

Traditional and Contemporary Perspectives

The perspective of political theory can be divided into various categories, which

have been discussed here.

Orthodox Perspective

Orthodox political theory has positive explicit uniqueness. First, it was dominated by

philosophy. Great philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle were notable because of

the comprehensiveness and scope of their thought. The digressions of political theory

included description, explanation, prescription and evaluation. Second, there was no

clear distinction between philosophical, theological and political issues.

Political theory

was not an autonomous subject as it is today. Third, political theory was concerned

with probing into issues, asking important questions and serving as a sort of

conscience keeper of politics. Fourth, classical tradition believed that political theory

dealt with the political whole—the theory must be all-comprehensive and all-inclusive.

Liberal (Broad-minded) Perspective

The long spell of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Cicero and other thinkers of the classical

age was broken in a variety of ways after the twin revolutions of Renaissance and

Reformation in Europe since the fifteenth century, coupled with the Industrial

Revolution later on. The Renaissance produced a new intellectual climate which

gave birth to modern science and modern philosophy and a new political theory

known as liberalism. This new political theory found classical expression in the writings of Grotius, Hobbes, Locke, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Jeremy Bentham, J. S. Mill, Herbert Spencer and a host of other writers. While classical political theory considered the moral development of individual and the evolution of the community as co-terminus, the liberal political theory developed the concept of sovereign individual. The central theme of this political theory was individualism. The liberal theory declared that state is not a natural institution but comes into existence by mutual consent for the sole purpose of preserving and protecting the individual rights. The new liberal political theory dismissed the idea of common good and an organic community.