MEANINGSAND DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF COMPROMISE: A POLITICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE

AMIT MONDAL

The word compromise means a reciprocal promise to solve a dispute by the decision of an impartial third party. The meaning of compromise has developed with its different forms across the ages—from the classical meaning of compromise to its modern understanding. Philosophers such as Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, John Morley, and AvishaiMargalit have often discussed and commented on the idea of compromise and the ethics of compromise in their political and philosophical discourse. Meaning of compromise has developed in the different periods primarily on the basis of its different usages: as a tool, a virtue, and a principle.

This paper attempts to demonstrate the different meanings of compromise and its connection with contractarianism and representation. Keeping in mind the differences in the meanings of compromise across the ages and the differences in representation I have tried to explain compromise in a comprehensive way. It is so because the political and philosophical history of compromise shows differences as well as similarities regarding the meaning and understanding of the word, especially while looking into the ethical aspects of it. The paper also focuses on how the classical sense of 'compromise' had undergone a sudden change from the early decades of the sixteenth century, and how the change persisted till the late eighteenth century in European political and philosophical discourse.

I

Compromise is a word of Roman origin, meaning a reciprocal promise to solve a dispute by the decision of an impartial third party, *compromissarius*.[1] The meaning of the word *compromissarius* was understood to be an arbitrator who mediated between the parties or communities involved in a dispute. The *compromissarius* was always superior to or above the parties involved in dispute. In the classical understanding of the concept the *compromissarius* was not the compromiser. A *compromissarius* just arbitrated a compromise; neither did it compromise, nor was it a part of a compromise. Compromise was indeed exclusively a verbal contract meant for avoiding the formalized legal system of court justice during that time, if there was any dispute between different parties. It was one of the reasons for which it acquired a popular meaning during the medieval period.

In the early Middle Ages, a *compromissarius* was chosen by the people, and he played the role of a representative of the parties involved in the disputes, especially in the selection of members of the church authority through an electoral method. Religion and legislation were indeed the two main subjects with which the idea of compromise was mainly associated during the Medieval Ages. Much of the existing literature of the Middle Ages discusses about the concept of compromise primarily in its association with Church and Legislative system.

Interestingly, during the early Middle Ages the word 'compromise' was still not available, but there was the practice of the concept. In this respect, the third party, that is, the *compromissarius* or an arbitrator would play a major role in resolving the dispute of the parties involved. And on that matter, the interests and opinions of the parties were not considered worthy in resolving the dispute. The fact was that the solution to any problem or any sort of conflict had to be resolved only by the *compromissarius*, resulting in the full acceptance and agreement of the parties concerned. The arbitrator was trusted to be 'in between' or 'above' the interest of the parties. However, in the late Latin the word c*ompromissum* was available which meant a joint promise made by two or more persons in the presence of an arbitrator.Itwas also used in the sense of consent to arbitration.

Here, I would address two questions: First, why would a medieval man wholeheartedly accept the decision of the arbitrator when there was a chance of his own conscience getting hurt? And the second, why was the medieval man not afraid to compromise? To understand this I will focus on the now forgotten dialectic between *forum internum* and *forum externum.*[2] In an article entitled "Lost in Translation: Centripetal Individualism and the Classical Concept of Descending Representation," Alin Fumurescu argues that *forum internum* was a subject to conscience, authenticity and freedom of an individual, and it was a subject to nobody else. In this forum one could be punished by no one except God. On the other hand, *forum externum* was a forum in which an individual could identify himself and was identified through his belonging to a particular group or community (156-176)). So, these two forums were very important in the matter of representation of an individual in society. If we take the matter of representation of a medieval man into consideration, it can be argued that a medieval man would reveal himself only as a member of a group or community, and the kind of identity he had would always depend on the identity of the group or the community he belonged to. It goes without saying that the medieval man was never ready to compromise his *forum internum*, at any cost. He indeed did not need to compromise his *forum internum*. It was so because in his *forum internum* he was unique and an individual self, whereas in *forum externum* he shared a membership with the other members of the community which he belonged to. Therefore, he was a private, and at the same time public person in *forum externum*. This is how the medieval man seems to maintain a balance between the two 'forums' that definitely point towards the compromise issue. In case there was a situation in which no other option was available, the medieval

man would compromise, and that compromise would involve only his *forum externum*. As a matter of fact, his *forum internum* was not threaten or violated under any circumstances. The medieval man, thus, was not afraid to compromise. For him compromise was nothing more than just a tool among others.

