
A Critical Review of Aristotle's view on Human sociality

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Abstract:

This work makes a critical review of Aristotle's view on human sociality. The human being cannot exist without the other persons. He/she lives among others of his own species. They lives in society and survives with some degree of cooperation. The method of this work is analysis. Human being is a gregarious being and by nature he/she lives with his/her fellows and likes it. Indeed, no more cruel punishment can be inflicted upon an individual than to isolate him/her from other human beings for a long period of time. Whether this love of being with others is due to man's basic and original nature, none can say. However, it is clear that the earliest human beings of whom we know lived together. It may have been in a cave, or it may have been in shelters constructed of branches and leaves, or it may have been by squatting beneath a tree; wherever it was, the most primitive of humans wanted to be near those of their kind. Therefore, the reason for human beings not living in isolation may have been the inherent desire for security, self preservation and the realization that one person living alone is dangerously exposed to the enemies, while two or more humans together are better able to protect themselves and preserve their lives. Since all living together, whether it be of man or of beast brings conflicts of purpose and desire, it is almost certain that the earliest of men organized some form of society and established some rules which were accepted by each one to guide them. I can say that, the human person is a social animal, as such, to make him/her little less than an animal is to deprive the person social relationship, interaction and political activities.

Keywords: Aristotle, human sociality

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Understanding the naivety of the primitive man, who lives in a stone age and wished to live in an isolated world of his own, the philosophy of Aristotle distinguished man by nature as a social and political being. However, Human being is by nature destined to live in a pattern of life that is social and political, suitable to his own nature. The challenges and advancements of life in our globe have indicated that, 'no man is as an Island'. Thus, nature has bound man/woman to create society where he could live and relate with others of his kind. Deducing from the fact that no man is an island to himself, Aristotle, a great philosopher of his time set up a theory which asserts that, "man is by nature a social and political animal". This statement created a lot of controversies with those who are for and against the theory. It appears that for about five centuries, various philosophers have viewed social aspect of man as a contrivance deliberately set up by man/woman for certain ends. They refused to view this theory from the angle that human being has been ordained by nature to live in a society. This led to the proposition of many theories on how man is a political animal or how he is naturally bound to create society. According to some philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, society means for the protection of man against the consequences of his own nature. To some, social and political life of a human being is an artificial device of mutual economy. Others still maintained that man is born free in his state of nature. Therefore, his establishment of any community or society is just a mere set up.

However, these are theories that today cannot gain any ground, due to the fact that they are very superficial in their criticisms. For human being to live in a society and to create it, already it is an indispensable part of his existence. Nature per se had bound man and presupposed that he lives as a social being and creates political society. Man/woman creates communities and establishes relationships, all because of his natural inclinations as a social and political animal. This made Aristotle to assert that: "Man does not create or form the state for the sake of being social and political animal, but because the state is the creation of nature and it is prior to the family and even individual".¹

It is very important to note here that man is by nature a social being is not an illusion, although there are various ways he shares that natural beingness with other animals. In this case human being is confirmed social because of his natural endowments which raised him higher than other animals; endowments such as power of speech, sense of direction and articulation. Man/woman is political, if looked at with all meticulousness, hence acting by nature through rational activity in society. It is only man/ woman among other animals that is blessed with high memory, man/woman being a higher animal tends to organize other animals and decide who to be their head. All these in a single sentence suffice that one should agree to the opinion of Aristotle that man is a social and political animal.

However, human being as we tend to analyse through this work is to be treated with some differences. Man as a living being could be differentiated from what Aristotle refers to as 'man by nature a social and political animal'. The basic difference is just that we see man ordinarily as composed of body and soul, and on the other hand, man by nature a social being is said to be man in his social activity which involves the instinctive organization of his place in the universe as supposed by nature, this natural tendencies are not only observable in advanced society, but also their existence could be experienced among the primitive society in the age of early man. Moreover, for man to be natural and act according to nature, he must find a place in a society or must live in the society with others. For those who prefer to live in isolation they are either beasts or gods, though some may do so to lead a life of total sacrifice to God any reason other than this would make man to live against his nature. Therefore, it is not true as other philosophers held, that "Man can become more human being outside society; it also means that men are individual before they enter into the society."²

