CHAPTER-6

CONCLUSION

In the history of Philosophy and Political Thought we come across a galaxy of names, the authors who have influenced the thinkers not only of their own time but also the future scholars and person engaged in intellectual pursuit. Right from the ancient days referring to Plato and Aristotle we may allude to many such persons who have created history and have made notable contribution still remembered as a milled stone in our times also. Apart from J.S.Mill, Lawsky and Wittegistine along with earlier philosophers, Hobbes, Locke and Rossoue we have one such name in our contemporary world greatly impressing the contemporary political thinkers and the student of philosophy. With no more riddles we must name Gallie who has given the idea of essentially contested concepts found in the realm of Political thought, religion, and morality. It should never mean that essentially contested concepts are not found in the other fields of sciences. The scholar agreeing on the basic idea discovered such concepts in the realm of law, aesthetics and ethics.

Introducing the problem we have explained the concept itself. it is important, for, all over mental images or processes can not be termed as concepts. We have, therefore clarified the meaning of the concept and have defined it as a term. Inferring from the definitions of the term concept; we have realized that the Socratic epistemic truth is still holds significance. Many modern writers have, even now, given emphasis on the classical theory, cognitive in nature and reject the modern theory for valid reasons.

Essentially Contested Concept as Gallie propounds is based on seven pre-requisite conditions. We need not repeat them here, but come to the conclusion that these seven necessary conditions are the work of Gallie’s mind trying to
emphasize the level of disagreements and disputability which arises primarily from the usage of the concept. It aims at clarifying that the scholars of religion, morality, art and political science don’t agree on the usage of some concepts which Gallie calls essentially contested. Even after mentioning seven prerequisites, Gallie is not very clear in his paradigms. He however, holds that the students of Political thought, religion, art and morality face this problem and never agree on one particular use of such concept. Every one of them tries to argue his own usage of the term and rejects the other usage. The contestability is not inherent in the meaning it is concealed in its use. Gallie, therefore, in his six and seventh condition refers to the exemplar and inevitable modifications imbibing the pristine use of the term or the concept.

Besides Gallie other contemporary political thinkers across the world have argued the meaningfulness of the idea. Connolly, Mason, and John Gray have also given their arguments to uphold the validity of the idea of the essentially contested concept. Gray particularly criticized Gallie and his frame work but does not reject the idea altogether we may conclude that the idea of essential contestedness is significant because it has given a new impetus to the growth of political thought. The scholars engaged in this debate agree on the point that there is a dispute in the usage of these concepts which must be understood not for seeking a resolution the problem but for reducing the level of disputability.

Conceptual confusion in the social sciences and certainly in political science is a major source of difficulty in both theory and empirical analysis. The literature is replete with concepts that are applied inconsistently. This in turn influences the coherence of research and the cumulation of findings in the study of politics. On one level, these problems may be seen as deriving from a straightforward failure to specify the relationship between ‘term’ and ‘meaning’, involving confusion about concepts. Scholars are sometimes inconsistent in their own usage, or they simply fail to grasp the definitions employed by other
researchers. These problems, in all likelihood, are not inherently irresolvable, although their resolution can be hindered by the sometimes surprising disregard for conceptual issues among some important social science methodologists. Beyond this question of conceptual confusion, another issue must be addressed, i.e. conceptual contestation. The strong normative valence associated with some Concepts, often combined with other considerations, motivates users to strongly prefer a particular meaning. They may energetically defend their own usage; whereas others will contend that an alternative usage is correct hence the idea of a contested concept. Examples of such concepts are democracy, justice, rule of law, citizenship, war, genocide, abortion, rape, and hate crime.

Gallie offers a framework for helping political scientists reason about complex concepts. His approach including the broad themes that frame his discussion, as well as his seven criteria is centrally addressed to political theorists. Yet it is equally useful for empirical researchers, perhaps especially as they address the normative component of their concepts and evaluate its relation to specific applications in their own work.

