happiness is the personal possession of a desirable good, ultimately the perfect good of an intellectual nature. The term happiness has been used often times in the literature of moral philosophy. Utilitarians have opined that the measure of right action is whether it makes for the greater number of happiness for the greater number of people. This however is the moral principles of judgment for the utilitarian while the hedonists and eudaemonists are of the opinion that happiness is the only thing that is worthwhile in itself. Akam J.B in his *Oracle of Wisdom* defined happiness as:

As special goal Admirable by all rational beings (men) and as such lacks philosophical exactitude; there is agreement neither on its substance nor its source. All we know is that it is a profound instinctive union with the stream of life, but we do not know what is united.⁴⁰

From the foregoing definitions, it therefore means that only a rational intellectual being can attain happiness. They alone can reflect on their satisfaction they enjoy. Animals cannot attain happiness. They move towards ends and have appetites that can only be satisfied by things good for them instinctively. "Happiness is not a passing feeling or emotion, such as joy or gladness, but is a lasting state or condition".⁴¹ One may

be generally happy though suffering a temporary grief, just as another's chronic unhappiness may be punctuated by moments of joy. Happiness therefore is a subjective condition entailing the existence of desire in oneself, the consciousness of the existence of the desire, the actual satisfaction of the desire and the consciousness that this desire is being satisfied such state can exist only in a being capable of reflection and self-consciousness, an intellectual being.

Types of happiness

By and large, happiness could be faultless or flawed. Faultless or perfect happiness comes from the complete ownership of, or participation in and communion with, the perfect or faultless good, that which fully gratify our desires. Boethius defines it as the state made perfect by the aggregate of all good things; good which once obtained makes the desire of anything else impossible. "For Cicero, happiness is that state in which all troubles have finally disappeared and a person enjoys the harmonious abundance of all that is good".⁴²

Perfect happiness could be absolute or relative.

Absolute happiness is happiness to an infinite degree and this pertains to God alone. Relative perfect happiness is the happiness that a finite being can possess, according to its finite capacity. In other words, according to Fagothey, perfect happiness supposes a perfect correspondence between potency and act, potency for happiness and actual possession of it. God, who is pure act, is necessarily happy by his own very being and to an infinite degree. A creature composed, as it is of potency and act, is rendered happy when its limited potency for happiness is actualized so far as its limitations allow.

Furthermore, happiness could also be assumed in two justifications namely; the abstract and concrete justification. The abstract justification of happiness is understood thus, that people seek or desire happiness without specifying the object supposed to produce it. The fact remains that, we can not desire anything without at the same time wanting our desires to be satisfied; otherwise, we both do not desire it. Happiness is only a name for our self-conscious realization that our desires have been or are been satisfied. Therefore we can desire anything without desiring happiness. The concrete justification of happiness stands to put this questions, What precisely will bring perfect fulfillment to a being whose nature is rational? What is the good which he needs to possess in order that this fulfillment may be his? With regards to the first justification of happiness, is human not free because man is made to seek happiness? Thus, of necessity every person desires happiness. However, one is free in the choice of concrete object, by whose possession one hopes to obtain happiness. All want to be happy but not all know how to find it.

Imperfect happiness

"Imperfect happiness on the other hand, falls off from the perfect by leaving some of our desires entirely or relatively unsatisfied".⁴³ One who is imperfectly happy is happy in so far as his desires are fulfilled, and unhappy in so far as they are not. It is also the actual perfection experienced by the person through a realization of his potentialities; the possession of the desirable object. When this actualization is ultimate, the person possesses perfect subjective happiness; until then, it can only be imperfect. Ultimately, man has but one goal: perfect happiness, which is the full realization of his potentialities through intimate personal union with God in the beatific vision.

Other interconnected concepts of happiness.

There are many interconnected concepts of happiness, but for the sake of clarity we shall be focusing our attention in these concepts. Namely: *virtue, joy, felicity and pleasure.*

Virtue: For Aristotle, happiness is an activity of the soul in accord with perfect virtue. What then is virtue as a related concept of happiness? To juxtapose this question, let us start by understanding the term virtue. Virtue is a word formed from the Latin *virtue* which means power or strength or valor or manliness. In man, virtue is a habit that accord with human nature, lending power smoothness, promptitude to the operation of that nature. Virtue is a good habit either in the intellectual or in the moral order.

Virtue is an operative habit; it is operative in the sense that it has to do with doing, not being. According to Aristotle, virtue is a good habit. Virtue makes its subject good, and makes the subject's work good. For virtue implies perfection of power. "Virtue may be called a good habit of reason by which we live rightly, and which cannot be put to bad use".⁴⁴ Virtue however have many subjects namely; virtue belong to the soul; it is a perfection of a power of the soul, whether intellect or will. Virtue is a true habit, and we have already seen that the proper subject of a living being is the life of principle. Virtue is called a habit of reason.⁴⁵ Reason is, primarily, the thinking mind; though it includes the will when there is question of practical reasoning. Therefore it is habit that belongs to a power of the soul. Virtues are either intellectual ie understanding, or moral order of will. Finally a life well lived with the coherence of virtue will certainly, according to Aristotle tend to reach to the Golden mean which is happiness.

Joy:-

Joy is a Great happiness, feeling of pleasure, especially of an elevated or spiritual kind. Further more, Joy can be said to be the possum or emotion exhibited by the acquaintance or expectation of good, pleasurable feelings or emotions caused by success, good fortune, and the like or by a rational prospect of possessing what we have or desire, gladness; exhilaration of the spirits; delight. Joy biblically is more than sentiments; it involves a sense of happiness with a state of blessedness. But in the New Testament, it is pointed by public excitement at times of festival (Deut 12:6) and by relief when an individual had a grievance which he could bring to the temple of settlement (Ps 43:4). The notion of joy in New Testament is prominent in Luke's gospel (Luke 2:10, 19:37) and in the Acts (13:53) where it is a characteristic gift of the spirit.

Felicity:-

This is more closely interconnected to happiness, but its main implication is contentment. It could be regarded as happiness expressed, be it through contentment, manner of speaking or writing.⁴⁶ However, one can see that felicity is not happiness qua tale, in the sense that it implies contentment, and knowing fully that contentment is a partial happiness with some unhappiness. And there is a little difference between a part of and the whole of that thing. There is no way part can be commensurate to the whole. As a way of explication a person can be contented with one particular thing, but that does not, in any way, mean that he is no more in want of that same thing again rather it means that he just decided to do with what he has. On the divergent, happiness is satisfaction per excellence. The level which one may say I don't want any more, I am satisfied.

Pleasure:-

This is one of the most misused words in the world today. Both in the past and present, many people use this term interchangeably with happiness as if there is no difference between the two. The Epicureans which is the Hedonist ethics for instance say that pleasure is: "The sole good (salus v'itae Salamen) and that all human actions are channeled toward it, and the search for pleasure should be the raison d'etre for life."⁴⁷ Further more; the Epicureans sees pleasure as the standard for judging the rightness or the wrongness of an action, what should be done or what should be avoided are based on pleasure. Aristotle described pleasure as; "an accomplishment of an activity"⁴⁸. The advocates of pleasure as the summum bonum ultimate good for man would rightly say, let us make merry today because tomorrow we are all gone. They are pointing to the worldly pleasure only to be gotten from external objects within the ambient of our existence. If we consider pleasure to be a generator of happiness, then we should take cognizant of the fact that some activities can make available pleasure but at the same time keep us unhappy. Again since pleasure is the completion of an activity, as Aristotle had mentioned, then the criticism for evaluating any particular pleasure in terms of being good or bad now depends or varies from the activity it accompanies.