It is difficult to find an appropriate word for compromise. In the Middle Ages it was basically understood in the sense of 'bargain', 'contract', 'accommodation' and also 'consensus'. These are a few of the accepted meanings of compromise. In the most recently updated online *Middle English Dictionary*, four forms of the word are mentioned: *compromis* (noun), *compromisen* (verb), *compromission* (noun) and *compromitten* (verb).[3] It is very important to note that all of these forms bear a sense of mutual agreement, co-promise, or arbitration. All these forms of compromise had been represented and used as a means of avoiding hassle in the court justice, so far as the dispute between the parties was concerned. It was not only meant for resolving disputes, adhering to different parties or public affairs by delegating men's power to the *compromissarius*, but also was exclusively meant for world affairs such as political tussle, foreign policies, and in few cases disputes between rival countries.

II

Prior to the sixteenth century, there was the usage of a French word *compromis*, denoting a subjective and mutual understanding for the resolution of disputes. Fumurescu claims in his book, *Compromise: A Political and Philosophical History* that since early fifteenth century the classical meaning of compromise was also in practice in France during the Middle Ages; the first mention of *compromis* was found in a poem of Christine de Pizan (1364 – c. 1430) in which Pizan said "*Et dessusvousensontencompromis/Les parties d'un debate playdoye*" ("And above you there are in compromise/The self-pleading parties of a debate").[4] Pizan mentioned the word *compromise* mainly in a political context in order to celebrate the wisdom of an arbitrator. Like all other authors of that period, Pizan believed that politics was something that was interrelated to philosophy; it could not be separated from the philosophical wisdom. However, from the sixteenth century onwards, many other French philosophers and writers have shown their concern about the idea of compromise. Pierre Charron and Michael de Montaigne, for examples, are very important figures who were concerned about the French usage of the word, although they were afraid to compromise their conscience. This concern was also shared by many French

writers of later generations such as Rene Descartes, Pierre Corneille and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. To each of them compromise was a dangerous word to practice in life.However, since the early decades of the sixteenth century compromise as arbitration persisted as a very significant concept across the continental Europe.

The discrepancy in meaning of compromise was found after the sixteenth century both in England and France, and it went all the way through the end of the eighteenth century. Discrepancy was noticeable in the usages and understanding of compromise. Since then, there was another thing to be noticed and that was the change in the role of the impartial arbitrator in a dispute. Unlike the arbitrator who had a direct participation in the medieval ages, there was found no such active participation of the arbitrator in the post-medieval ages. It was so because instead of depending on the arbitrator people established a mutual understanding or agreed upon mutual contract among themselves in order to resolve their disputes. However, it should not be forgotten that not only England and France, I assume, the understanding of compromise might also be pertinent in Germany, Italy, and some other European countries through the ages.

From the sixteenth century onwards, there was a tendency among Frenchmen to become more crucial about the idea of compromise. The idea was that compromise should not be done under any circumstances in the French context because it was considered a bad thing. This French understanding can best be understood in Chiara Lepora's analysis of the idea of compromise. In an essay "On Compromise and Being Compromised" Lepora talks about the negative connotations of compromise and argues that by choosing compromise one cannot avoid the feeling of being morally compromised because it affects one's identity and authenticity. Even in case of intellectual productivity, compromise with anything or anyone could be unethical for one's dignity and identity.In other words, I would say that the only ethical aspect for Frenchman was not to compromise with his dignity, identity or patriotic emotions. Most importantly, there are two conditions that demonstrate when and why one should not compromise or not turn to 'being compromised'. Firstly, if the opposite party or person is not equal for that matter, there should be no question of compromise. It is so because compromising with their inferior oppositions was a matter of self-humiliation to Frenchmen. And secondly, if there was any doubt that compromise might be hurting one's honour and virtues. The reason was that the Frenchman believed that compromise with one's honour and virtue was absolutely against the

dimensions and codes of ethics and morality. The idea was clear that Frenchmen held a subjective concern about the idea of compromise during that period. Self-identification was a matter of priority, to be sure. Indeed, French understanding of compromise bears a resemblance with that of the Medieval Ages, so far as the matter of representation of an individual, by protecting his 'self,' was concerned. French authors suchas Alain-Rene Lesage, Pierre de Marivaux, Antoine Francois Prevost and Rousseau had used the word with negative connotations. Rousseau's novel *Julie* (1761), for example, mentions the usage of the word compromise many times with negative connotations. Meanwhile, its British counterpart was very much positive about the idea of compromise. Like British politicians, sociologists, philosophers, and anthropologists, British authors also embraced it as a virtue. The first British and French dictionaries from the seventeenth century confirm this discrepancy.[5] Apart from dictionaries, there are many online sources available on internet that demonstrate an astonishing consistency in the practice of compromise as a virtue in Britain, and as a vice in its French counterpart, even if there has been a continuous process of homogenization between England and France in terms of culture, language, intellectual productions, and so on. Even today, such discrepancies are discernible.