Among the many themes that might be underscored by way of conclusion, we will repeat one. Some critics of Gallie, and indeed Gallie himself, have raised concerns that his framework may promote an undesirable conceptual relativism. We find it unbelievable, however, that the meaning of concepts is inherently fixed and stable, and the expectation that this might be the case focuses attention in the wrong direction. Rather, we view Gallie’s framework as a needed warning against excessively emphatic claims about what a concept really means. For complex concepts, such claims are unhelpful. Gallie’s approach calls for a certain humility in declarations about conceptual meaning; a concerted effort to keep discussion of concepts within the framework of reasoned discourse; and serious consideration of what it can mean to establish such a framework.
Finally, we wish to comment on points of intersection between Gallie’s framework and two other perspectives in concept analysis: Gallie’s effort to refine the idea of ‘family resemblance’, which is strongly identified with Wittgenstein; and one major current of work in cognitive linguistics, beginning roughly in 1970. In these concluding observations, the goal is to indicate possible directions for future analysis, not to offer conclusive statements on these complex issues. Our point is simple: Gallie’s framework has important features in common with these other two approaches, and it can potentially add something to each of them.

To summarize a complex idea all too briefly, the idea of family resemblance involves concepts for which the component elements are not linked to the overall meaning in a relationship of necessary and/or sufficient conditions. Rather, they exhibit varied patterns of partial similarity to one another, such that although the concept does not have sharp boundaries the coherence of the concept can be evident.

Gallie evokes family resemblance as he grapples with the concept of art. Although not central to our discussion earlier, it has much in common with other concepts discussed here and nicely illustrates a key point. He makes provocative comments about the challenge of pinning down this concept, stating that ‘art must be a very queer concept one of a kind whose structure has never been adequately explored’. It is a concept ‘of a very slippery and dangerous kind, resting unsteadily on our recognition of a ‘family resemblance’ or a perceptible overlap between a number of lines of resemblance running through a wide family of instances’. Gallie is thus concerned that the idea of family resemblance does not adequately clarify conceptual meaning. He worries that this framing provides no account of ‘why, among all the conceivable sets of over-lapping resemblance . . . one particular line of such resemblances, or one set of such lines, has been picked out and valued under the rubric “work of art”’. Through the application of his own
framework, he seeks to offer a more precise account of the structure of this concept.

It is no doubt a matter of complex judgment whether Gallie’s framework productively moves beyond framing the discussion in terms of family resemblance. Yet it is noteworthy that he situates himself in relation to that tradition, and that he seeks to build upon it.

Gallie’s framework likewise has major elements in common with a notable current of work in modern cognitive linguistics that focuses on categorization, cognitive frames, prototypes, and the structure of complex concepts. Among the many strands of analysis within this literature, we will call attention to seven themes that correspond to Gallie’s criteria for essentially contested concepts. The cognitive linguistics literature encompasses a concern with (I) the normative content of concepts (appraisive); (II and III) cluster concepts, or radial concepts, which are tightly interconnected conceptual structures that can assume different meanings when seen from different viewpoints (internal complexity and diverse describability); (IV) the adaptation of concepts to new circumstances, as well as the application of a particular concept to new domains at a given point in time (openness); (V) the analysis of cognitive frames which can promote mutual recognition among alternative meanings; (VI) links between concepts and prototypes (exemplars); and (VII) contestation among alternative frames and rival sets of meanings that may potentially encourage the discovery of common ground among rival approaches.

This synoptic overview of the linguistics literature does little to capture its complexity and provides a limited basis for discussing the ways in which Gallie may depart from this tradition. One such departure might be considered, however. Notwithstanding some expressions of concern that Gallie’s approach encourages relativism; his overall objective is certainly to strengthen the rational basis for progressive competition. This strong prescriptive element in his framework is
doubtless more central to his work than it is to the literature on cognitive linguistics.

Thus, both in relation to the idea of family resemblance, and in relation to work in cognitive linguistics, we see both strong parallels with Gallie’s framework and interesting potential contrasts. Exploration of these common and divergent elements would be a productive avenue for further study.