As philosophers, we must take the aforementioned theory with a pinch of salt. People set up theories and arguments for the sake of intellectual introspection, but at the end of it, they need to be educated on how to accept the truth for 'if a fact is tested and established, it cannot be untrue, except if it ceased to be a fact'. The scope of this work tends to educate people who could not see meaning in this aspect of Aristotle's philosophy, that man is by nature a social and political animal, and as such must live in a community, relate and interact with those of his kind. The philosophy of Aristotle on man's natural propensity to live socially is something that many people are not aware of or regarded as an 'old school' philosophy. This is a forum to revive this precious knowledge in them, or to remind them of it and to educate them. As natural as man, the theory does not support life of solitude, but rather portrays man as social and political animal who needs others to be his companions. In spite of the advancement of technology in our society, it is unfortunate that our society is fast degenerating into what Aristotle referred to as solitary life. This is due to the fact that many among the relationships that are developed today result in hate, war, mutual distrust, tribalism and corruption. One wonders whether humanity in this age is making a return to the era of barbarism.

2.0 HUMAN PERSON AS A SUBJECT

Man is the subject of our inquiry. He is at the centre of the whole universe in which he finds himself with other beings. The beingness of man/woman is surely attested to by all, but there are varied notions towards the understanding of what man/woman is from different schools of thought. Philosophers, anthropologists, psychologists as well as scientists and other scholars have all made attempts to explain what man is, but it has not been very easy to give an exact and comprehensive analysis of 'whom' and 'what' man is. Traditional metaphysics and anthropology have both presented him as an ontological entity made up of body and soul; matters and form. Metaphysically, the body and soul are substantially united to form a complete man.

The early Greek conception of man/woman is derived from two sources, one mythological and the other cosmological. The mythological aspect treats man's origin, nature and condition based on fatalism, while the cosmological source offers a realistic and rational consideration of man/woman. This philosophical reflection has its bearing on the phenomenal world and studies human being in the cosmological context. Plato in his analysis emphasized man's spiritual nature and had tended to depreciate the corporeal nature of man/woman. St. Augustine was more akin to follow the Platonic view on this subject. With the arrival of Aristotle into the scene of philosophy came the doctrine of hylemorphism. He applied this doctrine in his own philosophical evaluation of man/woman, whom he regarded as the supreme being on earth, primarily spirit and capable of intellectual knowledge, but with a bodily constitution adapted to, and informed by the spiritual soul in a matter-form composition.

The Thomistic solution reintroduced the Aristotelian views on this issue. With the advent of Rene Descartes in the 17th Century, there came replacement of man's unity with a dualistic conception that sharply drew the line between the *res extensa* and *re cogitans*. In a way, this stressed the spiritual nature of man/woman; it also prepared a way for the '*homo noumenon*' proposed by Immanuel Kant, and in general, for the idealists' view that man/woman is only but a manifestation of the Absolute Spirit. This in a way led to a high appreciation of the human dignity. It also led to an over-emphasis of man's autonomy, resulting in the dangerous exaltation of the Nietzschean 'Superman' (*ubermensch*). Indeed, the newly found autonomy appeared to be a burden too heavy for man/woman to bear. One here, has to consider the existentialist's despair which found expression in the Heideggerian notion that man is a being towards death or Sartrean expression of absurdity in his words that 'man is a useless passion'. Marxists' materialism regarded man as nothing but the highest form of an organized matter. This view might be seen as being too radical.

The scientific-biological study of man explains him in terms of his human origin. Some other philosophers have expressed varied views on man. Sartre described him as a being who is not what he is and who is what he is not. He is not what he is, in so far as he is not now what his past had been. His future is not fully known to him, nay, he is what he is not. This implies that he has not a stable or permanent human nature. In his own case, Martin Heidegger's refusal to grant man a stable nature is the basic for his concept of '*dasein*'. According to him, we can speak of man/woman only as a 'being-there' (*dasein*), who has been gratuitously thrown or cast into existence.

