

03b. Aristotle, *Politics*
 August 30 - September 11, 2001

[Page #s are from Reeve/Barker editions]

Announcements:

Upcoming response paper:

September 4: Book I, II (chap. 5), and VII (chaps. 1-9, 13-16)

- ~~PP~~ due Thurs
 - on TD's

- Eric's Q

- this day's
 was need
 re-vision / printing

Thurs: look
 @ connects
 for Beck's
 3rd 446
 paper!

I. Summing up Socrates

A. Q: What Greek virtues are elaborated in the "Apology"?

1. Q: What aspects of Athenian life does he criticize?
- 2.

Realm of philosophy	Realm of politics
truth	rhetoric
virtue	flattery
goodness (right over wrong)	persuasion, power

2. Q: What similarities and differences are there with the "Funeral Oration"?

B. Q: Let me ask you again, does Socrates embody Athenian ideals or does he reject them?

C. Q: Was the jury correct to find Socrates guilty?

D. **Plato and politics**

1. "A man who really fights for justice must lead a private, not a public, life if he is to survive for even a short time." 32a

2. Q: Why does Socrates avoid politics? Is Socrates implying that politics and morality don't mix? That morality and democracy don't mix? [I think the latter but not the former, if the "phil-king" stuff is to be consistent with what he says here.]

3. [But remember: Soc seems to put the private before the public, but he also refuses to "mind his own business" and he considers his gadfly role to be performing a public function. Plus, as Gregory Vlastos argues, Socrates seeks the good life and moral perfection for all people, including women and slaves. This, Vlastos argues, shows that Soc is really a democrat, whatever his criticisms of Athens.]

E. Q: How is this conception of politics different from Aristotle's?

II. ~~Three communities~~ (three forms of human association)

1. ~~A. The household~~

1. Consists of three kinds of relationships: husband-wife, master-slave, parent-child. Its function is to provide the necessities of life.

2. ~~B. The village~~

1. It consists of kinship relations, and its function is also to provide for life's necessities.

2. "the art of acquisition," i.e. of accumulating wealth, requires currency and a village structure xx/23

3. ~~C. The polis:~~

x. Read 3-4/4-5 /29

x. Q: Why is the polis "complete"? or on "end"?

a. Unlike the household or village, it is **self-sufficient**. It doesn't require any other human community to provide for it.

hand to "trial" notes

L

b. The village and the household enable people to live, but the polis enables them to **live well**. Its function is to achieve the **good life**.

x. **Read Q₂**, p. 4: "the city-state is also prior in nature to the household and to each of us individually, since a whole is necessarily prior to its parts." (p. 29 in Daver)

x. **Q:** How is the polis "prior" to individuals and the household?

x. The polis exists by nature because it is the ultimate political form toward which humans naturally move in order to develop their capacity. It is prior to the individual because **wholes are prior to their parts**. In the same way, an **oak tree is prior to the acorn**, because the ultimate form of an acorn is a mature tree. The acorn's end is a tree, hence the end is prior to the parts that make it up.

x. **Q:** Why are human beings "by nature a political animal"? 4/5

a. **Q:** Why aren't other animals political animals?

b. **Read Q₁**, p. 4/6 (28-29)

c. Only humans possess the capacity for **speech** and the ability to discern good from bad and just from unjust. In other words, humans alone possess **reason**.

x. **Define polis:** "a body of such persons adequate in number for achieving a self-sufficient existence." xx/95 It contains two crucial elements: a military component and a component "that deliberates about what is beneficial and makes judgments about what is just" (205/xx).

a. the polis is the ultimate form of association. It exists not only to provide for life but to enable us to achieve the good life. It doesn't just help us live, it enables us to live well.

b. A polis is defined by 1) its size, 2) its constitution. The most important characteristic is the constitution. xx/99

c. The polis exists for the sake of the good life, and **politics** (political participation) **is central to the good life**. We need to explain why this is so.

C. Justice

1. **Read 5/7**

2. **Q:** What is justice and how does it relate to the polis?