To illustrate the English context of compromise, I find that England has a distinct development in contrast to France, so far as the matter of individual representation was concerned. It is henceforth important to note why England has a distinct development. The fact is that England is distinctive because of the peculiarities in its law, spirit, culture, history and intellectual competition against continental Europe. Unlike the rise of administrative centralisation and political absolutism in France in the second half of sixteenth century, Englishmen were introducing a new intellectual as well as political system in their own country with the purpose of deviating England from the European influence; this continued till the end of the eighteenth century. A common law was established in England in opposition to the Roman law, while most of the European countries were still under the influence of Roman and canon law. The purpose of establishing the common law was to primarily make a connection among all Englishmen in order to respond to the needs of each other. As a result of it, an important English distinction can be found in the feudal system of eighteenth-century France as well as England. During that time the French monarchy system represented a very strong side in the world in terms of the imposition of its law and regulations. It was so because an absence of alliances was found between

French barons, courtiers and common men. Barons and courtiers were the only people in the French monarchy system who were the decision makers regarding all matters, either domestic or foreign. As a matter of fact, they enjoyed absolute freedom, whereas common men were deprived of it. Indeed, there was no chance for the common people to make alliances with these feudal lords. The freedom enjoyed by those barons and courtiers prevented that alliances, so to say. While common Frenchmen were disconnected from the monarchical system, on the contrary in England common people had enjoyed their freedom that connected them with the English administrative system. Unlike French, English common men could take part in the selection process of their representatives, and admitted them to the parliament as representatives of the whole nation. In this respect, Jean Louis DeLolme's observation about the relationship among common men, representatives, and royal power is noteworthy. In *The Constitution of England; or An Account of the English Government*, DeLolme observes that with the implementation of the common law "The lord, the vassal, the inferior vassal, all united. They even implored the assistance of the peasants and cottagers"; and "The people…. instructed by the examples of their leaders…insisted that, for the future, every individual should be entitled to the protection of law, and thus did those rights with which the lords had strengthened themselves, in order to oppose the tyranny of the crown, become a bulwark which was, in time, to restrain their own" (32-33). It was an important observation about the functions of Englishmen in the proceedings of common law, and this way they indirectly represented themselves in the law and order. They started representing themselves exclusively in terms of the wills and the office. It is a peculiar sort of representation on the part of English men. But it should also be clear that while delegating their rights to the hands of a group or person, individuals paved the way to indirectly creating arbitrators. Here, the representatives chosen by the Englishmen function as arbitrators, even if there was the consent of the individuals.

In contradiction to the classical understanding of the role of arbitrator, I argue that there was no arbitrator directly present in a dispute under the common law; rather those chosen representatives functioned as the 'artificial' arbitrator in the dispute. Despite the absence of the arbitrator, it can also be argued that there was a sense of equality among the individuals across the country; Englishmen were also very aware of their functions in society. In addition, the sense of equality was offered in the proceedings of the common law. Under the common law a man's decision or opinion was granted by the agreement of others, during

that time. However, in such democratic sort of system the English common law triumphed over the Roman canon law, and thus England emerged as a distinct nation in the continental Europe. As a result of it, there was an increase in the role of the parliament. It was the common law that represented all Englishmen in terms of equality, so far as the question of the individual representation was concerned. Fumurescu addresses this kind of individualism as 'centrifugal individualism'. Undoubtedly, this peculiar form of individualism was directly connected with the idea of compromise. In England, from sixteenth to eighteenth century, this form of individualism developed the idea of the commonwealth that would most importantly require the consents of the parties involved. If there was any dispute, the requirement of equal status of the parties was very essential to arbitrate a compromise. Needless to say, under such common law every man is considered equal to every other man.