It will be more pleasant for us to be precise by saying that, if pleasure is a means, it should be a means to an end (Imperfect happiness) not an end in itself.⁴⁹

Pleasure and Happiness

It is no extraordinary news this day that people misrepresent or misquote happiness for pleasure or equate with pleasure. This is a clear fact coming from people's belief and actions. In our society today, people have in mind to attain real

happiness but they end up grabbing on things that are pleasurable. Against this backdrop, let us vividly distinguish the difference between happiness and pleasure. This explication is necessary due to the fact as we have mentioned earlier about the misappropriation of the two concepts. The early utilitarians and Epicurians were guilty of this particular confusion. Epicurians and utilitarians often spoke of both pleasure and happiness interchangeably as if they were two but the same thing. They maintain in their ethical theory that the pleasure of right action is whether it makes for the greatest happiness of the greatest number.⁵⁰ Therefore, for the utilitarian, an action is classified as right or wrong depending on amount of happiness generated by that very act and the number of people involved. James Stuart Mill, a known protagonist of this theory in his first ethical principle states that, the measure of goodness or badness of an action depends on whether it contributes to the promotion of happiness or the opposite of that respectively. Joseph Omoregbe in his transparency gives James Stuart Mill ethical creed thus:-

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, utility or the greatest happiness principle, holds that... actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness are intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness pain⁵¹.

A .C. Ewing, in his ethical theory looks at happiness from its utilitarian point of view. He said that actions are good or bad depending on the amount of pleasure or pain they produce respectively. Epicurus often spoke of pleasure, when in actual fact he meant happiness as: when we say that pleasure is a chief good, we are not speaking of the pleasure of debauched man or those which lie in sensual enjoyment as some think who are ignorant, and do not entertain our opinions or else interpret them perversely; but we mean the freedom of the body from pain and of the soul from confusion. J. Hospers

in his *Philosophical Analysis* describes pleasure as: "A certain kind of state or consciousness (not verbally definable) but a psychological state with which we are all acquainted in our experience"⁵². Thus we speak of the pleasure of eating and drinking, sexual experience and so on. Hospers maintain that both, that is happiness and pleasure, are not synonymous and identical and he went further to narrate the difference between the two concepts. He writes: We do not use the word, happiness synonymously with pleasure. We speak of intense pleasure lasting for a few seconds and then ceasing but it would be strange to speak of being happy for a few seconds and then becoming unhappy and then ceasing but it would be strange to speak of being happy for a few seconds and then becoming happy again a few seconds later. And a person may experience such pleasure without being happy.⁵³

Aristotle in his ethical discourse also recognizes this fact that happiness is not the same with pleasure. As for this all men think that happy life is pleasant and weave pleasure into their idea of happiness. Conforming to the ideas of Aristotle that pleasure is not happiness, Jude Mbakanma says: Pleasure is not happiness, it is an element of happiness; the blessing of an unimpeded exercise of our faculty. It is a process that accompanies human activity of a kind, and so, it can not be equated with happiness which is the greatest goal of man. Happiness for Aristotle is lasting not temporal or momentary, not merely a feeling but also an enduring and fixed state, that is the reason why we can not equate pleasure and happiness. That was why he said that a happy man will be happy throughout his life. Pleasure for Aristotle is transitory and Temporal.

The resume of pleasure and happiness in Omoregbe's work on ethics stated thus:

- Pleasure can be derived from one single activity, while happiness is derived not in one single activity but from a series of activities.

- Some activities can give us pleasure but at the same time make us very unhappy.
- Pleasure is transitory, that is, it is of short duration, but happiness is of a much longer duration and a more permanent state of mind.
- Pleasure can be sought and obtained directly or indirectly by performing certain activities that gives pleasure, such, as eating, drinking, or sexual activities but the performance of such activities and actions does not necessarily make one happy.
- Moral rectitude and peace of mind are necessary conditions for happiness whereas a person who has no peace of mind and moral rectitude cannot be happy even if he indulges in many pleasures⁵⁴.

All these, finally discussed, one can succinctly say that pleasure is not happiness. Aristotle presented happiness as consisting in action or activity (energeia) and not in mere passive enjoyment or inactive quiescence (nirvana). This action is proper to man in contrast to other animals. Explaining further the nature of this action, Aristotle calls it a virtuous and contemplative activity.

For Aristotle;

Ultimate happiness consists in the highest activity of man, which for him, is contemplation or philosophic life of speculation. No wonder, he considers the philosopher the happiest man, and one who is dearest to the gods.⁵⁵

Aristotle nevertheless did not approve of material needs such as wealth, honor and fame, power, merriment, and pleasure as capable of providing man with perfect happiness. However, he acknowledged that man necessarily needs them in this life; hence they can only offer temporal kind of happiness.⁵⁶

Attainability of happiness

From the existence of God and the immortality of the human soul, taken as philosophically proved presuppositions to ethics, it follows conclusively that happiness is man's natural destiny and that it is possible for him to attain it.⁵⁷ Aristotle's concept of happiness does not go beyond this world. Consequently, he holds that ultimate happiness can be attained by man in this life though rigorously and by a few who according to him are philosophers. Aristotle; however seemed to have limited the attainment of ultimate happiness to philosophers and also considered them nearest to the gods. Of course he made it clear that ultimate happiness consists in the activities of the highest virtue, which he says philosophers possess. In line with the above, he denied the capacity of the young and slaves to attain happiness. Aristotle was also of the view that animals are not capable of attaining happiness. This is because animals are irrational and virtue is a prerogative of rational beings.⁵⁸ The basic and indispensable essential for happiness in Aristotle's concept of happiness is virtue.⁵⁹ This goes from the point of view of happiness consisting in virtuous activities of man according to reason. It means by implication that happiness is found in human action (actus humanus) and not in the act of man (actus Horn mem). Therefore happiness does not come by chance or without a person's knowledge and volition. To consolidate this Aristotle says that, to entrust to chance what is greatest and most noble would be a very defective arrangement. Also Aristotle suggests that even though happiness does not consist in acquisition of external goods, these goods are undeniably necessary. Such things as good birth, good children, beauty, friends, wealth, etc. are not unnecessary for him. Aristotle asserts thus:

The man who is very ugly in appearance or ill born or solitary and childless is not likely to be happy and perhaps a man would still be less likely if he had thoroughly bad children or friends or had lost good children or friends by death. However, he maintains that the acquisition of these external goods, especially wealth, should be moderate, since virtue, he says lies in the mean.⁶⁰

Happiness; the End of Human Action

Aristotle started his theory of morality with the following assertion.