In order to explain the essentially contested concepts we have taken up some important political concepts have examined rather critically the meaning and definition of these concepts. Democracy is one such concept. Since the ancient times there has been a debate on the form of government best suited for the people of a country. We are aware that the monarchy has been most popular government in the world. The scholars, however, always remained, sometimes ever ship and sometimes skeptic about the monarchical form of government. It is for the obvious reasons that the monarchy does not fulfill the people crave for the participation in the administrative affairs of the state. The Greek city states, which experienced of its trainee resulting into coercion and unnecessary atrocities. The Greek thinkers, remained occupied in finding out some alternative form which could satisfy the greatest number. The Aristocracy who another form of government, which in character was not very much different except that it, provided opportunity to the nobility to participate and manage the state affairs. The people whistle kept out of the decision making bodies.

We are also aware that the Greek society was mainly divided into two large classes the slaves and the masters. The later was free but the former had to obey the masters. The Greek authors generally tried to save guard the interests of the
masters. The slaves were satisfied with their position and accepted the rule of their masters as the work of their destiny.

Plato and Aristotle like their predecessor continued to advocate for the rights of the upper class. In his *Republic*, Plato has vecephorously defended their rights and pleaded for the wretched conditions of the slave. He spoke of the three different classes (Aristocracy, Soldier, and Slaves) being ruled by the philosophers king. He justified it by metaphorically calling had heart and appetite. Plato’s *republic* is an ideal state having a kind of constitutional monarchy in which only the Aristocracy could participate in the state affairs. Each of these classes as Plato thinks has its own work which must be dutifully performed.

Aristotle, the student of Plato, elaborately classified the forms of government and emphasized the participation of the freeman in the administrative affairs. He called such a government as democracy in which all free men could part take. It should however, be clear that even Aristotle did not give this right to the slavery. He defined democracy as the government of people but by the people he meant only the freemen.

Democracy, since then had been a disputed concept. In the medieval ages the concept of theodicy was more emphasized. God was believed the source of all power which could be enjoyed on the earth by his image, the Pope, the ecclesiastical authority. There was no question of any other form of government. The Pope administered the whole Christian world. The authority thus lived with the church.

With the inception of the modern era, people were eluded with the church. Consequently they raised a voice, meager in the beginning in the resolute thereafter, to separate the church from the state. It was a mile stone in the history of man kind. People now took a shift from religious tyranny to social democracy. These started debate again on the form of government best suited for the people after a long civil war in England and elsewhere in Europe, Hobbes, defended the
monarchy through his theory of social contract. Following him emerged Locke and Rousseau who pleaded for the constitutional monarchy and democracy respectively. They also argued their case through the same theory of the social contract.

After the industrial revolution and on account of scientific development people at large felt awakened. They became more conscious about their welfare and collectively raised a very strong voice for equal participation in the matters related to their own self. This awakening and political consciousness gave way to the emergence of democracy. The concept, however, was erstwhile present. It was to be realized and reassessed. We know that democracy in England began with the preparation of Magna Carta which, for the first time after a long gap of medieval ages, recognized the rights of the people and also established their authority in the determination of the type of government; they would like to be governed with.

We have mentioned in our chapter of democracy various vibrant definitions emphasizing one or the other aspect of the concept. Going through these definitions we come to the conclusion that no two authors agree on one point of view. They defined the concept in the light of the specific use that each one of them prefers for the determination of its modified meaning attached to its character. For this reason alone, Gallie and his contemporary consider it as an essentially contested concept. Gallie perhaps has not taken into account the universality that the concept possesses.

Despite disputability there is an agreement among the political thinkers and the philosophers as well on the substance of the concept democracy. The very substance is enough to sustain that the concept of democracy is meaningful and refers to a form of government best suited for the people. Disputability or contestedness does not make it meaningless or less important. The democracy as a concept refers to an ideal form of government appraisive in nature yielding
welfare to the greatest number. It being an essentially contested concept does not make it insignificant or invalid in any ways.

Besides democracy we have discussed power as essentially contested concept for the reason that it has generated a lively debate in the political thought and also the philosophy. The word power in the common man’s language is used to mean sometimes energy, sometimes strength and sometimes authority. The energy and the strength are not significant from the point of view of philosophy and political thought. Authority is of course is important and requires due attention in the ancient times it was believed that the power follows from the barrel of the gun. But, as the knowledge grew and the concepts took a serious shift, it assumed and altogether different meaning. It inspired the scholars to redefine the concept of power. Moreover, the political awakening among the peoples demanded a serious modification in its conceptual framework.