III

If one wants to know about the English version of compromise popular in the seventeenth century, one cannot avoid considering, even if briefly, theories of social contract as proposed by Hobbes and Locke. It was so because since the seventeenth century and all the way up to the eighteenth century compromise was considered a social contract in England, so to say. Hobbes and Locke were the two most important authors of the seventeenth century who have been more discussed, commented on and criticised than any authors during that time. The impact of these two authors was such that even many key literary texts of the writers of the later generations have often been read and reviewed in their philosophical frameworks, such as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Fielding' *Tom Jones*, and so on.

Of the seventeenth-century philosophers Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) was one of the predecessors and founders of modern political philosophy who had immense contribution to the development of the idea of compromise. In Hobbes's theory of social contract, as discussed in *Leviathan* (1651), the sovereign power of king functions as a mediator which is over all present as an arbitrator to resolve conflicts between two individuals, although the king is not physically present as an arbitrator as we find in the classical understanding of it. In Hobbes's theory, conflict which is an integral part of compromise can be traced on his explanation of the equal state of human nature. If Hobbes's theory of social contract is compared and contrasted with the classical meaning of compromise, then in both

the cases there is a presence of the *compromissarius* or arbitrator, balancing the dispute between the opposite parties. Alongside, the difference lies in the idea that in Hobbes's interpretation the arbitrator is not the third party directly present there in contrast to the classical one. It is more important to note that in social contract theory the dispute is between men, whereas in the classical understanding of compromise the dispute is between different parties. So far as the English sense of compromise is concerned, Hobbes is truly an English man for his approach towards the theory of social contract. Now, the question is: Can we consider the term 'contract' as an appropriate term for compromise? By the end of the seventeenth century English men already understood the term 'contract' as a generalised compromise. Hobbes's contemporary Gilbert Burnet, for example, had also shown a positive outlook on contract as compromise. While talking about the importance of compromise Burnetsays:

The true and original notion of civil society and government, is, that is a compromise made by such a body of men, by which they resign up the right of demanding reparations, either in the way of justice against one another, or in the way of war, against their neighbours; to such a single person, or to such a body of men as they think fit to trust with it. (qtd. inFumurescu 265)

It was not only about civil society; even family relationships also came to be dominated by 'contractarianism', during that time. William Fleetwood's account on the family relations, for instance, envisages that the relations between husband and wives, parents and children or masters and servants came to be accepted on the basis of contract. Contract was indeed the basis of all kinds of relations. Fleetwood writes that "there is no Relation in the World, either Natural, or Civil and agreed upon, but there is a reciprocal duty obliging each party" (*The Relative* 68). Even, before Fleetwood, John Locke had laid down the absolute proposition that "conjugal society is made by a voluntary compact between man and woman" (*Two treatises* 319); and indeed Locke's proposition was very true to his contemporary English society.

In Hobbes's analysis the state of nature is the root of compromise, while his follower John Locke also finds the root of compromise in human state of nature. But Locke believes that human beings are peaceful by nature, not like Hobbes's state of war. And in order to maintain peace they keep a positive outlook towards compromise. Contradictory to Hobbes's sovereign-governed society, Locke was the author who talked about civil society. Therefore, we

should turn to Locke to further understand the idea of compromise. Like Hobbes, Locke also begins his book *Two Treatises of Government* with the consideration of the state of nature. Locke too believes that every man is free and equal to every other man by the state of nature (by the state of nature he means the state of human beings prior to the establishment of civil society or political community or earthly sovereign). Unlike Hobbes's state of war, Locke considers the state of natureas a state of "Peace, goodwill, mutual assistance, and self-preservation" (280) where people are governed by the "law of nature." He says that "all men are naturally in that state, and remain so, till by their own consents they make themselves members of some politic society" (278). Although Locke is more optimistic than Hobbes, his consideration of the state of nature cannot avoid the question of conflicts because it is conflicts that ultimately lead people towards compromise. In spite of having a state of peace, goodwill and mutual assistance, the situation turns conflictual here also. And it happens in the absence of a judge or a law enforcer, as everyone is equal to other. As a matter of fact, everyone becomes his own judge, and everyone his own law enforcer. Locke's view on the state of nature therefore becomes problematic, so far as the question of self-preservation and the preservation of individual's property is concerned. It is therefore important to note that what is agreement or compromise in Hobbes's social contract theory is consent in Locke's understanding. Needless to say, during Locke's time people understood'consent' by associating it with the idea of compromise. Interestingly, in Hobbes's consideration there is always a possibility of coercion in achieving consent; the reason is that the absolute power is enjoyed by the sovereign who can do whatever he wants to do. For Locke, however, the initial consent must be unanimous without the possibility of coercion. For example, a man can always renounce his consent by migrating to other country. He can also withdraw his consent going into the wilderness to live in the state of nature. But in order to live in civil society one must be a member of that society. Otherwise, it is very difficult for a man to live in the state of nature being absolutely separated from others. This can be more exemplified with Edmund Burke's assertion that "…indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue and every prudent act—is founded on compromise and barter. We balance inconveniences; we give and take; we remit some rights that we may enjoy others; and we choose rather to be happy citizens than subtle disputants" (qtd. in O'Gorman78). By 'barter' Burke probably means the policy of giving and taking. It was Burke's reaction to the imperial problem of America. Although this assertion was made on March 22, 1775 in a political context in order bring peace,