"Every art and every investigation, and similarly every action and pursuit is considered to aim at some good".⁶¹

His theory centers, on the belief that everything in nature and even people have a particular end to achieve or a particular function to fulfill. This being the case, his moral theory can be called teleological. Unlike his predecessors, as time went on, Aristotle moved his attention from the details of science to conduct and character.

If human activities are done for an end, such questions as what is the good or end at which human actions aim will necessarily arise. Some philosophers have tried to give answers to this ethical question. However, let us see briefly what Plato says. Plato had tried to answer this question by saying that people aim at knowledge of the idea of the Good. The Good was separated from the world and from individuals and was to be arrived at by the mind's ascent from the visible world to the intelligible world. Aristotle on the other hand holds that the principle of good lies within the individual. This good can be attained through actual behavior in daily life. Our actions aim at different ends thus, Aristotle differentiates the kinds of ends we aim at. These are the instrumental ends (acts done as means for other ends) and intrinsic ends (acts done for their own sake).⁶²

Subsequently, the instrumental ends refer to acts that are done not for their own sake but as a means to the achievement of other ends. Aristotle gives an example with the art of making bridle. When the bridle is complete, its maker has achieved his end as a bridle maker. But the bridle is a means for the horseman to guide his horse in battle. Also, a carpenter builds a barrack, and when it is completed, he has fulfilled his function as a carpenter. The barracks also fulfill their function when they provide safe shelter for the soldiers. But the ends here achieved by the carpenter and the building are not ends in themselves but are instrumental in housing soldiers until they move on to their next stage of action. Similarly, the function of the builder of ships is fulfilled when the ship is successfully launched, but again this end is in turn a means for transporting the soldiers to the field of battle. The doctor fulfills his function to the extent that he keeps the soldiers in good health. But the end of health in this case becomes a means for effective fighting. The officer aims at victory in battle, but victory is the means to peace. Peace itself, though sometimes taken mistakenly as the final end of war, is the means for creating the conditions under which humans can fulfill their function as humans. When we discover what humans aim at, not as carpenters, doctors, or generals, but as humans, we will then arrive at action for its own sake, and for which all other activity is only a means, and this, says Aristotle, must be the Good of Man. The above examples mean that there are some skills that are subordinate to others. These ends that serves as a means to achieving other ends was not what Aristotle upholds rather he talks of ends sought for their own sake (intrinsic ends).

Also, the intrinsic ends are ends in themselves and not means to another end. To arrive at this end sought by humans for its own sake, which Aristotle calls the "Good" of man, he deviated from Plato's attachment of the good to the function of a thing. He distinguishes between being a good doctor and a good person. One can be a good doctor

without being a good person and -vice versa. Thus, the good person is one that fulfils his or her functions as a person. Aristotle concludes that the end of all human action is happiness. Happiness is the end, which is sought for its own sake. Aristotle says that this is the general agreement but the problem lies in saying what happiness consists in: Well, so far as the name goes, there is a pretty general agreement ...but when it comes to saying what happiness consists, opinions differ⁶³, In defining happiness, Aristotle says it is: An activity of the soul in accordance with virtue.⁶⁴ Aristotle rejects the view that happiness lies in pleasure, wealth and honor because they are not ends in them. They cannot occupy the place of the chief good for which people should aim. Happiness is the only end that meets all the requirements for the ultimate end of human actions such as being self-sufficient (sought for its own sake) and attainable by people. To support his view, Aristotle says that we choose pleasure, wealth and honor only because we think that, through their instrumentality, we shall be happy. Happiness, it turns out, is another word or name for good, for like good, happiness is the fulfillment of our distinctive function⁶⁵

As earlier stated, following the definition of happiness given by Aristotle, it is pertinent to note that, happiness is an activity of the soul and is not separable from virtue. However, these virtues have to be formed: None of the moral virtues arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature.

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CHAPTER FOUR

AN EXPOSITION OF ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPTION OF POLITICS

4.1 EMERGENCE OF THE STATE

Aristotle in his politics as in his ethics stresses the element of purpose. Although Aristotle did not create a blue print for an ideal state like Plato, he viewed the state as the agency for enabling men to achieve their ultimate goals as human beings. Aristotle stipulated that any practical theory of the state must take note of what kind of government that should be adapted to particular states, and the legislature must be acquainted with "which is best relatively to circumstances" "how a state may be constituted under any given condition" "how it may be longest preserved"¹. Aristotle's conception and political theory goes on to show how man by nature is a political animal and who is a citizen of a state. He also goes on to show the different types of states and the best form of Governments are also outlined in order that the good or best form of life can be achieved. For Aristotle, the good rulers seek to achieve the good of all, whereas the perverted rulers seek their own private gain and the bad rulership brings about revolution

For Aristotle, "Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good, for mankind always acts in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at the good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good."² One may infer from the foregoing that the state is primarily a political community because it is made up of persons who are by nature social and political. Aristotle used the two terms social and political in his politics to make a point in the origin of a state. There is a social instinct in man and by

that fact man is by nature a political animal³ and lives in the state. He who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity,⁴ from Aristotle's claim we distill the fact that the political nature of man is a function of the social instinct implanted in man by nature.

It follows that the state is superior to other forms of the communities such as family, village associations, political parties and others. On account of the supremacy of the state, it aims at the highest good. Aristotle supported the above statement by asserting that out of these two relationships between man and woman, master and slave, the first thing to arise is the family. But when several families are united, and the association aims at something more than the supply of daily needs, the first society to be formed is the village. The most natural form of the village appears to be that of the colony from the family, composed of the children and the grand children, who are said to be suckled with the same milk then several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite sufficing, the state comes into existence.⁵ However, we must not think that there are clear-cut boundaries between the interest of the state as a whole and that of its constitutive institution. There is interdependence between the whole and the part, which means that we cannot talk of universal without the particular. To portray this reality, Aristotle asserted that

in the first place there must be a union of those who cannot exist without each other namely; male and female, that the race may continue (and this is a union which is formed, not of deliberate purpose, but because, in common with other animals and with plants, Mankind have a natural desire to leave behind them an image of themselves), and of natural ruler and subject, that both may be preserved⁶.

Following the above citation one may understand that no one can do without the other person which means that one needs that other person to fulfill his or herself in the state. The state has the privilege of independence and self-sufficiency. Aristotle asserted that state can only be realized when there is association of families and households living with a view to complete an independent existence. This made Aristotle say, "he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state is heartless one"⁷. Consequently, upon the state one can measure or grade oneself both quantitatively and qualitatively but the latter has more force than the former. By qualitatively he means such qualities as freedom, education, wealth, good birth, food, health and religion. If any of these qualities are lacking, that state is not to be regarded as a state to be reckoned among the best. By quantitatively he was more or less referring to population density and territorial size.

On the contrary, for Aristotle the best form of governance is formed in a kind of state whose composition is natural. This shows that it is necessary to find master and slave, ruler and the ruled in the governed state. This issue of nature has made Aristotle defend the position that nature has made some to be masters and others to be slaves. He went further to support this argument that by nature every human being is born into a family and a family is by its very existence natural in its composition. This follows that when several families live together a village naturally establishes itself, when several villages are united in a single but complete community large enough to be nearly self-sufficient the state naturally comes into existence.