3. [put this discussion here or elsewhere? Need to explain how justice and polis are related, and how justice is a product of the polis, and how justice relates to virtue, reason, participation and the good life]

D. Slavery and the subordination of women

x. **Q:** How does Aristotle justify slavery and women's subordination?

x. **Q:** Does the slave/woman/child possess virtue?

x. They do possess virtue, but a different kind: The soul has two elements, the rational and nonrational. Likewise, humanity is divided into two elements, the rational (free adult males) and the nonrational (women, children, slaves). The freemen's virtue is based on reason, which is necessary to rule, while the slave, women, or child's goodness is on obedience and temperance, i.e. those virtues which enable them to be ruled.

x. Property belongs to the household, slaves are "animate tools," therefore slaves belong to the house and its master. (Bk. I ch. 4) Slavery is just because only some humans are by nature (physis) fit to both rule and by ruled (Aristotle's definition of a citizen), while others are by nature fit only to be ruled. Slaves are slaves by nature. Because they are naturally slaves, the institution is beneficial to them as well as the master. Book I chap. 5. When slavery is based on superior conquest and power rather than nature (i.e. being enslaved through war), then it is not a mutually beneficial relationship. chap. 6 [but is it wrong? dc]

x. **Q:** Does the very fact that Aristotle feels the need to justify slavery indicate that there exists some debate on the morality of slavery in his era? Does it indicate some discomfort with the institution?

what to do?
→
reverts
II.B.
p. 9 of
BK II (4)

x. In other words, Aristotle is raising the question: **are all human beings equal?** It's significant that he raises this question, even if we disagree with his answer.

x. He concludes that humans are different and unequal by nature. This belief in **the fundamental inequality of humans** is at the heart of Aristotle's political philosophy.

x. **Q:** Given this, what can democrats and those who believe in the fundamental equality of humans get from Aristotle?

[put chart on overhead and post for Thursday or after discussing polis]

	Household	Village	Polis
relationships	hierarchical: master-slave husband-wife parent-child	hierarchical: kinship	horizontal: citizens
function or telos	sustain life (through the use of property)	sustain life (through the acquisition of property)	achieve the good life
characterized by	dependence	dependence	self-sufficiency

^{purpose}
III. The role of the polis: the good life

A. The role of the polis, then, is to achieve the good life. The best polis is one that enables its citizens to live the good life: "the best constitution must be that organization in which anyone might do best and live a blessedly happy life."

194/284 / 260

1. Q: What is the role of the state for us in achieving the good life?

2. We tend to see the state or society as an obstacle or a potential obstacle to achieving the good life, because the state limits individual freedom. **Aristotle does not pit the individual against the state**; the good life is achievable only through the polis. The state does not inhibit our potential, it *enables* it.

3. Read Cambridge companion 234

B. Q: What is the good life, then?

1. Q: Is it getting rich?

2. No. The acquisition of wealth is concerned with living, but not with living well. It belongs to the realm of the village and the household, not the polis. Physical gratification is not equivalent to living well. 17/xx (Bk. I ch. 9)

3. **Thales of Miletus** (Bk. I chap. 11)

a. Q: Who is Thales and what does he do?

b. He was a wise philosopher but poor. His poverty was cited as proof of the uselessness of philosophy. So one year, anticipating a bumper crop of olives, he hired out all of the presses. When the crop came in, he had a monopoly on the presses and made a fortune.

4. Q: Why is his story significant for Aristotle?

5. Philosophers could easily become rich if they wanted, but they don't want to. They seek the good life, not wealth. Hence wealth is not the good life.

C. **The good life is a life of happiness (eudaimonia)**

x. **Define eudaimonia**: Happiness, success, well-living. Eudaimonia is *the* objective toward which all other objectives aim for. It is good in and of itself, not for what it brings, unlike money or power, which are means toward happiness. Happiness is end, not means.

like health

x. Happiness is **the exercise of virtue**. It is living a life of entirely virtuous and excellent activity throughout one's lifetime. (Cambridge Companion 202, 203.) It is living a life in which one's reason rules one's passions.

x. Happiness is not the same thing as **pleasure**, although pleasure is a byproduct of happiness. Further, happiness is not a state of being or a feeling but an **activity**. It's something you do, not something you are, **well-doing** rather than well-being. "For happiness is action, and many noble things reach their end in the actions of those who are just and temperate." 196 ["Felicity is a state of activity; and it is the actions of just and temperate men which are the fulfillment of a great part of goodness." Barker 288] See also 204/xx, 213/312 *See 263 in Dore*

x. Eudaimonia implies **virtue/arête** (moral virtue + excellence), **reason**, and **action**