Power is a measurement of an entity’s ability to control its environment, including the behavior of other entities. The term authority is often used for power perceived as legitimate by the social structure. Power can be seen as evil or unjust, but the exercise of power is accepted as endemic to humans as social beings.

In the political theory the concepts of power was aliened to the idea of sovereignty. From the sixteen century onwards there arose a controversy as to who should be the source of power. The religious people still pleaded, as they did in the medieval ages, that the power flows from God. It could be exercised only by the chosen people. The church therefore, enjoyed all powers and governed the people as it willed. They took inspiration from the religious text and interpreted it as per their convince. With the emergence of democracy the concept of popular sovereignty gained ground. The political philosophers were, however engaged to explain the actual application of power. They rightly had some meaningful objections in acknowledging the people as the source of real power.
In the contemporary period Lukes has written in important book: in power: a radical view in which he has discussed various meanings and shades of power and has argued that it is an essentially contested concept. We have included his contention in our chapter on power.

In short we may conclude that the power as a concept is a controversial term. It has been used to mean differently. The political thinker’s theorists and parties have given interpretations suited to their interests. Some advocate the old principle of power’ might is right. Hobbes seems to support this view. Rousseau on the other hand emphatically pleads for popular sovereignty general will which assigns power to the people. The dictatorial regimes believe in mono-doctrinal principle of power according to which all power follows from one person the dictator. This may be applied to party dictatorship as well. Keeping it in view we may deduce that the power like other political concept one of the essentially contented concepts.

Ethics and politics in Greek philosophy were understood as one discipline. Liberty in Plato and Aristotle even in earlier philosophers for which they used the word freedom mentioned it as a virtue. This could be enjoyed only by the freeman, a class opposite to slavery. It was interpreted as a normative concept which means that the freeman must be able to stay and to do what he feels proper or necessary for his personality development. Freeman also enjoyed power, liberty then meant for man to exercise his powers without any external control or outside pressure. In our chapter on liberty wee have tried to explain the meaning and content of the term.

Liberty in the contemporary world is still held as a high sounding political virtue. In this era of democracy it has assumed more importance. The philosophers strongly advocate for all kinds of liberty i.e, civil liberty, and economic liberty, social liberty, and political liberty and so on. In all types of liberty economic and political liberty is more significant.
The concept of liberty is closely related to the concept of rights. With the development of socio-political consciousness it has been recognized that a citizen enjoys some rights. The constitution of all most all the countries which currish democracy not only as a form of government but also as a value, do guarantee fundamental rights to their citizens. The concept of welfare state gives more right to the people. The U.N.O unrecognition of rights has constituted the commission of human rights. The body is watchful that the human rights are not violated in all its member countries. We often come across its annual reports rating the member countries having poor, good or excellent record of human rights. This effort often compels the member countries having poor record to attend to address human rights situation. It enhances the better possibility of the objects of liberty.

Liberty is also related to the concept of equality in this modern era of democracy there can be no discrimination on the basis of the caste, creed, and color among its citizens, social, political, economic and legal equality can not be denied to any of the residents in a country. Equality also ensures liberty of all kinds. It makes liberty more valuable and significant and also helps in the evaluation of the social status of the individuals. Even the socialist states like China were forced to grant every possible liberty within its limits.

In short liberty is very important political and philosophical concept. As it is manifest in our chapter on liberty that there is a disagreement an its definition and an application. We have explained its meaning, definition and the history of the concept and come to the conclusion that like any other concept it is also essentially contested.

Gallie’s paradigm seems to be skeptic. Disputability is in the very nature of these concepts that is why they become essentially contested. If this preposition is upheld, it would mean that Gallie’s attempt is nihilistic. He is of the view that there is an endless dispute in the use of all these concepts. If it is true, we would
not arrive at any conclusion. Skepticism, as we know leads to nihilism. Gallie, however, considers it to be a positive quality to which we don’t agree.