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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JUSTICE AND RATIONALITY IN ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL AND MODERN ERA: A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF MACINTYRE’S CONCEPTION

Anila Yasmin ^{*1}, Riffat Iqbal ²

^{*1} M.phil Scholar, Department of Philosophy, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan

² Assistance Professor in the Department of Philosophy, BZU, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan

Abstract

The present study aims to explore the nature of justice and rationality and a relationship between them that how it has become a base for any society and culture in ancient, medieval and modern age. And how different thinkers present rival and compatible views about justice and rationality and how they both impact in our society. Any society benefits from having justice as a prevailing virtue. This helps ensure that wrongs will be ended and rights will be upheld thereby leading to a safer society for everyone. Its strong relation with virtues maintains that it cannot uphold without the presence of virtues. The most basic virtue is rationality without which no justice is possible. Different thinkers in ancient medieval and modern times give different views about the relationship between justice and rationality. But Macintyre holds that there is no neutral conception of justice but there are different standards of justice and rationality in every society.

Keywords: Justice; Rationality; Macintyre’s Concepts; Ancient; Medieval and Modern Concepts of Justice and Rationality.

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1. Introduction

Justice is a broad notion that is based on a concept of moral rightness. Justice has different conception in every culture. It is the result of distinct methodologies, religion and histories that justice has rival and incompatible concepts. On the other hand rationality aware an individual that all his instinctive and judgments in which he believe are either justified or not. A British philosopher Alasdair Macintyre presented the concepts of four traditions (Aristotelian, Augustinian, Humean and Thomists) about justice and its relationships with practical rationality. The differing accounts of justice and rationality which are presented by Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas and Hume, different in their conceptual scheme.¹ These traditions bared a lot of criticism.

Macintyre defines, In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality*, a tradition a “A concept of rational inquiry ... according to which the standards of rational justification themselves emerge from and are part of a history in which they are vindicated by the way in which they transcend the limitations and provide remedies for the defects of their predecessors within the history of that same tradition”.²

2. Ancient Era and Criticism

We start from ancient traditions of Plato who followed Socrates by concluding about justice that: “A just soul and a just man will live well, and an unjust one badly ... a just person is happy, and an unjust person wretched.”³ Macintyre holds that according to Plato, justice is nothing but what the strong make it. Those who lack justice will not only fail in excellence by the standard of virtue, but they also fail in respect of effectiveness, a failure which they are unable to understand correctly.⁴ Macintyre maintains that one cannot become just, on Aristotle's viewpoint, without the ability to reason practically.⁵

Frank, De Vita said that, Plato’s concepts of justice are based on the emotion itself, while Aristotle concepts rest on action and virtue. He said that, to be Platonically just, an agent should be rationally control of their desires. On the other hand Aristotle maintains that to attain the state of justice an individual should have practical wisdom. So through practical wisdom an individual attain the balance between their spirited emotions and appetitive desires to develop Aristotelian virtues. Thus the Platonic and Aristotelian just individuals are consistent and describe in harmony with each other⁶

David Johnston (1941) explains that, according to Plato the purpose of justice is the accomplishment of wisdom, and an explanation of accurate associations of power and duty. On the other hand in contrast Aristotle argued that above all the thought of justice concerns to associations between men who are free and equal and who have different abilities, which allow them to contribute to the political society in diverse ways.⁷ Another thinker Karl Popper maintains that, according to Plato a society will be just if the individuals of that society will sacrifice their needs for the sake of the city. He holds that according to Plato justice is health, stability and the unity of the collective body, nothing more⁸. Thus this is extremely dangerous in Popper’s perspective. According to Popper, the state and other social institutions designed by human are subject to rational inquiry and that are serving the interests of individuals. He was against the Plato’s organic view that justice is what in which the functioning of state will be in proper way, while on the other hand Popper argued that a proper justice is based on equal treatment of individuals. The Popper emphasize on the view of libertarianism to a large extent. He focuses on the individual freedom that is the most significant political value. He said that through equality one can lead to totalitarianism. But his main focus was towards freedom and said that its value is greater than equality because equality put freedom in dangers⁹. Karl Popper argued that Plato’s concept of an ideal state is totalitarian while Popper’s own view is libertarian.

So, it is concluded that Plato's theory of Justice is idealistic in nature. And it also comes to us that, both Plato and Aristotle think that a just person would have a much more righteous and successful life. But there are many fruitful people who attained their achievement through unjust habits.