D. [misc.] Q: Is the good life a life of contemplation and the cultivation of the mind à la Socrates or is it a life of participation and political activity? Is the best life a philosophical or political life, the life of a philosopher or a citizen? (chap. 3)

x. Q: Aristotle has defined happiness as an activity. Is thinking an activity?

x. No. Thought is an activity as well, thus philosophy is an activity.

x. [see Cambridge Companion 204-5 if you want to finish this sxn]

E. **Happiness and political participation**

1. Aristotle says that the good life requires a polis. Eudaimonia is only possible through politics. In other words, eudaimonia requires participation in politics. [the logic of this needs work next time]

2. Q: Why? *why does* why? *eudaimonia require part. in politics?*

just pose as a riddle to be solved for now?

3. Humans are rational creatures. We possess the use of reason. We are at our best when we use our reason and not our emotions, for that is what distinguishes us from the animals. We also use our reason to distinguish right from wrong, just from unjust. This type of judgment is called **phronesis**, or **practical wisdom**. The function of phronesis is to seek the common good, i.e. not only what is good and just for the individual but what is good and just for the community. Phronesis, then, is a virtue that requires deliberation: it is not an innate form of wisdom but one that only comes through acting with others, both because we are social/political creatures and because it concerns the good of the entire community. Thus, phronesis implies participation in politics, and this is possible only in a polis. Thus, **to be fully happy a human being requires participation in politics and a polis.** [does this make sense?] - I think so

F. Happiness requires leisure (*schole*).

1. For the Greeks, leisure is *not* the opposite of doing something. Nor is leisure the same thing as recreation or amusement. Leisure is a form of activity for them, and it is in fact the highest form of activity, because it is activity according to rational principle, which we'll discuss in a moment. In a sense, Aristotle's "leisure" is more like our "scholarship" than our "leisure."

2. Thus, the working class can't experience the good life because they lack the leisure necessary to participate in politics. Only property owners can be citizens.

3. Q: The next question is how this select group achieves eudaimonia. What else does it need, besides free time? **How does a person become a good person? How does one achieve arete?**

4. It requires an **excellent polis**. The next task, then, is to find out what is the ideal type of polis that can best achieve the good life.

IV. The ideal polis (Book VII)

x. Having defined the best or most choiceworthy sort of life, and having argued that the best sort of life is possible only in a particular sort of polis, Aristotle then has to define what the ideal constitution is that can help humans achieve the good life.

x. The **Greek concept of "constitution"** means more than just a written document that serves as a polis's fundamental law. It also refers to the structure or makeup of the polis. (Like how a person has a "strong constitution.") A constitution is a way of life followed by a community. Thus, by "ideal constitution" he means the best way of life.

x. **Three elements of the best life:**

1. External goods: property, wealth.
 2. Goods of the body: health
 3. Goods of the soul: the virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice
- x. A good person has all of these elements, but the first two goods exist for the sake of the soul.

x. The best sort of life, then, is a life of goodness, in which external and bodily goods serve the goods of the soul.

x. Read xx/282/259

x. A polis is a **self-sufficient community** of persons. Aristotle then goes on to describe what the ideal size is of the ideal polis in terms of territory, population and naval power, that can achieve self-sufficiency without being too large. (chaps. 4-5) Note that in all these he tends to favor **moderation**, or a middle ground between extremes (not too large or too small, not too many or too few, etc.)

x. "The best constituted state is the state which possesses the greatest possibility of achieving felicity." xx/312

x. The ideal polis consists of two kinds of person, "integral parts" and "necessary conditions."

x. The "necessary conditions" are those (slaves, women, laborers) who make it

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possible for the citizens to enjoy the good life by furnishing the polis's food and other goods. These people don't have the leisure time to participate in politics, therefore they cannot fully share in the good life.

x. The "integral parts" are full citizens who actively share in the good life of the polis. They are property owners (of land and slaves) who have the necessary leisure to participate in politics, and thus can share fully in the good life.

x. Thus, for Aristotle, even in the ideal polis, only some may share in the good life.

x. "the state is an association of equals, and only of equals; and its object is the best and highest life possible, [in which the slave cannot share]. The highest good is felicity; and that consists in the energy and perfect practice of goodness. But in actual life this is not for all; some may share in it fully, but others can share in it partially or cannot even share at all." xx/298-299 or *Prud 272-73*

x. Q: Is this a reasonable assertion?