specifically in the context of England's conciliation with America, it concerns the issue of compromise less as a matter of politics and more as a matter of personal strategy. Personal strategy obviously points towards giving one's individual wills to the contract and taking benefits out of it. Hence, it can be said that the implication of the idea of compromise is directly connected with Locke's social contact theory. Like Locke, Burke was also a philosopher and defender of compromise of the eighteenth century.

However, Locke's argument had been very influential among people who had ceased to believe in the state of nature. Locke plausibly presents the state of nature and its importance to maintain a contractual relation among people in society. This is obvious that English people always want to represent themselves as the members of a group or a community. Therefore, the question of contract becomes very significant, since living in contract indirectly means living in community on the whole. In Locke's civil society everything is contractual; every action by the government is performed on consent. But the principle way in which Locke's civil society differs from Hobbes's sovereign is thatthe governors in civil society are themselves parties to the initial contract,unlike Hobbes's sovereign. They hold power on trust and consent of the people. If they fail to enforce the law of nature or violate natural rights people can overthrow them from the power.

Although theories of Hobbes and Locke present different perspectives, similarities can also be noticeable. They both believed in the contracts of individual wills in order to create any form of government, be it monarchy or civil society. To talk about the role of arbitrator, Locke's social contract theory presents an arbitrator not as an individual directly present in dispute. In Locke's analysis the power given to the government by people is indeed present overall as arbitrator. Locke is very much expressive and optimistic about the fact that the establishment of human society has always been based on compromise, since compromise is taken to be the other form of contract or consent. On the other hand, the sovereign power functions as an arbitrator that is indirectly present in the disputes in society.Hobbes's explanation to contractarianism is, therefore,very influential because this moved the people of his contemporary period towards compromise.This must be one of many other reasons for the acceptance and development of the idea in English society in a welcoming manner.

Therefore, I find no reason to deny the fact that it was English people who for the first time could enjoy individual rights and had the sense of liberty. An English

man had always shown his willingness for protecting his individual self by representing himself as a member of a community in the late Medieval Age, and later this medieval representation of man was changed into the different forms of contractarianism. In other words, here I will argue, English people have always managed to keep the positive aspect about the usages of compromise. So, there is truth in the fact that from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century compromise has always been considered a virtue in England.

IV

By the nineteenth century John Morley observed that compromise was raised from a method to the status of a principle. Yet, one should not confuse method with principle. Method is generally a procedure of getting one thing into other, and it does not concern what is being gotten into what. In other words, it can be said that method is a neutral position towards different ideologies, and it is eminently practical. To give an example,it dates back to the Medieval period when compromise represented a method; the medieval man basically used it for practical solutions. Morley thinks that method cannot be exclusive and final. While defining principle Carrie Menkel-Meadow in her essay "Ethics of Compromise" argues that "Principles are philosophically more "higher" and valued than pragmatic decisions to forego something of value in order to agree to accomplish something else" (2). In context of compromise Meadow also argues that "compromise as a concept assumes that one is "conceding" something to someone else, usually in order to achieve some goal—any agreement (e.g., contract, treaty, legislation, policy, or decision of more than one person) or simply to end a conflict or dispute…" (2). What Meadow wants to point out is very simple. According to Meadow, compromise is possible when one gives up one's principles to some extent in order to end conflicts or bring peace. In addition, Martin Benjamin has also shown a similar interest in the connection between compromise and principle. In *Splitting the Difference* Benjamin argues that compromise means "giving up" of pure principles and commitment to rights and truth.