The moving fact that brings about the formation of the state stems from the basic need of life such as defence, exchange and cordial relations. But one thing is certain, what sustains the life span of state is the spontaneous desire or lust for the attainment of a good life for all its citizens, which is happiness. Therefore,

the state is a perfectly natural form of association as the earlier associations from which it sprang were natural. This association is the end of those others and its nature itself is an end, for whatever is the end product of the perfecting process of any object, that we call its nature. Moreover the aim and the end can only be that, which is best, perfection; and self sufficiency is both end and perfection.⁸

In his Ethics, Aristotle made mention of "living together". He made us understand that living together is not living like cattle and other animals that graze without knowing what they are doing. He made us know it involves positively living in consciousness of each other's interest. Moreover, Aristotle did good service to political thought by insisting that the state does not exist merely by convention but is rooted in human nature. The state is not an artificial restriction of liberty but a means of gaining it. A. E. Taylor supports Aristotle as follows: Hence Aristotle definitely rejects the view that the state or society is a mere creature of convention or agreement, an institution made by compact between individuals for certain special end, not growing naturally out of the universal demands and aspirations of humanity.⁹

In addition to that, the state has the function, which aims at the good, and the function of all the means of the state or the individual members of the state. Finally, the end for which the state exists is not merely its own self-perfection. Aristotle assigns a higher value to the life of the student than to the life of practical affairs, since it is only in the civilized state that the student can pursue his vocation. The ultimate reason for which the state exists is to educate its citizens in a way that it can be filled with the noble use of leisure.

4.2 FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

In this sub section, we are going to look into the various forms of government according to Aristotle, which implies we need to consider how many forms they are, what they are and what are the true forms of government and what are the differences between them. These governments may be in the hand of the one or few or many. The true forms according to Aristotle therefore, are those in which the one, or the few, or the many, govern with a view to the common interest¹⁰. However, the corrupt forms of government are the governments which rule with a view to the private interest of the ruler, whether of the one, or of the few or of the many are perversion¹¹.

These forms of government can be divided into three good states, which include the following kingship, aristocracy and polity, which can degenerate into tyranny, oligarchy and democracy. When one ruler rules with the view to the common interest we regard this form of government as kingship or monarchy. When more than one but not many rule with the view to the common interest we call it aristocracy and it is so because they have the interest of the state and citizen at heart.

More so, when one particular outstanding leader rules and he is not interested in nation's welfare that form of government ceases to be kingship but tyranny. When few leaders rule not with the interest of the nation's welfare it ceases to be aristocracy but oligarchy. In a polity, there is a constitutional government run by a considerable number of qualified people who rule with the interest of the nation's welfare, it can degenerate into democracy only if the multitude of the ruling personnel ignore the good of the state and its citizens and exploit power for their own advantage. In democracy, the corrupt form of the polity makes policy for the state for personal gains rather than the good of the state.

However, having explained what they are, it will be better to look critically at the nature of the different forms of government;

(Kingship or monarchy) according to Aristotle, is defined ðas rule by a virtuous man¹² which implies that one particular outstanding leader rules with the interest of the nation at heart.

Aristocracy: This form of government is usually regarded as the rule of the best, few virtuous individuals. In practice, this usually means rule of the well born, those of the noble family. This form of government is called so either because the rulers are best men or because they have at heart, the best interest of the state and of the citizen. It is also where the rich rule over the poor.

Polity: In modern English, polity is not a common word but when it is used as a form of government, thus one might or may speak of it as government of the considerable, qualified middle class. Polity is a dual mixture of the rich and poor, the majority and the minority sections of the state body. It is a government, which is a well-made combination of oligarchy and, democracy, but it is neither of the two. If we take virtue as the mean between extremes (in this case between poverty and riches) we can rightly say that polity, which is the midway between democracy and oligarchy, is the best for general use. Polity is fitting for general use because it satisfies both the rich and the poor by being neither of these even though it bears some aspects of both.

If this be the case then polity which is a mixture of the rich and the poor is the best for general use. Apart from this it is not easy for one man (king) who excels above all others or the few virtuous ones (aristocrats) who are the constituent of the polis in all

places. So polity, which combines the rich and the poor, has a general possibility to exist or be established than kingship and aristocracy.

The peculiar characteristic of polity then is that in distributing office duties, it takes cognizance of both wealth and free status and therefore has a strong middle class to whom it entrusts its power. Having seen the different forms of the good government, it will be good to list and discuss the different forms of corrupt governments. These corrupt forms of government are as follows: Tyranny, Oligarchy and Democracy.

Tyranny: This is the corrupt form of kingship, which is the kind of government in which the ruler has only the interest of the monarch or himself in mind rather than that of the citizens. It is the government of one corrupt rule in a state.

Following the above definition of various forms of corrupt government, one may understand that whether in oligarchy or in democracy the number of the governing body is accidental due to the fact that the rich everywhere are few and the poor numerous. The real difference between democracy and oligarchy is poverty and wealth.

4.3 THE BEST STATE

The best states according to Aristotle are those states, which should be ruled by the best men. The best state for Aristotle is relative. It is the best all around for general use because it extends citizenship to include a fairly large number rather than limiting itself to men of virtues, intelligence and property. If polity consists of a strong middle class it follows that in all activities and structures or institutions of the state, the mean or moderations will act as a check and balance preventing any of the extremes from being dominant. For this reason Aristotle writes:

Great then is the good fortune of a state in which the citizens have a moderate and sufficient property. The mean condition of state is clearly best for no other is free from factions and dissensions. For a similar reason large states are less liable to faction than small ones because in them the middle class is large whereas, in small states it is easy to divide all the citizen into two classes who are either rich or poor and leaving nothing in the middle.¹³

There are some factors that constitute the best state and they are as follows:

- i. The rule of law ó Law is good because it has a stabilizing function, it guides against the whims and caprices of the rulers
- ii. Large middle class ó The state should be composed of neither too rich nor too poor. The above will make it possible for the state to get out of the problems of tyranny or mob rule. This should be the foundation of the best state
- iii. The best state is the middle course between oligarchy and democracy. The golden mean is the average of the both. The aim is to get stability.

Of course where there is no stability, the poor and the rich quarrel with each other whichever side gets the better, regards political supremacy as the price of victory. If any state should concentrate on either oligarchy or democracy, the state will eventually lead to stable equilibrium. The position led Aristotle to opine that it has become a habit among the citizens of the state even to care for equality. Instead, all men are seeking domination but if conquered, submit willingly. Polity unlike other constitutions that are tarnished with master-slave characteristics has its aim, the provision of life worth living and not merely a life based on investment.

Moreover, citizenship in the best state is not merely a share in ruling and being ruled but one who is able and chooses to rule and be ruled with a view to a life that is in accordance with goodness. Polity is therefore, the best constitution to be used in the best state. Aristotle made the assertion that polity is the best constitution, to be used in the best state because polity is the fusion or mixture of oligarchy and democracy. For stable equilibrium can only be reached through a sort of reconciliation between oligarchy and democracy. In the best state there should be no cause for revolution since there is no nobler state beyond and above the best state. So the issue of revolution in the best state is unthinkable. However, having seen that the best state lies in the middle class Aristotle applied the principle of moderation in all things to the problem of evaluating any state. He concluded that the good state is one in which the middle class constitute a majority. For a nation with an excess of lower class poverty-stricken individuals will tax the state unduly, becoming a serious handicap, while an excess of the upper classes will have more interest in personal wealth and this will also create national imbalance. A middle-class majority together with middle class rule is the healthiest condition for a nation.