We have taken pains to explain this divergent views as an effort to present the 'what' and 'who' of man. As can be observed, there is no specific view on who man is. All these attest to Socrates' view that man has not known himself. He therefore held that man/woman should study and know himself. However, the 'non-dogmatized data' on whom man is does not in any way show

the denial of the beingness of man. He is a being-in-the-world-with-others. To be is to be with others. He is a social animal and for him to alienate or isolate himself from the social network of his nature is to beatify himself. He is a being in relation with others. This bears testimony to the African way of life which upholds the philosophy of communalism. "I am, because we are." It is worthy of note that man is an unfinished product. It is for this that he yearns for a complementarily, seeking relationship with others.

One of the evils of the modern man is the despising of this communalism and in its stead, the enthronement of individualism. Much of the modern culture promotes the suppression of social humanism. The effects have been amply disillusioning; the enthronement of 'itself' as the god of the other. A successful attempt in the understanding of what man is and the world around him would not be complete without owing a listening ear to existentialism.

The springboard of existentialism is the human person, what he is, his condition and existence in the world and his relationship with others in the world. Just like most of the philosophical concepts, the word 'existentialism' has no specific clear-cut definition. However, it is pertinent to note that it concerns itself with explaining the totality of the human situation, experience, and existence. It emphasizes the primacy of human existence, a philosophy of man as rational being. It finds neither empiricism nor rationalism adequate enough, therefore it departs from them and rather adopts the path of communion.

The existentialists are constantly concerned with the questions of the authenticity and none authenticity of the human existence. For Kiekegaard, an authentic existence is achieved by 'making a leap of faith'. For Marcel and Buber, it is rather rooted in a communion with others. Every I-thou relationship bestows authenticity of existence upon two people and this, for them, necessarily reaches out to the absolute. Existentialism, even though, it stresses some objectives in defence of man, is yet to be wrested from the error under which it has shelved itself. This error consists in emphasizing the subjective and then disregarding the objective.

This notwithstanding, however, the existentialists attest to the fact that man dwells in the world, and in this world, he encounters other human beings. He also realizes that the other needs not simply be flushed aside for he must confront you. To exist therefore is to co-exist with others.

3.0 THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF CIVIL AND POLITICAL SOCIETY

Beginning from the works of early Greek thinkers, we could say that political society is as old as man. From the early centuries, human being started looking for that which is good for his nature. And it is in his nature to look for ultimate good. In the book, *What Politics is About*, H.S. Ferns and K.W Watkins stated that:

We can come to some preliminary conclusion about the human condition, that is the circumstances in which all communities at all times and in all places find themselves, if they are to survive longer than the lives of individuals who at any one time make up the community.⁵

From this we could infer that man by nature finds himself in a community. In that community he is expected to live up to some expectations, with the aim of not interfering with the common good of the community. Thus, we can trace the origin of political society to the pre-literate societies. And there are two schools of thought that gave light to the origin of political society, namely; the natural philosophers and the social contract philosophers, otherwise known as the contractions. In the school of naturalist, we have Plato, Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, while in

the social contract school we have Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke. For Plato, the state originates because of man's needs. In *The Republic* he made it clear that "society (*polis*) originates then... because the individual is not self-sufficient but has many needs which he can't supply himself".⁶

It is not only formed by the quest to satisfy human needs, but also by the fact of people living together. Where man live together, there is the need for some kind of organization and this Plato call a community. Once man/woman finds himself in the state of nature, there is that tendency for competition and once that sets in; the best way to go about it is by politics. Aristotle traced the origin of the political society to the generic components of the human family."In order of time, the family comes first; it is built on the two fundamental relations of man and woman, master and slave, both which are natural."⁷

This gives us the idea of what the family is for him, naturally family is the first stage of human society. And when a large family is formed, it gives rise to village, and several villages in turn give rise to community, then the city and then the state, all in an effort of man to satisfy himself. It is in the state that we have the fulfillment of mans quest. Still on the origin of political society Nwanunobi would say; "We need not to get as far as Neolithic to appreciate that human beings functioned and still do function in most meaningful spheres of activities as members of a group rather man as isolated individuals."⁸