However, the primary requirement of the ethics of compromise is the consideration of when it is good and ethical to compromise, and when it might be wrong or unethical to compromise. For this, I will give two instances that will clarify these two opposite aspects of compromise. Firstly, Machiavelli in his best known book *The Prince* (1532) has suggested that great leaders are always

required to compromise their own principles to govern many because compromising their own principles make them great leaders, even if their own principles might be different from other's. Truly, Machiavelli had positive approach towards compromise. His suggestion on compromise therefore becomes more significant in modern understanding of the idea, although it does not necessarily concern modern men to be great leaders, so to say. Machiavellian compromise therefore suggests that if a man gives away his principles to compromiseto some extent,his act might be considered ethical. This is how the great leaders become great, says Machiavelli. And secondly, I refer to Sir Thomas More who did stick to his own principles in the matter of compromise. He did not compromise with his own principles, and instead herefused to swear an oath to Henry VIII and the church of England, even though he was forced to swear. In More's view giving away his principles would not be a proper way. If I consider a modern man by putting him in both these contexts, then the man seems to be following the Machiavellian suggestion of compromising his own principles. Yet, with reference to the second example I argue that in the modern sensecompromise is not a compromise which is done by force, coerce or illegitimate way. It is so because compromise is a very personal matter in the modern context; it involves a person's own emotion and reason. No external influences can hurt one's own principles. Besides these ethical aspects of compromise,Benjamin, Meadow and many other critics have talked about the unethical aspects of compromise as well. They agree with the idea that if a compromise involves personal interests of the compromiser, or if it meets the needs of people, then this compromise is obviously immoral, unethical and wrong. AvishaiMargalit hasrightly concentrated on these two aspects of compromise and has tried to give a sort of theoretical explanation to the idea that makes modern compromise more comprehending.

Margalit, a renowned professor emeritus of philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has explained the idea of compromise in his well-known book, *On Compromise and Rotten Compromises*. He defines compromise as an ambivalent term because it has two implications—positive and negative. He says that "It is regarded on some occasions as an expression of goodwill, and on other occasions as being wishy-washy" (6). As 'compromise' is considered an ambivalent term it is both good and bad. To exemplify the positive aspect first, if we consider that in a war one party makes certain compromises and that lead to peace or a poor man refuses the offer of a good amount of money for killing a rich man. Secondly, the negative aspect of compromise implies immoral and unethical actions. For

instance, if both the parties in war stick to their own ideologies without bothering about values of human lives or the poor man kills the rich person against his own wills, even if he knows that money can reduce his poverty. But this sort of compromises with one's wills or the wills of a group turn to be unethical, to be sure. However, Margalit has divided compromise into two different categories: 'compromise' and 'rotten compromises'. By 'compromise' he means an agreement between two forces or individuals, and it always has a positive notion signalling something better for a larger community that is good for man. The 'rotten compromises', in contrast to the previous one, favour cruelty and humiliation. Rotten compromises, according to Margalit, must be avoided under any circumstances. He further claims that in most of the cases what we have today in human society is the outcome of our compromises, in terms of cultures, politics, religions, languages, habits, social customs and so on. As a matter of fact, man's identity in regard to all these terms can be traced on the compromises reached under different circumstances. Margalit finds evidence of it in his study of the religious and political affairs of the world. In the book *Compromise* he says:

> After all we very rarely attain what is first on our list of priorities, either as individuals or as collectives. We are forced by circumstances to settle for much less than what we aspire too. We compromise. We should, I believe, be judged by our compromises more than our ideals and our norms. Ideals may tell us something important about what we would like to be. But compromises tell us who we are. (5)

Although Margalit has talked about compromise from the aspects of politics and religion, it has been very significant through every aspect of life. Like other English philosophers and writers, he is also very much positive about compromise. His assumptions on human wills for compromise are plausible, so to say. He assumes that we do compromises mainly in two types of situations: 1. if there is a socio-political concern, and 2. if it is a question of survival. In the second situation, we are ready to compromise even with the worst or unacceptable by denying any sort of religious or social norms. Hence, it raises the question whether compromise is a luxury or a necessity that remains unexplained by Margalit. But if we give a closer look into this matter, we find that compromises differ from one person to another in accordance with the situations, depending on a person's abilities and capabilities of handling the concerned situations, even if it is the case of survival. So, from his observations it can be argued that the

assessments of the ethics of compromise are variable, contextual, and situational. It is therefore important to understand the matter of representation of modern man on the basis of compromise.