3. Medieval Era and Criticism

A.Y. “Fred” Ramirez explains, Like Aristotle, Aquinas defines justice as a rendering-to-each- his- due: "Now each man's own is that which is due to him according to equality of proportion. Therefore the proper act of justice is nothing else than to render to each one his own" (ST, SS, Q. 58, Art. 11).. Aquinas names justice as a cardinal virtue, of which mercy, liberality, and pity are secondary in the sense that justice would encompass them all. He distinguishes between “commutative justices” from “distributive justice” in the following way: the former refers to the manner in which one individual interacts with another, privately, whereas the latter refers to the manner in which a community acts towards a single person in the way it distributes, proportionately, common goods, such as titles, resources, rights, opportunities. (Q61, Art. 1). Aquinas goes on to argue that favoritism is opposed to distributive justice—that justice should be meted out according to the merits of a cause—and he illustrates this with the example of offering a professorship: it would be unjust to offer a position to someone simply because he is a particular man (e.g., Peter); rather, justice requires, by nature of the cause in question, that the position be offered on the merits of the person’s knowledge.¹⁰

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’s (1646-1716) was impressed by Aquinas and Aristotle and in practical rationality he adds the pluralism of values and the theory of estimating the possibilities of the outcome of recommended actions. According to him the distinct aspect of practical rationality is that the best rational choice which is the best of all the other world’s choices is the divine rational choice, which is the choice of God. In kind, divine and human thought are parallel and in degree they are different. It is natural for men to make mistakes to approach to the goods, for him the real good is that which is in front of him. On the other hand God choose the real good. Thus in good moral conduct the correct moral reasoning is important. Though, if the moral act is based on reasoning within the limits of the abilities of the person concerned, it will be rational. In other words, men are able to deliberate rationally whether or not their moral judgments are accurate.¹¹ David Berge argued that, on several points Augustine and Aristotle differ: Augustine holds that the city of God (*Civitas Dei*) is all-embracing, while for Aristotle who is not the citizen of a specific polis, he will be excluded from that polis. Augustine’s believed that the chief virtues are humility and charity while on the other hand Aristotle denies his notion of virtues that is based on humility and charity. Augustine believes on the authority of will which do right acts while Aristotle maintains that there is no any will as such. And Augustine’s *telos* is God himself while Aristotle’s *telos* exist in the city of Man. Thus, their schemas were dissimilar at a large extent. But it was Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century who brings the thoughts of Aristotle and Augustine together.¹² Thomas’ view holds that only the laws of God are the source of justice that, without virtues there is no justice and without grace there is no virtue. According to him our society will be called rational and the just society if it will beyond the comprehension of God.¹³

Macintyre express that both for Aristotle and Aquinas, rational justification is a matter of deducibility from first principles, in the case of derived assertions and of the self evidentness as necessary truths of those same first principles.¹⁴ He holds that the statement of Aquinas is logical and justifiable, as it come outs from the complex arguments that are considered more than Augustine and Aristotle.¹⁵

Paul J. Weithman ¹⁶argue that the central difference between the two thinkers lies in the dissimilar values each assigns to citizens attachment to the common good. Thus, the Thomist holds that it is through our moral development that we are able to apply the first principle.

Another thinker Hans Kelsen elaborate the view of utilitarian's in his theory of justice that, according to them, the goal of each person is chiefly the elevations of agents own happiness. Macintyre holds that: All utilitarian doctrine which prescribe that everyone is to count for one, that everyone desires are to be weighed equally in calculating utility and, what it, right, from Bentham to contemporary utilitarian's and egalitarians, are deeply incompatible with Aristotle's standpoint. For what those deprived of the justice of the polis want cannot provide any measure for justice".¹⁷ Kelsen believed that law can be separated from what is just or morally right. A law is still a law and should be obeyed even if it is completely immoral. He concludes rightly that it is impossible to define justice scientifically and if reasonably any concept of justice emerges than it will be establish on emotive premises. He holds that justice is irrational ideal that highlight the preferences and values of individuals.