His view brings to light more, the importance and need for civil society. Hobbes in his own view finds man in the state of nature as where there is anything like authority, nor justice and injustice. In fact it is a state where man is a wolf to man (*homo homini lupus*). In such natural state, there is no development, no industry, no agriculture and no navigation. For men to escape such state of nature where life is nasty, brutish and short, they formed themselves into a political society. That is done by conferring of power or right to a body or an individual as well as for the community at large. So, for Hobbes, political society started with the conferring of power to one man or a body of men which is an attempt to avoid the chaos in the state of nature. He says:

To avoid such a condition of anarchy, the chief cause of which is that of individualistic and egotistical judgments of rights, men following the dictates of natural law, seeking peace, renounce some of their rights or freedom and enter into a social contract.⁹

Through social contract man escapes from the evil, with the purpose of self-preservation from the universal war, which as it were, resulted from war of our love of liberty for ourselves and the domination over others. Further, for man/woman to come out from the state of nature, they went into an association:

A form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force, the person and the goods of each association, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone and remain as free as before.¹⁰

And so, by this formation of association peace is set in the community, and individual respects the lives and property of the other. In fact, it is with the formation of civil society that human society has meaning, with the aim of protecting and providing the needs of individuals in society as well as those of the society at large.

Thus we could then say that, civil society is possible to surface because of the rationality of man/woman and of the cultural aspect of man's nature, because however and whenever a society exists, culture exists as well. So the origin of human political society could be traced

back to the nature of family which serves as the basic structure of the state, while as the definitive civil society came as a contract in order to protect the natural rights of the individuals. So by nature, man is both a social and a political being, endowed with rationality. And thus, we say in line with the words of Aristotle, that he who says that he has no need of society is either a beast, if not, then a god.

4.0 ARISTOTLE'S VIEW ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

It is evident that man is higher above every other animal. That is why in whatever he does he tries to fulfill the natural qualities in him namely, to be social and political. Therefore, "now that man is more of a political animal, then bees or any other gregarious animal is evident. Nature as we often say makes nothing in vain and man is the only animal whom she endowed with the gift of speech."¹¹

The truth of the above statement could be seen through the presupposition that man/woman in a way is higher than any other animal, even though we see irrational animals, with a sense of organization. Even at this, human being cannot in any way be compared with animals. Since all the efforts man/woman makes to form such socio-political associations are all in conjunction with his nature, it means that nature is neither cheated nor does anything in vain. Therefore, man/woman forms community, not for the sake of being superior over all other animals, but because he is propelled by nature to be social. This implies that a man/woman without society (state), for Aristotle, is either a bad man or above humanity (god) and he is a "Tribeless, lawless, heartless one."

It is only in this social and political society that human being tends to understand and develop his potentialities as a social animal because man cannot be what he is outside this society. Thus, the political society as far as Aristotle's concept of the state is concerned exists to serve man's needs, to provide the individual the means and circumstances that could enable him to develop himself and attain the goal of life, namely, "happiness." In this case, one can deduce from the concept of political animal of Aristotle, that all that what man/woman tries to achieve through his natural inclination is the greatest good and all that the state tries to render for man/woman is to make them competent for the services of the state. Since, at the end of the day all efforts boils down to the fact that the state is a product of nature.

When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state as conceived by Aristotle comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life and continuing in existence for the sake of good life. Since the earlier forms of society are natural, so is the state, for it is the end of all other societies and the nature of a thing is its end. Following this Aristotelian undertaking of man as a social being, one could be right to assert that, "man as it were has been implanted by nature, social and political instincts. This is because man/woman when sub-guided with laws tends to be the best of all animals, but when separated from law and justice, he becomes the worst of all animals".¹²

For Aristotle, any community formed outside law is doom to destruction. So the human community that is created by man/woman must find its square root within the context of law and justice for a lawless society is not a society at all. Rousseau observes that, "Man is born free and everywhere in chain,"¹³ the above mentioned assertion is in context with nature because the idea of natural law is a reality that man cannot claim ignorant of, as categorical imperative directs us on what to do as good and avoid as evil. In other words, nature had presupposed the existence of the individual in a society and though man is free to do whatever he likes, he is bound to do it

within the context of natural law, which for Rousseau is not freedom at all. Thus, the society proposed by Aristotle must in a way be a political one based on justice and obedience to the nature, which applies to all living creatures.