4.4 AIMS OF THE STATE:

It is only in the state that every individual finds his self-fulfillment and develops a wholesome life. This wholesome life can only be attained when there is common interest of all the individual members of the state, which Aristotle supported by asserting that: Men even when they do not require one another's help, desire to live together, not but that they are also brought together by their common interest insofar as they each attain to any measure of well being¹⁴.

Following the above statement, one may say since the state deals with common interest, it is a moral idea, in which its aim is ethical and it builds character. More so, this

ethics which builds up character can be an end in itself only if man can achieve his moral goals. This moral goal is the life of leisure in which man's highest good can be realized in a life, which can be devoted to cultural pursuits, religious art, political or best of all philosophy. In addition to that, in Aristotelian theory of state, upper class was only made for the citizens while the slave and peasants, being poor, would be compelled to work and it is only this upper class that can devote themselves to leisure, activities of politics, science and philosophy. They alone would have an opportunity to achieve the good life, happiness, the by-product of moral excellence.

Finally, following the above argument, one may understand that the aim of the state is the good life of all the citizens, which may lead to happiness, which has moral excellence as its background.

4.5 CONCEPT OF SLAVERY

Aristotle started his discussion on slavery by defining slave as "an instrument not of production but of action not for making some particular article but to aid in the general conduct of life"¹⁵. From the above definition one may ask whether slave is natural or conventional. But Aristotle asserted that the former is more of the case. So Aristotle's concept of slavery holds that some people are natural slaves and others natural masters. Analogically, Aristotle asserted that:

There is such a difference as that between soul and body or between man and animal (as in the case of those whose business is to use their body and who can do nothing better), the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should under the rule of a master.¹⁶

From the above view, it is seen that both slaves and master are natural to society just as body and soul, or animal and man relationship, which are all natural. Another question is whether there are any persons who intent to play this part of slave by nature? Aristotle answered the question by pointing out that the antithesis of the superior and inferior is found everywhere in nature between soul and body between intellect and appetite, between man and animal. Male and female and that where such a difference between the two exists, it is to the advantage of both that one should rule the other. More so, Aristotle went further to justify slavery on the part of its account of the origin and development of association of household. Slavery forms one part of the household that is, the first stage in the progress of forming association. But, is slavery õjustö? with regard to this he finds himself faced by two views, one which holds that the rule over slaves are identical in kind with political rule, being an instance of the normal rule of superiors over inferiors, and another view, which holds that nature recognizes no distinction between master and slaves, that slavery rests on an unnatural convention and is therefore just.

Moreover, during Aristotle's time virtually every ancient culture has some forms of the institution of slavery. Their slaves were usually of two kinds, either they had at one point been defeated in war (and the fact that they had been defeated meant that they were inferior and meant to serve) or they were the children of slaves in which case inferiority was clear from their inferior parentage. Aristotle himself said something of the sort of war that involves hunting, by remarking thus:

And so, in one point of view, the art is natural art of acquisition, for the act of acquisition includes hunting, an art which we ought to practice against wild beast, and against men who, though intended by nature to be governed, will not submit, for war of such a kind is naturally just.¹⁷

Following the above quotation we can understand that even war is natural and that nature had made some to be slaves through war. However, the question is who should be slave by nature? Aristotle did not take upon himself the responsibility of stating that people are determined by their race, colour or their own making to become slaves. It does not mean that nature has set out one particular group of people from the rest to be slave or master. So there is a possibility of having slaves in every particular group of people we might come across.

He asserted that those who are slaves by nature do not have the full ability to reason (obviously they are not completely helpless or unable to reason, in the case of slave captured in war). He supported it by stating that, "the slave is not a mere body but he has that subordinate kind of reason which enables him not merely to obey a command but to follow an argument."¹⁸

In addition to that, this is no intention on Aristotle's part to bring men who are different in their qualities of reason and emotion under a form of domination. The description of the slave in terms of the soul-body paradigm places a slave more in the vicinity of lower animals and illustrates the way he is being used, the relationship of reason to emotion is the basis for placing the slave in his relation to fellow human being, showing how a master can deal with him. Furthermore, the economy of the Greek City state rested on slavery to carry out the productive labour, without slaves, there could be no leisure for men to engage in intellectual activities. The greatness of Athenian states, architecture, sculpture and philosophy could not have been achieved without the institution of slavery.

Finally, one of the themes running through Aristotle's thought that most people would reject today is the idea that a life of labour is demeaning and degrading, so that

those who must work for a living are also able to be as virtuous as those who do not have to do such work. Indeed Aristotle says that when master can do so he avoids labour even to the extent of avoiding the oversight of those who must engage in it.

4.6 THE CITIZEN

From the time of Plato to our modern time different political philosophers have different notions about the concept 'citizen'. Aristotle's conception of a citizen is widely different from the modern concept because for him there are some qualities, which a citizen must possess before acquiring citizenship. We may say that a citizen is not a citizen because he lives in a certain place, which makes Aristotle remark, that:

He who is a citizen in a democracy will often not be a citizen in an oligarchy. Leaving out of consideration those who have been made citizen, or who have obtained the name of citizen in any other accidental manner, we may say, first, that a citizen is not a citizen because he lives in a certain place, for resident alien and slaves share in the place, nor is he a citizen who has no legal right except that of suing and being sued, for this right may enjoyed under the provisions of a treaty.¹⁹

From the above quotation, one may understand that being in residence in a particular place for Aristotle does not merit an individual to be a citizen. Example; for Americans today, citizenship is a legal question, and anyone born in the United State or born to American citizen abroad is automatically a citizen. For Aristotle, there is more to citizenship than living in a particular place or sharing in economic activity or being ruled under the same law. Instead, citizenship for Aristotle is a kind of activity, which implies that the citizen, involves in judicial functions and political offices.

More so, Aristotle defined citizenship as follows: "He who has the power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of any state is said by us to be a citizen of that state, and, speaking generally, a state is a body of citizen sufficing for the purpose of life."²⁰ Following the above quotation by Aristotle, a citizen can be said to be a person who participates in judicial functions and political office. The affairs of the state are run directly by its citizens. Each citizen will be a member of the assembly or deliberative body of the nation; he will be eligible for the various offices of the state.

More so, one of the highest privileges a citizen has is the ability to hold offices and administrative positions. Every citizen should actually take turns of ruling and being ruled, and not merely being a member of the executive, but of making law for the state. Furthermore, Aristotle excluded the working class and children from citizenship because life of a mechanic is incompatible with the practice of virtue. The mechanic might not have time to sit in the sovereign assembly. He supported this assertion with the following:

And we do not for as moment accept the notion that we must give the name citizen to all persons whose presence is necessary for the existence of the state. Children are as necessary as grown men but as we have already remarked, they can be called citizen only in a qualified sense.²¹

Notwithstanding, from the above qualification of a citizen we saw that for someone to be a citizen he must have some legal status including a right to sue and be sued. When one is sued, Aristotle is of the view that the culprit should be given a legal trial. From the above statement one may infer the reason for Aristotle not to include children and workers in the numbers of citizens. It is because children are not of age to sue and be sued. He went further to upgrade the citizen as one who rules and is ruled in turn, he said that this is precisely what justice is, that one does not usurp what is beyond one's due.