4. Modern Era and Criticism

In modern perspectives the philosophy is not moral but it is technical. John Rawls (1921- 2002) who was also a communitarian was opposed to the concept of utilitarian's and argued that the utilitarian's reserve freedom and political rights and the freedom of everyone, they maintain that by doing so they are helping to promote society. He gives two principles of justice to form a better society: The "First Principle" maintains that society should guarantee every individual of a city equal fundamental rights and freedom to achieve these rights, towards which all individual can approach equally. ¹⁸ It is also called the principle of liberty. And the other is called different principle in which the fair distribution which deals with the organizations, opportunities, income and possessions introduced. Rawls' description of distributive justice in his defense of libertarianism, is criticized by Nozick. According to Nozick the means are created by people and they have full right upon things which they produce. Thus, the distribution of the least advantaged will be unjust because it is often seen that people do not work willingly for others, for the reason that they do not want share equally those things which they produce with a great struggle. ¹⁹

Michael Sandel criticized Rawls and argued that Rawls supports people to sense about justice while separated from the values and targets that define who they are as persons and that permit people to find out what justice is.²⁰ Amartya Sen raised objection by arguing that we should focus not only to the distribution of possessions, but also how well the individuals are capable of utilize those possessions to achieve their goals.²¹ Against Rawls, Cohen argued that any unequal distribution of possessions is unjustified. He was in opposition to Rawls and holds that the rich are already gifted with talent, advantaged childhood, and objective. So Cohen said that if we will gratify them more with material possessions then it means we are gratifying them twice, which will not be just ²².

4.1. Hume and Hutcheson

In Stephen Darwall views, Hutcheson holds that a person makes efforts to achieve a goal and to achieve the goal which an action requires is practical truth. He argued that rational beings are those that have concern for the good of others and their own good.²³

According to Richard, Hutcheson was religious in his beliefs and holds that it is through human reason and understanding that we could apprehend the world's reality in which we live, and can judge the condition of institutions. He said that reason urges us to find out that what is the purpose and mission of God to create human beings and other creature on earth. Thus he believed that man has an intuitive moral sense which is his hidden potentiality.²⁴

About "reason" Hume argued that it is a faculty through which we discover the truths of the world. In Hume's perspective reason is not practical.²⁵ Millgram argued that, as Hume maintains that reason is not practical but his account has a "null hypothesis" that rational and irrational actions cannot exist. Elijah Millgram, Christine Korsgaard and Jean Hampton, argued that Hume is merely a denial of a practical rationality but it does not mean that he is an anti-rationalist²⁶. Hume's account, as MacIntyre holds, require a very diverse kind of context, that the goal of a society is based on the fulfillments of desires, in which reciprocal are organized for their interactions.²⁷

According to MacIntyre, Reid criticize David Hume that the use of rationality whether it will be practical or theoretical requires no any specific kind of social order. We are spending our lives in the world in which the matter of practical rationality is personified in those social contexts that are continuously under the conflicts and disagreements²⁸.

JOSEPH GRCIC (1865-1943) said that, according to Hobbes justice means acting upon the contract and injustice is any violation of the contract that is done through the ruler. Hobbes maintains that some political philosophers for example Aristotle put forward that the ruler cannot be divided into dissimilar authorities. For Hobbes, a separation is impossible between legislative judiciary and executive power because to resolve the clash between them requires a supreme authority which will be the authority of a ruler. Hobbes' concept of the contract maintains that this contract generate lawful and moral obligations. He said that no contract exists among a ruler and the individuals, and to the supreme ruler there are no moral and legal boundaries. He maintains that a ruler has the power to take the possessions of people, to tax, to makes law, to the appointment of judges, give reward or punish and make war and peace and anything he wants in his state, while on the other hand people have no rights expect the right of self preservation. The liberty of self preservation is the liberty that people are in opposition to the ruler. People will protest for another ruler if the existing ruler will not protect them and make injustice to the people.²⁹

Paul Weirich (1946) argues that, the evaluation of a rationality of an act depends upon the circumstances and abilities of an individual. Its demands adjust to them. When the circumstances are not in favor of him, it decreases its demands. For example, when the time for a decision is short, it may close the eyes to top options. Rationality is bounded, in common language. And it is attainable in its specific term. Some options are rational in facing the problem of every decision. An option that is rational will be sustained by good reason than any other option. But some options are not equally rational and equally sustained by reason. At least one option is rational, because

rationality is attainable and be suitable for all appropriate doctrines of rationality. In an ideal decision, the rule to maximize utility applies while on the other hand the principle of satisfying may apply in a non ideal problem. Some options make best use of utility and therefore are rational but some options are satisfactory and as a result are rational yet if that are unsuccessful to make best use of utility. Such as, a chess player may rationally make a satisfactory but non-optimal move, having unsatisfactory strategic reasoning command. An individual who is rational follow the goals of rationality in a reasonable way even if their achievement becomes difficult through the obstacles. Thus, in pursuing the primary goal of successful action, rationality helps a lot and put forward the best ways.³⁰

Immanuel Kant who was a German idealist holds that all individuals have rights and they can act freely what they want, and according to the universal law everyone has freedom. But it does not mean that we should hurt others or destroy the rights of others. In this way the Kant's universal law of justice emerged that is called the categorical imperative: in which he assume that an action will be just if in which the freedom of an individual coexist jointly with the freedom of the other according to those law that is universal.