x. Q: Is Aristotle a democrat or an elitist? Or both?

x. Achieving happiness

x. Q: How does this select group of citizens achieve eudaimonia? What else does it need, besides free time? **How does a person become a good person? How does one achieve arete?**

x. A person does not achieve happiness through **fortune**, or luck.

x. Instead, a person becomes good and virtuous through **three means**:

1. "natural endowments" granted to us at birth
2. **Habits** of good action that we form
3. By acting according to "**rational principle**." xx/314

x. Parts of the soul

1. **Rational** and **non-rational**. The irrational part has the capacity of obeying the rational part. The rational part of the soul is the higher part. Thus the soul is divided into ruling and ruled elements. Book VII, chap. 14

2. The rational part consists of two parts:

- a. practical reason (phronesis)
- b. speculative reason (*theoria*)
- c. This is the politics/philosophy split [???

3. We should attain to all three elements of the soul: obedience to our rational side, practical reason, and speculative reason.

a. The ultimate end is the exercise of our reason. "The exercise of rational principle and thought is the ultimate end of man's nature." xx/323

b. Only some of us can reach the second and third elements, however. (The working class, slaves, and women can only achieve the first, for example.)

4. The **purpose of the polis** is to help us achieve the highest of these ends we possibly can. xx/318 Legislators should seek to instill the good in humans.

x. How do we learn how to exercise our reason?

x. Aristotle then goes on to argue that making good citizens and good person requires the regulation of marriage (so that men won't marry too young or too old), the health and physique of a couple, and the number of children they may raise. Book VII chap. 16.

x. Q: Are these things the proper concern of a legislator? Why is it for Aristotle but not for us? Does this contradict Aristotle's argument that the ideal polis will lead to happiness and the good life?

"Youth never resents being governed" —Aristotle, xx/316 Ha!

[misc.]

September 6, 2001
Politics, Books III & IV

Announcements

Key points

- review of Tuesday
- defining citizenship
- classification of constitutions

I. Review of Tuesday

- A. go over "3 Types of Association" overhead
- B. role of the polis: to achieve the good life
 1. Good life means eudaimonia: happiness, success, well-living.
 2. The exercise of virtue throughout one's life.
 3. Implies arete (moral virtue + excellence), reason, action
 4. Q: Eudaimonia requires participation in politics. Why?

Der p. 101

II. Defining citizenship (Book III)

A. **Definition of a citizen:** "The unqualified citizen is defined by nothing else so much as by his participation in judgment and office." Reeve 66 ["a man who shares in the administration of justice and in the holding of office." (Barker 93)] It's a person who has the right to share in any deliberative or judicial position.

1. Read 67/xx ~~102~~ 102
2. Citizenship involves **participation, judgment, and the holding of office.**
3. It also involves the ability to both **rule and be ruled.** The citizen of a democracy must know how to rule and be ruled, i.e. to make the laws he obeys.
4. Read 72-73/104-105 ~~106-109~~
5. Q: Is citizenship the same for different kinds of constitutions?
6. No. The definition of citizenship changes according to the constitution of a polis. The above definition is particularly a definition of a citizen of a democracy. 67/94-95

B. **The good citizen and the good man** (Bk. III chap. 4)

1. Q: Is the good citizen the same as the good person? *How can one be a good citizen but not a good person?*
2. **Different constitutions require different citizens.** The definition of citizenship will vary according to the constitution or political structure of a polis: a democratic constitution requires a citizen who can rule and be ruled, while the citizen of an oligarchy requires a citizen who only needs to know how to obey.
3. Thus, **there are several ways to be a good citizen**, depending on the constitution. There is **only one way to be a good human being**, however. The virtues of a good citizen vary from constitution to constitution, but the virtues of a good person are singular and universal.
4. Thus, a **good citizen is not necessarily a good person.** A loyal Nazi in 1930s Germany was a good citizen, but not a good person.
5. A **good person, however, must be a good citizen**, because a good person requires a good constitution.