Obviously, the modern sense of compromise presents a deviation from the already established meaning of it that remained dominant from the sixteenth to the eighteenth-century in England. One may find the deviation in the relationship between the representatives and individuals. I have discussed earlier that the representatives of people have always functioned as the *compromissarius* in disputes, and in any sort of compromise individuals have depended on the decisions of their representatives, either directly or indirectly. Undoubtedly, individuals were the compromisers who were subject to the decisions of the *compromissarius* in dispute. But the change that we find in modern period is that here individuals are not basically found as the compromisers, rather they themselves seem to play the roles of the *compromissarius*. It is so because the unity and strength of being in a group or in a particular party is hardly found in modern times. Instead, one can feel a social, political as well as cultural distance among individuals. The modern man indeed seems to be engaged in resolving his own personal conflicts and disputes by himself. Just like a *compromissarius*he has to choose between what to do and what not to do, between what to think and what not to think. I argue that modern compromise is a kind of mixture of two elements or two different choices, and this mixture gives a new definition to compromise. But this sense of compromise as a mixture of two different sides is not very new, because this is somehow connected with the ancient meaning of the concept. Henceforth, in order to understand the modern understanding of compromise we need to focus on its ancient meaning, specifically Aristotle's idea of *mesotes*. The *mesotes* was a Greek term, and it was generally used to mean 'middle' in ancient philosophy. It was indeed the central concept in Aristotle's ethical and political theory. Aristotle used the term in the sense of 'mean.' It mainly refers to a position of virtue between two vices—one can be of excess and other of deficiency. Many scholars agree that *mesotes* was understood as a compromise in the ancient philosophy. In an essay "Justice, Compromise and Constitutional Rules in Aristotle's Politics" David Resnick has interpreted Aristotle's *mesotes* as a compromise. Resnick argues that "A compromise for Aristotle is a mixture, a resultant that combines elements from each particular to yield a new compound having elements of both" (75). By calling compromise a mixture, Resnick argues, Aristotle does not mean that compromise can be reached by balancing the two

extreme positions to meet halfway in quantitative fashion, but it is a middle position, different from the nature of the two extreme positions. For example, in our society there are three sections of people—rich, poor and middle class; people are rich and poor for some certain conditions, but middle class is a position that is devoid of the arrogance of the rich and the servility and mean-spiritedness of the poor (76).So, it can be argued that in Aristotelian compromise or *mesotes*, compromise is reached by excluding the qualities of the two different opposite elements, while at the same time staying in a middle position. Aristotelian mean or compromise is not an extreme position quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

Although Aristotelian 'mixture' may appear to be similar to the modern sense of compromise, they are not exactly same. Here, I argue that modern compromise is reached, on contrary to the Aristotelian compromise, by equally balancing the two opposite elements in quantitative fashion, and also sharing the nature of the two. It is also true that the ancient compromise was reached to get justice, whereas modern compromise is reached only to avoid violence and greatest evils regarding individual matters. These are the two main points on which ancient and modern compromise are different from one another. Yet, one cannot avoid considering Aristotelian *mesotes* to understand the present-day compromise.

The presence of arbitrator who had a major role to play in the classical sense of compromise is no more found in modern compromise because in the modern sense compromise is basically reached by the man who himself is involved in his own disputes. Hence, there is no need of a third party to settle the disputes. In that sense, it can be argued that modern compromise is very different from the classical understanding of the concept. I also argue that even if people in the present time are connected in a social contract relation they are not there in it in the truest sense of the contract theory as proposed by Hobbes and Locke. Indeed, the serious interest in the social contract theory declines in the twentieth-century. It is so because a modern man does not seem to trust another man; instead, they seem to be selfish and self-centred about their own interest and benefits. James Fieser has truly analysed the nature of modern man and his behaviour in human relation that can be well connected with the modern sense of compromise. Fieser in his book, *Moral Philosophy through the Ages*, has discussed a few important aspects of social contract. He sees men in a hypothetical environment in which human interact to each other, and this environment involves the account of the limits of human rationality, the risk of a

man in taking decisions, and also the way a modern man keeps balance between short-term and long-term interests. He also talks about the conflicts of a modern man of handling the matter of self-regarding and the regards for other. Fieser calls this a hypothetical environment. In view of this hypothetical environment, conflicts inevitably arise. What Fieser wants to point out here is that conflicts are based on what way man rationally calculates his own interests. The rationally calculative mind of a modern man does not take much time to do compromise, although his rational calculations motivate him to pursue the best deal for him (105-106).Therefore, compromise, indeed, is a very important part of human enterprise which is undergoing certain changes in its meaning and interpretation over the time periods.