According to Chloe Doss & Kara Delemeester, Kant follows the libertarian's view of justice that if the distribution comes from the free exchange of goods then the distribution of possessions will be just. Kant denies the concept of Utilitarianism. He maintains that the aim of a just organization is harmonize every person's freedom with others.³¹

Alasdair Macintyre is a major critic of the Enlightenment and modernity, particularly as it appears in Kant's philosophy. He presents that Kant holds a negative view about the relation between practical rationality and human interests and attachments. In his view, human beings should adopt a neutral stance in identifying moral duties, using pure practical rationality.

Macintyre, on the contrary, holds that there is no practical reasoning capacity for human beings independent of his training and upbringing in moral traditions. Human beings should acquire moral virtues by following moral exemplars before being able to reason about them.

5. Macintyre's Conception about Justice and Rationality

For moderns, all our thoughts are not based on traditions and that every culture has their own criteria's of justice and rationality. They hold that there is no place for traditions that is essential for moral and political investigations. Thus, Macintyre argued that these traditions off course different from each other over much more than their contending accounts of justice and practical rationality: they differ in their catalogues of virtues, in their conceptions of selfhood, and in their metaphysical cosmologies.³²

For Macintyre, we can make no any argument or no any enquiry that is possible without a specific type of tradition. That is called "the rationality of traditions" by Macintyre³³. He distinguishes two related challenges to his position, one is the "relativist challenge" and other is the "perspectivist challenge." According to him, relativism is the concept that in a specific tradition rationality and ethics will be valid and it will not be devaluated outside that tradition. Since every tradition is superior as others. In contrary, perspectivism is the view that rationality and ethics of a specific

tradition will be valid only in the perspective of a given tradition. These two perspectives holds that, in any tradition of thought validity and truth is impossible. Both perspectives hold that the criteria's of rationality are available in traditions and they agree on this point that nothing can be considered right or wrong without any traditional concern.

Professor Macintyre arguing that: "No tradition can claim rational superiority to any other. For each tradition has internal to itself its own view of what rational superiority consists in, regarding such topics as practical rationality and justice, and the adherents of each will judge accordingly".³⁴ Thus there is no single concept of rationality but rationalities and no single concept of justice but justices³⁵. According to Macintyre no any idea or ideas of practical rationality and justice that is outside any other tradition, in which our moderns are confused³⁶. He holds that the ethical concepts are unchangeable and absolute and that are linked with practical rationality. Hence the world in which we are moving is continuously in conflict with the circumstances in which practical rationality and justice are exemplified.

6. Conclusion

Macintyre presents four traditions regarding justice and rationality. After the analysis of different traditions it is concluded that the Thomists tradition is quite well than others. Aristotelian tradition treats equals equally, unequals unequally which is not a good deal because it is often seen that the individuals who do not make just acts can achieve more than those who perform just acts. In this way a great gap occur among people and society because the concept of hard work will not sustain too long if people achieve what they want effortlessly. The views of Mill, Rawls and Kant are not satisfactory. Rawls focus on the equality on the whole level which is an unjust act because in this way the people who are poor just satisfy their basic needs and the richer become richer if they are granted twice. So, there is a big difference occurs among society and their members if we accept his view. According to utilitarian's the concept of justice is to promote happiness at maximum level. But it is concluded that in this way we can exclude the minorities of the society that will be unjust and irrational. As they focus on the welfare of the individuals rather than society it is not just. Kant accepts the person's freedom in his rational judgments. His view is liberal. But sometime this freedom leads us towards wrong decisions though which we intentionally or unintentionally hurt others and make decisions that are not helpful to us in future. In Humean tradition as it is seen earlier that they do not accept rationality. Hume adopts from Hutcheson the view that we are under our passions control. Thus, it is concluded that where there is no rationality there is no justice because through passions we cannot make valid or true judgments.

If we see the Thomist tradition that holds that our good reasoning is not possible without moral virtues (prudence, courage, justice, temperance). When these will be in harmony we can reason well and we can judge well and if they will be in contradiction then we can neither reason well nor judge well. Thus, it is concluded that we should follow the Thomist tradition to construct a good society and promote justice in the society and these virtues helps us in maintain that what we ought to do or not to do.

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*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: anilayasmin4@ gmail.com