C. **Who is not and cannot become a citizen**

1. Q: Can craftsmen (i.e. the working class) be citizens?
 - a. No, because they don't have the experience of being rulers as well as being ruled. They don't have this experience because they must spend all of their time making a living. Thus, they are only ruled, and do not rule. Only those who are free from menial labor can be citizens, because only they have the leisure time to participate in politics. E.g., see 74/xx ~~110~~
 - b. The same goes with slaves, women, and children.

? → 5
Why are page #s messed up?

2. Aristotle's belief in a **natural hierarchy**

[from Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, chap. 4]

a. Aristotle's view of the world is **completely hierarchical**. He believes that there is a hierarchy to nature from plants to animals to humans to gods, and that things lower on the hierarchy exist to serve those things that are higher. Hence plants exist to serve animals, and animals exist to serve man.

b. Man's end is his **happiness**. Happiness is the exercise of virtue, particularly the exercise of one's **reason**. Nutrition, wealth, sensation, and health all exist to serve reason, since the use of reason results in happiness.

c. This natural hierarchy not only distinguishes humans from beasts, it **distinguishes humans** as well.

d. The ideal polis consists of **two kinds of person**, "integral parts" and "necessary conditions." (Barker translation) The "**necessary conditions**" are those (slaves, women, laborers) who make it possible for others to exercise their reason by furnishing the polis's necessities. The "**integral parts**" are full citizens who actively share in the good life of the polis. They are property owners (of land and slaves) who have the time to participate in politics, and thus can share fully in the good life.

e. Thus, for Aristotle, even in the ideal polis, only some may share in the good life. Some must serve the citizen rather than being one. Specifically, women exist to serve men, and slaves exist to serve masters. **Women and slaves exist to serve citizens.**

f. Thus, while everyone can be a good citizen, so long as she knows her role in the social hierarchy and performs it, **only a select few can be good men**, even in a polis with a good constitution. 71/xx

g. "the state is an association of equals, and only of equals; and its object is the best and highest life possible, [in which the slave cannot share]. The highest good is felicity; and that consists in the energy and perfect practice of goodness. But in actual life this is not for all; some may share in it fully, but others can share in it partially or cannot even share at all." (Barker 298-299; see Reeve 204 for the quote)

3. Happiness requires leisure (**scholē**).

a. For the Greeks, leisure does *not* mean doing nothing. Nor is it the same thing as recreation or amusement. **Leisure is a form of activity** for them, and it is in fact the highest form of activity, because it is **activity according to rational principle**. In a sense, Aristotle's "leisure" is more like our "scholarship" than our "leisure."

b. Thus, the **working class** can't experience the good life because they lack the leisure necessary to participate in politics, therefore they cannot fully share in the good life. Only property owners can be citizens.

D. Thus, **being a good person depends on:**

1. One's place in the social hierarchy
2. The activity of leisure
3. The exercise of reason, particularly political wisdom/judgment (*phronesis*)
4. The virtue of knowing how to rule as well as be ruled.
5. A type of constitution that can inculcate this kind of rulership among its citizens.

6. **Read** if time 75/109-110

E. **Q:** Is Aristotle a democrat or an elitist? Or both?

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III. Classification of constitutions (Book III)

A. The **Greek concept of "constitution"** means more than just a written document that serves as a polis's fundamental law. It also refers to the structure or makeup of the polis. (Like how a person has a "strong constitution.") This refers to the distribution of offices, who controls the polis (the rich, the poor, etc.), and to what end the polis exists (for the good of all or only some). (102/xx) A constitution is a way of life followed by a community.

also in p. 5 of Bk (1, 2, 7) notes. Lex or Acc?

1. Read 75 (Q₂) / 110 / 112 *Don't read - not that clear in this translation*

2. The **function** of a constitution: to achieve the good life. Its function is to enable men to live well, not just live. In order to do so it must be stable over a long period of time.