4.7 CONSTITUTION

The word constitution has been viewed by different political philosophers and scholars from their different perspectives. Generally speaking constitution means a decision concerning the organization or government and citizen in terms, which implies how a state should be governed and how the citizens should conduct themselves, their obligation, right and liberty. K. pretvitt and S. Verba in the book *The substance of Citizen State* defined the constitution as:

The fundamental law written or unwritten that set up the government of a nation, state or any other organized group of people specified the duty and powers of the various government agencies and describes in data the relationship between the citizen and their government.²²

From the above quotation one may understand that the constitution is the middle term between the citizen and the government. However, in the same book as above Austin Ranney defined constitution as "the whole body of fundamental values, written or unwritten legal and extra-legal according to which a particular government operates,"²³ which means that constitution is not only a written document or article but it can be oral because there are some rules of a state that are not written in the document.

More so, following the above quotation one may see constitution as an autobiography of a nation, and it is the basic law of a given community that incorporates the basic legal rules and conception of the community, any member of the community who refuses to follow the constitution will experience the wrath of the law.

Following the above contention on the definition of constitution Aristotle defined constitution "as the arrangement of magistracies in a state and especially of the highest offices."²⁴ He went further to define it as the arrangement of the inhabitants of a state it

follows that the nature of constitution depends on the seat of authority. He sees the rules as the efficient cause and asserted that the existence of a city-state requires an efficient cause. It implies that this ruling principle is defined by constitution, which set criteria for political offices, particularly the sovereign offices. He opines that once the constitution is in place the politician needs to take the appropriate measure to maintain it, to introduce reforms when he finds them necessary and to prevent the form of development, which might subvert the existing political system. Aristotle, having classified the constitution into the three good ones and three corrupt ones. The good constitutions are those which aim at the common advantage of the state, whereas, those constitutions which aim only at the interest of the rulers are deviant and unjust, because they involve despotic rule which is inappropriate for a community of free persons.

Finally, following the above expressions on the good constitution and deviant constitution Aristotle opines that the purpose of every constitution is to help its citizen live the "good life" which requires the ruler and the ruled in turn. However, Aristotle makes it clear that the "good life" cannot be enjoyed by all the inhabitants of a political state

4.8 ELEMENTS OF A CONSTITUTION

According to Aristotle a constitution have three elements which are the pre requisites, which a good leader has to regard as what is expedient for each constitution. When these elements are well ordered they enhance immensely the orderliness of the constitution. These elements are the deliberative arm of the government, which is the supreme element in the state. This arm deals with public affairs matters concerning war and peace. It is rested with the power of electing the magistrates and to audit their account.

Apart from that, there are the magistracies that deal with jobs allocated to them by deliberative arm. They deal strictly with what is assigned to them. The third arm is judiciary, which is solely concerned with judicial issues. In essence, this arm is vested with judicial powers to enforce the laws of the state. Aristotle X-rayed the various ways the deliberative aspects can operate. Despite the above, people with moderate qualification can do the deliberation and they in effect observe the stipulations of the constitution without altering the constitution.

If people with the required qualifications, share in the government this type of oligarchy is inclined toward polity. Nevertheless when the whole people deliberate on issues concerning peace and war, but the magistrates regulate everything and they are elected by vote, this type of government is Aristocracy. All the aforementioned are the various forms of the deliberative arm of government, which Aristotle talked about so elaborately.

Following the above argument, Aristotle seeks to balance the tension embedded in the various forms of government. With this in mind he admonishes the people to be deliberating issue in tremendous unison. He contends that the pattern of the oligarchies and democracy be emulated to aid them strike the balance. Both parties should harmonize their differences to aid their progress.

In addition to that, Aristotle's description of constitution on the bad is what is obtainable in our country Nigeria. There is always tension between the three arms of government. In recent times there was a case in our country where the petroleum minister was accused of embezzling 20 billion naira and she was called by the legislative house, to answer for it, but she never showed up. Instead, she got a court order that restrained her from the summon. One may wonder if she is above the law, or whether the rule of law is

no longer prevalent. It is until all these elements of constitution are harmonized well each state will continue to drift apart.

4.9 FREEDOM IN ARISTOTLE

The word freedom has obviously been thought-provoking in philosophy. It has received a range of discussion cutting across all the epochs in the history of philosophy, the ancient, medieval, modern and even contemporary eras. This word 'freedom' has various meanings among philosophers; its various meanings are centered on three themes which are as follows:

Firstly, 'The possibility of the subject to act as he will to satisfy his tendencies, aspiration (freedom of action) as opposed to constraint servitude.'²⁵ One may infer that this meaning of freedom is applicable to Aristotle's concept of freedom as applied to the relation of master and slave, in which the slave is not free to act, as he wants.

Secondly, it 'is the power of self-determination without any necessitation in willing, it is only from pressure of a nature slightly distinct from the ego.'²⁶

Thirdly, it 'is the fulfillment of reasoning subject by the internal determination of reason, of superior motivation over feeling and over inferior motivation.'²⁷

Having seen the three main themes which freedom centered on, one may understand that the first and third themes are more applicable to Aristotle's assertion that slaves are slaves because of superiority of reason of the master over the inferiority of reason of the slave which he supported by stating that 'the slave is not a mere body but has that subordinate kind of reason which enables him not merely to obey a command but to follow in argument.'²⁸ It is because of the above position that Aristotle links freedom to

virtue. Aristotle's notion of freedom in a way deals with the issue of virtue because if somebody has no virtue that particular person is not free. The rulers rule over the subject because they have moral virtue than that of the subject, moral virtue belongs to everybody and virtue consists in the good disposition of the soul. If the citizen has no good disposition, that particular citizen is not free.

He went further to tell us that the virtue of a child and slaves are not perfect and that is the reason why they are not free. He supported the above statement with the following quotation: "The child is imperfect, and therefore obviously his virtue is not relative to himself alone, but to the perfect man and to his teacher, and in like manner the virtue of the slave is relative to a master."²⁹

Following the above position one can understand why Aristotle likened the term "freedom to virtue". It is because if one's virtue is imperfect or not complete how can such an individual be allowed to be free in the state?

Moreover, Aristotle went further to divide choice into voluntary and involuntary choice. Voluntary choices are those choices, which one is responsible for one's free action or can be held accountable for an act. While actions which the agents are not praised or blamed are called involuntary actions and of these actions Aristotle comments, "those things are thought involuntary which take place under compulsion of which the moving principle is outside being a principle which nothing is contributed by the person who acts or rather is acted upon."³⁰

In other words, Aristotle's concept of freedom can be deduced from the different forms of governments. According to Aristotle, we have three good forms of government and three corrupt forms of governments. The good ones are as follows: Kingship,

Aristocracy, and Polity and the corrupt forms of government are as follows: Tyranny, Oligarchy, and Democracy. **Kinship government:** Is the kind of government in which only one virtuous ruler rules over the whole members of the state with the view to the common interest of all the citizens. One may see that it is only the king that is free to do whatever he wishes. Freedom is restricted. It is not for every citizen.