Reference

[1]It is a Latin word accepted as arbitrator by both parties in a dispute. In the medieval period any conflict between different parties was resolved by the decision of the impartial *compromissarius* which basically referred to a male judge whose decision was above the interest of the parties involved. See Glare, P.G.W., editor. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. 2nd ed., Oxford UP, 2012.

[2]It is a dialectic which was formalised at the beginning of the twelfth century. Through this dialectic a medieval man used to represent himself and the other, before the split of meaning of compromise in the sixteenth century. In his book *Compromise* Alin Fumurescu claims that for more than a thousand years this dialectic provided the foundation for individualism across the western world.

[3]The online *Middle English Compendium* contains these forms of compromise. All these forms are available at https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary.

[4]Fumurescu has quoted these lines in his book *Compromise: A Political and Philosophical History,*and the translation of these lines is also quoted here.

[5]For examples, Pierre Richelet's *Dictionnaire de la langue francoiseancienne et moderne* (1680) mentions "an honest man should not compromise himself with rascals," while in Antoine Furetiere's *Dictionnaaireuniverselle* from 1690 it is mentioned that "one should not put oneself in compromise with those who are inferior, that is to say have words or quarrels with them." These examples in English translation are quoted in Fumurescu's book, *Compromise: A Political and Philosophical History*, p.79.

Bibliography:

Benjamin, Martin. *Splitting the Difference: Compromise and Integrity in Ethics and Politics*. UP of Kansas, 1990.
Black, Antony. "The Individual and Society." *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350-c.1450*, edited by J.H. Burns, Cambridge UP, 1988, pp. 588-606.
Cawdrey, Robert. "Comprimise." *A Table Alphabeticall*, edited by Robert A. Peters, Scholar's Fascsimiles& Reprints, 1966.
Fieser, James. *Moral Philosophy through the Ages*. Mayfield Publishing Company, 2001, pp.105-106.
Fleetwood, William. *The Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants: Consider'd in Sixteen Practical Discourses: With Three Sermons Upon the Case of Self-Murther*.Palala Press, 2016. p.68.
Fumurescu, Alin. *Compromise: A Political and Philosophical History*. Cambridge UP, 2013.
---. "Lost in Translation: Centripetal Individualism and the Classical Concept of Descending Representation." *European Journal of Political Theory*, vol. 10, no. 2, 12 Apr. 2011, pp. 156-176.*Sage Journals*,http://ept.sagepub.com/content/10/2/156.Accessed 24 June 2021.
Goetsch, John. *Contemporary Compromise: Standing for Truth in an Age of Deception*. Striving Together Publications, 2010.
Hoad, T. F., editor. *Oxford Concise Dictionary of English Etymology*. Oxford UP, 1996, p.89.
Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Edited by J.C.A. Gaskin, Oxford UP, 1996.
Johnson, Samuel."Compromise." *A Dictionary of the English Language*, edited by Robert S. Jameson, William Pickering, 1827, p.138.
Lepora, Chiara. "On Compromise and Being Compromised."*The Journal of Political Philosophy*, vol. 20, no. 1, Blackwell,26 Sept. 2011, pp. 1-22.*Academia*, https://www.academia.edu/19647061/On_Compromise_and_Being_Compromised. Accessed 24 June 2021.
Locke, John. *Two Treaties of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett, Cambridge UP, 1988.
Machiavelli, Niccolo. *The Prince*. Translated by Peter Bondanella, Oxford UP, 2005.
Margalit, Avishai. *On Compromise and Rotten Compromises*. Princeton UP, 2010.
Menkel-Meadow, Carrie. "Ethics of Compromise." *Global Encyclopaedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*, edited by Ali Farazmand, Springer, 2016, pp.1-8.*UCI Law*,https://www.law.uci.edu/faculty/full-time/menkel-meadow/ethics-as-compromise-Ency.of-Public-Admin-and-Policy.pdf.Accessed 3March 2021.
Morley, John. *On Compromise*. Rupa& Co., 2003.
O'Gorman, Frank. *Edmund Burke: His Political Philosophy*. *Political Thinkers*, edited by Geraint Parry, vol.2, Routledge, 1973, p.78.
Resnick, David. "Justice, Compromise, and Constitutional Rules in Aristotle's Politics." *Compromise in Ethics, Law, and Politics*, edited by J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman, New York UP, 1979, pp. 69-86.
Riddle, J. E. "Compromissum."*A Complete English-Latin and Latin-English Dictionary*, Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1843, p.63.