3. Read 81/xx/119-120 *Do you need to know his conception of friendship, then? Like Aristotle?*

B. Typology of constitutions

1. We can classify the various constitutions according to two criteria:

a. Poleis that are ruled by **the one, the few, or the many**. Aristotle argues that this really boils down to poleis that are ruled by **the rich or the poor**, since the rich are always few and the poor are always the many. Thus, what counts is not the number of people ruling but the *class* that is in power. 79

b. Poleis that rule for the **benefit of the common good** of all its citizens or for the **benefit of its rulers** (i.e the rich in an oligarchy, the poor in a democracy). The former are **correct** constitutions, the latter are **deviations**.

c. We can thus create a 3x2 matrix of constitutions:

2. Matrix of constitutions

		(Rich)		(Poor)
		One	Few	Many
Correct constitution		Kingship	Aristocracy	Polity/ <i>politeia</i>
Deviant constitution		Tyranny	Oligarchy	Democracy

3. Q: Which is better: rule by the few or rule by the many?

a. **Rule by the many is better**. Even though the many may not be as excellent as the few are, collectively they possess more wisdom than the many.

b. Read 83/xx ("Feasts to which many contribute...") *p 121 quote: since type it out here.*

4. Hence, the best type of constitution is a polity, followed by aristocracy, kingship, democracy, oligarchy, and tyranny.

C. The **polity** (Bk. IV chaps. 7-11)

1. A polity is a **mixed constitution**: it combines elements of oligarchy (rule by the rich) and democracy (rule by the poor)

2. A polity is also ruled according to **virtue/arête**. 115/xx

3. In one sense, the polity is a form of aristocracy, a "rule by the best," only the "best" are the majority rather than the minority. The difference between a polity and an aristocracy is one of degree rather than qualitative: Those mixed constitutions in which the few tend to dominate are aristocracies, while those in which the people tend to dominate are polities. The latter tend to be more stable, and are thus preferable. 150-151/xx

4. A polity is best because it's a **means between extremes**: rule by the rich or rule by the poor.

5. Read 157/xx /214

6. This is consistent with Aristotle's philosophy of the **golden mean**, which asserts that a means between extremes is always the best. **Virtue is a mean**. E.g. courage is a means between cowardice and rashness. In all things, a "middle life" is

best.

7. The rich, the strong, the well-born know how to rule but don't know how to be ruled. They tend to be arrogant. The poor, the weak, the humble know how to obey but not how to rule. But a good constitution requires knowledge of both. Hence, the best sort of rule is one in which the **middle class** dominates. The middle class knows how to rule and be ruled.

8. Further, middle class encourages social stability by **easing class conflict**. When some own everything and many own nothing, that's a recipe for conflict, but if there is a large number of people who own a moderate amount of property, you have stability. Thus, the middle class is a sort of **arbitrator** between the rich and the poor, and that encourages stability.

9. For these reasons, in a polity, the **good citizen and the good man coincide**.

V. Question for Tuesday: Why does eudaimonia require participation in politics?

phil. vs politics

- phil. is good in itself, ~~the~~ ~~best~~ ~~one~~ ~~is~~ ~~for~~ ~~what~~ ~~it~~ ~~brings~~ ~~us~~. Like health. If we want to ~~have~~ ~~use~~ ~~freed~~ ~~of~~ ~~body~~ ~~needs~~, what ~~will~~ ~~we~~ do but ~~contemplate~~ ~~the~~ ~~universe~~? Cambridge 196

bio

- students in the Lyceum: young ~~of~~ ~~of~~ ~~property~~, who ~~expected~~ ~~to~~ ~~play~~ ~~a~~ ~~big~~ ~~part~~ ~~in~~ Athens' politics

- eudaimonia: Goal of life for P: k. of the Forms / truth. Goal for A: eudaimonia. ~~def.~~ ~~of~~ ~~eud.~~ Cambridge 202, 203

Justice: is a mean between unfairness - & unfairness. (Cambridge 223). It's a mean.

- ~~election~~: Arist. believes in the rule of the best, but the best ^{is} ~~is~~ the ablest or most prudent but those who are morally & intellectually the best. Cambridge 226. ~~Also~~ (those who are free men). See note

- ~~friendship~~: ^{voluntary} relation among equals (i.e. citizens) based on affection for each other. Cambridge 228-229. reciprocity is key: mutual respect & virtue.

- ~~the problem of~~ Polity authority - what are the individual's obligations to obey the state? is subject in Aristotle, but the state is not external to the individual. This is not a potential threat to the ind.

- (1) key is not authority but the good: how can the polis enable the ind. to achieve the G.L. the polis is necessary to achieve the G.L.

- 1) ~~the~~ polis exists by nature, 2) humans are by nature fit to live in a polis.

over →

September 11, 2001

Announcements:

Key points

- The "homosexual question"
- Classification of constitutions
- How constitutions change
- Why eudaimonia requires participation

I. The Greeks and homosexuality [need to get more info next time]

A. Greeks considered man-to-man love as superior to man-woman love. In particular, the highest form of love was between a young (early teens) boy and an adult male.