Aristocracy: This is the kind of government in which a few virtuous men rule. It is only the virtuous men that are free. Those who are not virtuous are not free in this kind of government. It follows also that freedom is the few virtuous men.

Tyranny: Is the government of one vicious ruler who rules not for the interest of the state but for himself. He rules by force. It implies that he is the only person that has freedom to do whatever he wants.

Democratic Government: This is the government of the majority its characteristic is freedom of the majority of the poor citizen. Freedom in the democratic government implies that every body is free to act the way he likes which made Aristotle to opine that freedom is the end of every democracy, one principle of freedom is for all to rule and be ruled in turn in the society. Which implies that every citizen is free to rule and be ruled in turn in the state. It follows that the majority of the poor citizens are free more than the few rich citizens in the state.

More so, having x-rayed the various forms of government, one may understand that freedom for Aristotle has degrees depending on the form of government that is applicable for the individual.

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CHAPTER FIVE

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPTION OF MORALITY AND POLITICS

5.1 A CRITIQUE OF ARISTOTLE'S SOURCE OF MORALITY

In Aristotle's view, man is by nature amoral¹. This implies that morality is acquired and not inherent as postulated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau that man is born moral and Thomas Hobbes averred that man is born immoral. So, if morality is not inherent in man but acquired via habit in the society then it implies that morality is subjectively-relative to a given society which undermines the universal dimension of morality. The idea of good and bad as regulated by man's inherent conscience is not given a place in Aristotle's conception of morality since man is born amoral. Also, Aristotle's conception of morality is granting the source of morality to the society which rises from family units, this implies that, deciding what action(s) are good or bad could pose some problems and if that is the case, then this tendency could lead to disorderliness in the society that has a mixture of diverse family units.

5.2 A CRITIQUE OF ARISTOTLE'S NOTION OF HAPPINESS

According to Aristotle, happiness is the highest good which both the state and man are naturally inclined to achieve. However, he averred that it is only philosophers that can attain it, as such, limiting the state of happiness to the aristocratic philosophers. My contention here is that, is happiness truly the highest good? It's on record that Jesus Christ and some Christian martyrs deprived themselves of the Aristotle's highest end (happiness) and strived for a higher end which is heavenly inclined (winning souls to God).

Also, happiness is the result of the achievement of what one desires (a good). The good, as a matter of fact is desired because of the happiness which it gives to the subject. Therefore there is a distinction between this good and the happiness that its possession gives. Aristotle did not go beyond the earthly happiness. Rather, his idea of happiness incorporates only the aspects of human dimensions, which is only rational and reasonable. J. Maritain did not lose sight of this incompleteness in Aristotle's treatise on happiness, as a result of this he writes; True as they are (but incomplete) the true principle of Aristotle's moral philosophy do not penetrate the concrete existential reality of the human hopes, which go beyond rational and reasonable happiness, incapable of probing the recesses of his ego and the world of the irrational With its impulses towards dead and void². Maritain even noticed traces of this weakness all through Aristotle's moral philosophy, hence he remarks; that his moral philosophy lacks effectiveness and existential bearing because it is a system of means suspended from an end which does not possess the value of an end practically absolute, or the value of an end practically constraining³. It should however be noted that these traces of incompleteness are found in Aristotle's moral philosophy because his conception of man does not admit of immortality of the soul.

5.3 A CRITIQUE OF THE ARISTOCRATIC STATE

Having seen the differences in the various forms of the state, one may wonder whether or not some of them have merit or demerit respectively, one may think that the good state is all about good deeds which deal with the interest of the state. On the contrary, there are corrupt states in which the rulers are interested in their selfish ends. Aristocratic state: is the government of the best only, which implies that the citizens are best in virtue absolutely and not relatively. Following what Aristotle gives as Aristocracy, one may see

that this type of state is not attainable because there is no way everybody in the state can be virtuous persons or wealthy persons too. If it is the government of the virtuous, there is tendency that the poor among them may be marginalized and the poor and those that are not virtuous will not have anything to say in the affairs of the state and this may lead to revolution.

5.4 A CRITIQUE OF MONARCHY (KINGSHIP)

Monarchy or Kingship: This is a kind of state in which one leader rule in the interest of the members of the state. In this kind of state the ruler may be a good man or a good citizen of whom some theocratic state regard as having a divine power or in communion with the gods. Since the king communes with gods, the state may be moving fine. However, since the king is one person and the people believe that he has a divine power, he may try to exercise those powers to the detriment of the subjects, which in turn leads to tyranny. This was a case that was witnessed in Libya few years ago.

5.5 A CRITIQUE OF ARISTOTLE'S DEMOCRACY

Following Aristotle's definition of Democracy, one may understand that there is no law guiding everybody, that is, everybody does whatever he likes in the state because the poor are more and that the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, just as experienced in the Nigerian state today. This situation could result in a revolution as witnessed in Russia same years back.

5.6 A CRITIQUE OF CITIZENSHIP

In Aristotle view, a citizen is one who can rule and be ruled, sue and be sued. As such, he decided to exclude both workers (artisans) and children a citizen of the State. This

development is unhealthy for the socio-political and economic in development of the State. It's so because some artisans in the state with wealth of economic experiences (technocrats) bring their experiences to bear when given political offices to manage, which help in enhancing the growth and development in the State. Also, for a State to be well managed, there should be proper record of her citizenry which must include all and sundry. So, if a head-count (census) of the citizenry of the State is to be conducted and children are excluded then, there will certainly be a lacuna which will basically distort the manageability of the State.

5.7 STRENGTHS OF ARISTOTLE'S MORALITY

An area of note in Aristotle's morality is where he stated that morality or rather our moral conduct and decision should be guided by reason in relation to a given situation. This implies that telling a lie to save the lives of people will not be considered to be a bad thing to do. However, Christians will not buy the fact that telling a lie in any given situation is morally justified which tend to be a more rigid way of looking at morality. The truth is that, we are mere mortals as such, limited beings yet we long for a perfect existence which seems contradictory to me. So Aristotle, been aware of the actual existential situations of humans tried to objectify morality in a more flexible form. This could be said to be, the beginning of what is today referred to as situation ethics.

Another area of concern in morality is committing of murder. That is to say, is it morally right or wrong to commit murder in any given situation? For the Christians the answer will be that 'thou shall not kill' while for Aristotle, killing in self defence will be a welcome development because, it is only an irrational person that will stand and wait to be killed by an opponent in a fight.

Equally, it will be correct to say that Aristotle does not uphold the universal application of morality like his teacher Plato did. That is to say, every country should adopt their own moral standard in harmony with the prevailing situation. If for example one tries to impose a particular moral standard that is foreign, on a given country, it could bring about disorderliness in that country. An example is the issue of gay marriage prevalent in America and the subsequent attempt to impose it on African nations which resulted to a state of upheavals.