The aim of this social community does not confine itself to maintenance of law and order, defense against external enemies and the preservation of life. But its function is higher and more comprehensive than what one could imagine. So it aims at the happiness of the citizens in a perfect communal life.

5.0 COMPARISONS ON POLITICAL THEORIES OF ARISTOTLE, HOBBS AND LOCKE

The different understandings of these philosophers concerning nature differ. However, amidst this diversity of theories, different views would be considered based on the true understanding of the concept "nature" and "politics". Aristotle being the famous philosopher of his time understood the concept of nature and politics as the concept implies that "the nature of a thing is its end, for what each thing is when fully developed, we call its nature, whether we are speaking of a man, a horse or a family."¹⁴ For Aristotle, therefore, nature of a thing is not what the thing "is" but what it is "capable of becoming." Its nature is not static but a developing concept. He further explains that just as in biology where the nature of a seed can only be discovered by the observations of its growth, in politics, the nature of a state can only be discovered by observation of its development and tendencies. In practice, this means the study of its history and the observation of its dominating tendencies, whether these are autocratic or democratic forms of government to an expanding or stable economy, and so on. Therefore, the concept of nature or the way Aristotle grasped nature is distinct from Thomas Hobbes' in the sense that for Aristotle, nature is synonymous with the term good.

In talking about politics, Aristotle maintained that "it would however, be true that the state is the creation of nature and that man is by nature a political animal. His proof that the state is the creation of nature and prior to the individual and his reason for saying that is the fact that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole. Aristotle in this sense identifies the theory of the state as a kind of organism, unlike Thomas Hobbes. By this common identification, he means that, the state is not a mere collection of its part, but an organic combination of them, so that none of these parts would be what it is, if separated from the rest. So, the features of an organism are most simply illustrated by the human body.

Notwithstanding the fact that Aristotle was a biologist, in trying to further the explanation of the state as an organism, he pointed out the fact that:

- (a) The parts (e.g. the heart and the foot) no longer exist in the same form if separated from the body;
- (b) That the health of the whole depends upon the health of the parts and vice versa; and
- (c) That some parts (e.g. heart) have more essential function to perform than others. According to the organic theory of the state, these entire propositions are true of the political society.

Therefore, for Aristotle a political society must be true of these parts. Thus:" It is not a mere collection of individuals, but has an organic unity of its own. For this reason, there can be no real conflict between its interest and the true interest of its constituent members".¹⁵

So, the concept of nature and politics by Aristotle is considered differently from the notion of the nature and politics as upheld by others. It is pertinent to note that among these philosophers, there must be one or two things peculiar with their concept of the theory.

Hobbes, in trying to break down the concept of nature and politics in the state, identified it as "idea state". He further distinguishes between states as they are and states as he thinks they ought to be. Although, Hobbes unlike Aristotle does not believe the fact that, human actions are determined by their nature and environment, discovered that they have a faculty of reasoning whereby they try to calculate the most effective means of realizing their desires.

However Hobbes analysed human nature based on four empirical generations, distinct from that of Aristotle.

(1) Hobbes thinks that the basic motives of all voluntary action, which he distinguishes from involuntary bodily process such as, breathing, are 'desire' and 'aversion'. He thinks that desire and aversion are the two opposite forms of endeavor by which he means a combination of feeling and willing. Endeavour, for Hobbes takes these opposite forms accordingly as it is directed towards or away from that which causes it. Hobbes uses the word "contempt" to signify the attitude of indifference one felt towards objects, which excite neither desire nor aversion.

(2) Hobbes believes that man desire not only immediately attainable objects but also assurance that they will be able to gratify future desires. Thomas Hobbes in his words asserts thus: "The object of man's desire is not to enjoy one only, and for one instant time, but to assure forever the way of his future desire."

(3) In the third consideration, Hobbes also believes that, when physical and mental capabilities are both taken in account, men have the ability to attain their ends.