5.8 STRENGTHS OF ARISTOTLE'S POLITICS

Aristotle in his political theory was able to identify the trait of gregariousness in humans which naturally influence humans to form society. Also according to Aristotle, the State aims at the highest good for all and that no one can do without the other person because of our natural limitations as humans. As such, we need each other to fulfill ourselves in the State. In trying to establish the significance of the existence of a State, Aristotle averred that, he who by nature and not mere accident is without a state is heartless one⁴. For him, it is in the state one can measure or grade oneself both quantitatively and qualitatively. He also observed that no man is an island, as such, we all need each other to survive in a state. For he who cannot live and associate with his fellow men is either a beast or a god. Hence, the need for the emergence of the state cannot be overemphasized.

Equally, as regard the best state, Aristotle upholds aristocracy which comprises of few virtuous elites in governance of the state. The reality of the world today is that it is fast growing population, economic and other wise. As such, the practice of popular democracy as witnessed in ancient Greece becomes obsolete. Also, it should be noted that not everyone is born to lead. A leader therefore, should be one who is highly experienced

and educated and has a strong rational capacity to decipher morality inherent in the nature of phenomena to attain the state of *eudemonia* (happiness) for all in the society. Plato referred to these class of people as 'philosopher kings' Though, today what we have are 'educatedly-uneducated' leaders who passed through school but didn't allow school to pass through them. Hence, the problem of leadership in the world in general and in Nigeria in particular. Yes, we need few representatives to lead us but these must be the true aristocrats that Aristotle upheld.

END NOTE

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2. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, (Trans) W. D. Ross, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985). P. 1103.
3. Jacques, Martitain, *Moral Philosophy: A Historical and Critical Survey of the Great system*. (New York: Scribner's Son, 1964), p. 50.
4. Mekon Richard, *the Basic works of Aristotle*. New York: Random House Press. 1941. P. 1429.

CHAPTER SIX

A CONCLUDING REFLECTION ON ARISTOTLE'S NOTION ON MORALITY AND POLITICS

6.1 ARISTOTLE'S NOTION ON MORALITY AND POLITICS IN RELATION TO NIGERIAN SOCIETY

Like you have already known, happiness has been described by so many philosophers and scholars as the desirable end of every man's action. Aristotle would say that it is the ultimate end of man. It is no doubt that, from the discussion of happiness so far, it is evidently clear that happiness is the fulfillment or crown of all human desires. All ethical theories accord some importance to this happiness. I presume that we have already known what happiness is, so may I quickly contextualize this concept of happiness to Nigeria situation that is our general view of it. A modern day Nigerian sees happiness as more or less, a product of material well being. This notion of happiness is generally contradictory to Aristotelian concept of eudaimonism which he conceives as the active exercise of the power of the (virtuous) soul in conformity to reason. It is complete and self-sufficient to be retained. So against this back ground that he saw it as the most noblest and most pleasant thing in the world. Further more in the Book X of his *Nicomachean Ethics*; Aristotle extols the life of eudaimonia.

Furthermore, politics, culture and religious experience and so on have negatively influenced our idea of seeking happiness through wealth creation. Happiness for Aristotle is the activity of the soul in conformity with perfect virtue. Virtue in this context x-rays a life of simplicity, moderation, justice, a life where human right is respected, and a life people uphold the truth. Aristotle, in his doctrine of the mean, chooses the

philosophy of moderations. His view is that, happiness will result from moderation in doing things. He made effort to prove that happiness springs from moderate behavior, choosing the middle cause between two extreme actions, which are vices for example; courage between cowardice and rashness. Drawing a leave from Aristotle and relating it to the present society, before some majority in Nigerian society, happiness is measured or quantified with the number of cars, money, wealth, and possessions inclusive, is actually the existential happiness been practiced in our country Nigeria. In the political realm, ever since the independence of Nigeria from the colonial rule some dacades ago, our government in this era of democracy is good only to be described as similar to the dictatorship of the military. There was never a time good democracy was practiced in our country Nigeria; instead the only system that is applicable in our country is the Machiavellian pattern of leadership, which stated, that the end justifies the means. The systems of government were the people in government see others as slaves as a result of quest for power. How can such a society of anarchy experience happiness in both individual and collective level?

Equally, anthropologically speaking, man is a dual being. Dual being in the sense, that he is both a social and a political being. Man is a social being because he is meant to inhabit with others. Communitarianism, libertarianism, egalitarianism are the factors governing man as a social being. No man can find happiness in leaving alone in the society. As a social animal, we find happiness when we relate and integrate with one another. Living in isolation is thus going contrary to the law of nature. From the Genesis account of creation, God made them two; man and woman. In our society today, there are many negative perception of happiness, and because we have erroneously sought it, (happiness) its true form, will remain a mirage to us.

6.2 RECOMMENDATION

Having closely analyzed Aristotle's conception of morality and politics, it became glaring that for there to be a well ordered political society (State) then morality must be in place. In short, no morality no State. Since humans naturally live together in association with each other, then there must be a State, and when there is a State the next issue is what is going to be the best of system of governance for the State? It is in this regard I wish to make a recommendation, and what I recommend as the best form of system of governance is what I refer to as "altruistic-monarchy". Altruistic-monarchy could be defined as a system of governance that encourages the leadership of one person called the sovereign, who must be morally upright and selfless in the discharge of duties. An epitome of such leadership is Joshua of Israel and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania who never had a house of his own as a president of his country and Lycurgus of Spartan. Until such leaders come to power nothing works.

6.3 CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it is clear that the theory of state of Aristotle has had significant influence. He was able to propound law, constitutions and rules, which some modern states still adopt today. In conclusion, this research has attempted to highlight the meaning, and relevance of Aristotelian concept of morality in the state. According to Aristotle, for a social organization to be formed it has three stages which included the family, the village community and the state ¹. The state is to provide for its own internal resource, for all the spiritual as well as material needs of her members in order to attain the ultimate good. The end for which the state exists is not merely for her own self-perpetration but for the self-fulfillment of her members, which leads to happiness ². State

exists to educate her citizens in such a way as shall fit them to make the noble use of leisure.

Aristotle gave much consideration to the classification of the different types of constitution possible for the city-state. It is only in an ideal constitution that the education, which makes its subject a good man in the philosophical sense of the word, will also make him a good citizen.

Finally, Aristotle believed his political thought and constitution is a necessary tool for the formation of a state since the state and government is set up by the constitution. More so, credit must be given to Aristotle because his theory of state had influence on many of the modern states today because there is no country in the world that is not using his classification of constitution either the good ones or the corrupt ones. For example, Nigeria had adopted the democratic system of government, which was organized by Aristotle as a corrupt form of government.

ENDNOTES

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21/04/ 2015.

The Head

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Through

My Supervisor

Dr Anthony Areji

Dear Sir,

Application for External Reading.

I, NWOLU KELECHI MATHILDA of PG/MA 10/52766, do humbly seek your permission, to present my project work to the department for external reading. I do humbly hope that my request will be granted as this is one of the requirements for the award of a Master of Art. Thanks in anticipation for your co-operation.

Thanks

Yours Faithfully

Nwolu Kelechi M.