(4) Hobbes believes that men have faculty of reasoning by which, they acquire the knowledge of consequences and dependence of one fact upon another. For him, this knowledge is acquired through experience and it assists men to calculate the means of attaining their desires.

The argument of Hobbes here is that if a man has no faculty of reason, his actions would be predictable in any given circumstances from knowledge of his desires and his environment since he would react automatically to any given situation.

On the contrary, Hobbes unlike Aristotle proposed that at the pre-social stage, when men are not members of any organized society, good simply means whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire and evil means the object of his hate and aversion. Hobbes in this case, unlike Aristotle, discovers no independent standard of good and evil. In the concept of politics, Hobbes conceives these ideas distinct from Aristotle in the sense that, for Hobbes, every individual by nature should seek his own good and not good of the community as upheld by Aristotle and that no individual is decisively superior to any other. He explains further that coercive power of the central government would lead men into the condition of war of every man against every man for Hobbes, unlike Aristotle conceived that solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. It is evident that Aristotle conceived the idea of man, differently, more especially in his famous statement that man is by nature a social and political animal. But this proposition was counteracted by Hobbes that man in the state of nature would live if he does not belong to any political society. But looking at it critically, the argument presented by Aristotle is much closer to the truth in describing man as a "political animal", because some anthropological research has shown that, even in the most primitive form of society, there were elements of a social life and a moral code. Therefore, the ideas of the state and politics according to Hobbes are not natural and for him, man does not need to be in a society before he becomes what he wants to be while for

Aristotle, the reverse is the case. It is important to note that the thought of Thomas Hobbes has been influenced by the circumstance of his time, for he lived in the uncertain and dangerous period of the civil war, and he was anxious to justify a strong government with overwhelming power.

Locke's political theory, like Hobbes is a theory of the idea of state, but differs fundamentally in being amoral theory. While Hobbes thought that the idea state is idea in a rational sense. Locke thinks that it is idea in a moral sense because it offers the entire moral imperative for its members. Locke, like Hobbes, believes in the equality of men, independence and liberty. He did not attempt to justify this assumption, that there is a basic moral law, for the fact that, it is self-evident.

Govern it, which obliges every one, and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it; that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions; for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise maker; all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the world by His order about his business, they are his property, whose workmanship they are made to last during his, not one another's pleasure.¹⁶

Locke in his conception of the law of nature identifies it with the will of God. But Locke conceived the state of nature as that which men would live if they have perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit within the bound of the law of nature, without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man. Locke views that the state of nature should be that which men can live without being subject to a government. Here we can affirm that all the theories concerning nature and political state that are being thought about by different philosophers are in a way distinct from each other, based on the understanding of the concept by that particular philosopher.

However, the biggest distinction that one can find among these philosophers is the one of Aristotle and the two others namely Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Again one discovers according to Aristotle the evidence that man is by nature bound to form a political society, through which he becomes a better human being than when he lives in a solitary kind of life. Thomas Hobbes and John Locke almost held the same view, because both of them advocated for individual freedom. And on the contrary, man can be more human outside politics and society. The major difference is just that Hobbes recognized the law of nature only in the logical sense of rational calculation, whereas Locke understood it as an independent moral standard.

6. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 EVALUATION

The political theory of Aristotle with reference to man as a political animal is a deduction from the political philosophy that encompasses the natural political activity of man in the universe. Man/woman in his state of nature aims at performing social activities in group. This forms the basis of his relationship with others, in mutual understanding and co-existence. Moreover, the yearning to be in a society by man/woman, gave rise to the concept of politics among human beings. It is also evident that the concept of leadership came to being when man/woman saw the need to respect and acknowledge individuals in the society. Although, all men are equal and greater than other irrational animals, human being desires orderliness as they exists among others of their kind. Therefore, I find it necessary to explore and analyse these natural tendencies so as to challenge the animalistic attitude exhibited by men in our society.

Furthermore, in a modern and advanced society, we see some people who are supposed to be naturally higher than other animals tending to be the reverse, taking the place of the other animals rather than humans. Such struggle tend to negate some of the natural values in them, replacing them with irrational attitudes that are against nature, such as war, racial discriminations, tribalism, religious violence, terrorism, corruption, mutual distrust and ethnic intolerance. Instead of enhancing the natural yearning to be with others, man has chosen to live a life of solitary, loneliness and individualism. Man being by nature social, there is no doubt that human beings live normal lives when they mutually assist each other. Therefore the political theory of Aristotle raises awareness of natural human relationship, since no human being by nature finds fulfillment in a solitary kind of life. A society might exist if there are human beings mutually relating with one another, but there can be no society without individuals even if it is called human society. For no man is an island. The state is a perfect society that enhances the political life of man. It is the state that makes man to fulfill his instincts of understanding himself and those of his kind. Aristotle analysed the state as a perfect society through which man exercises his nature as a social animals, via relationship that leads to the attainment of the common good of all. However, if we are to be called social beings we must accept the fact of relationship in our society, if we are really social. For any society that lacks social interaction is no society at all. So the state should be seen as bedrock of human relationship and inter-relatedness. Besides, it is rational to say that the state as analysed by Aristotle is all encompassing.

6.2 CONCLUSION

Man, by nature is a social animal. As such, to make him little less than an animal is to deprive of him social relationship, interaction and political activities. On the other hand, what places him above all other animal is man's desire to form a social group and satisfy his yearning to be with others of his kind. As such, man/woman can never live a solitary kind of life. When Aristotle asserts that man is a social animal, it was an expression of the need of society. This is evident in man's reflection of society, even since the beginning of recorded thoughts. The reflection implies that it was not good for man to be alone, devoid of the company of others. Man is dependent on society, for protection, comfort, education, equipments, opportunities, division of responsibility, and the multitude of definite services which society provides. As such man needs social interaction to become full in his essence. He is dependent on society to realize his thoughts, his dreams, inspirations, even many of his maladies of mind and body. Without being told, the birth of man in society brings with it the absolute need of society for man and the desire to live a group with others.

Aristotle in his conception of the state has this to say: "The state is the most complex and perfect society and it is the end and integration of other societies of families and villages..."¹⁷ It must be noted that man, like the state must live integrally with those of his kind. Even though he may choose to live in isolation, he only does that at the detriment of his nature, because it is abnormal to his natural inclination to live in the society. As human beings, we must see the society as the bedrock of any social interaction. The kind of society we choose to build should portray a high level of integration that fosters mutual understanding for the good of all. It is also evident that man as it were, cannot find fulfillment and the satisfaction he desires outside the society, but in the society. To lay more emphasis on the need of social relationship, the authors of the catechism of the Catholic Church have this to say. "The human person needs to live in

society, society is not for him an extraneous addition but a requirement of his nature.... through the exchange with others; material service and dialogue with others, man develops his potentialities..."¹⁸

However, as human beings, we must strive to adhere to this teaching so as to satisfy our natural inclination to form a society of social and self sufficing beings. Because if we are to go by the concept of the state of Aristotle, we can see that the state as a nation is not a mere collection of its parts but an organic combination of them so that none of these parts would be what it is if separated from the rest, this is to say that human beings cannot attain that which they ought to without the formation of that which forms the integral part of human relationship.

Furthermore, man in his yearnings, desires to be with others, even when some factors warrant him to choose solitary life. He is only but coerced to contradict his nature. In our daily experiences, we see in human beings the fear of being lonely. It is even said that a child whose nature is to be social and who is expected to interact with others, if born and brought up in a lonely place tends to be dull and struggles by his nature to come out of such solitude. This alone is an evidence to show that man cannot be self sufficient apart from society. Little wonder then, that solitary confinement is one of the most fearful of all punishments to man, for it prevents the satisfaction of some of the fundamental needs and things man supposed to enjoy from the society. For man to be political, he must live in a society. Whatever claims of independence we hear from people, no man is by his very nature free of the need of the society and social relationship. For instance, a hermit can decide to leave the society of men if he imagines he can find another society in communion with "God" or "nature" or he is driven by some obsessions to a kind of self punishment. But sooner, he realizes that if he is not mad at the outset, he becomes mad at the end. This is a clear indication that a normal person needs social relationship to make life livable. For outside society and social relationship, life for man is not worth living.

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