B. In a sense, Greek homosexuality is a product of Greek misogyny: Women were so inferior that even romantic love and the expression of emotions was better spent on men than women.

II. Classification of constitutions

A. [see Thursday's notes and go over]

III. How constitutions change [Book V]

A. For Aristotle, constitutional change implies **not progress but corruption**. All constitutions inevitably corrupt, decay, and collapse.

1. This is a common republican tenet: the inevitable fall of the polity. No notion of progress but **degeneration**.

2. The cause of constitutional change is **faction**. Factions emerge when there is inequality and injustice. *117 in Power*

B. Aristotle's conception of justice

1. **Read 79/xx** Justice requires equality for equals and inequality for unequals.

2. **Q:** What does Aristotle mean by that?

3. Remember, Aristotle believes in a **natural hierarchy**, and that things of a lower order exist to serve those of a higher order. Justice, then, is equality among things or persons that are equal in the natural hierarchy and inequality among things or persons who are of different ranks. Injustice is inequality among equals and making persons of lower and higher orders equal to each other. 85-87/xx

4. Thus, in a sense, **justice is a sort of correct order** among persons. It means respecting the natural rank of persons: find your role and perform it, don't aspire to anything above or below you. Similar to Plato in this respect.

C. Factions, then, emerge when there is injustice: when either equals are not treated equally or unequals are treated equally. For example, it's when aristocrats fight among themselves for power, or when the poor fight the aristocracy for power.

1. **Read 137/xx if necessary** *140-141*

2. Numerical equality vs. proportional equality: 178,

3. A strong middle class, then, can mitigate constitutional change because it inhibits the rise of factions.

needs revision for clarity

IV. Happiness requires participation in politics

A. Q: We are now ready to answer the question: why does eudaimonia require participation in politics?

B. Q: Think about Aristotle's definition of citizenship as "participation in judgement and office." What does he mean by "judgment"?

1. Remember Aristotle's claim that humans are **political animals**. We are communal beings. No one would say the life of a hermit is a "good life." The good life must be a communal one.

2. Further, remember that Aristotle argues that **the polis exists by nature**. It is the "final form" of human association, the end toward which all other forms exist, the oak tree that the acorn strives to become. Humans, therefore, are **naturally adapted** to living in a polis.

3. Humans are **rational creatures**. We possess the use of speech and reason. We are at our best when we use our reason and not our emotions, for that is what distinguishes us from the animals. We also use our reason to distinguish right from wrong, just from unjust.

4. This type of judgment is called **phronesis, or practical wisdom**.

Phronesis is an intellectual virtue, as opposed to a moral virtue. It is using your reason in the best possible way.

C. Parts of the soul

1. **Rational and non-rational**. The irrational part has the capacity of obeying the rational part. The rational part of the soul is the higher part. Thus the soul is divided into ruling and ruled elements. Book VII, chap. 14

2. The rational part consists of two parts:

- a. practical reason (*phronesis*)
- b. speculative reason (*theoria*)

The rational part does not have appetites, any desire, etc. things motivated by pleasure & pain.

3. We should attain to all three elements of the soul: obedience to our rational side, practical reason, and speculative reason.

a. The ultimate end is the exercise of our reason. "The exercise of rational principle and thought is the ultimate end of man's nature." xx/323

4. The **purpose of the polis** is to help us achieve the highest of these ends we possibly can, given our station in life. xx/318 Legislators should seek to instill the good in humans.

D. The function of phronesis is to **seek the common good**, i.e. not only what is good and just for the individual but what is good and just for the community.

1. ~~The capacity for practical wisdom not only distinguishes us from animals, it marks us out for life in the polis.~~

2. A **good person** is one who uses *phronesis* to control his appetites. He uses this wisdom to choose to do the right thing.

3. Likewise, a good ruler is one who makes good use of his moral wisdom, or phronesis. "Practical wisdom is the only virtue peculiar to a ruler..." 73/xx A citizen of a democratic polis is both a ruler and ruled: He makes the laws that he obeys. Thus, a **citizen must possess phronesis**, or political judgment.

E. Phronesis, then, is a **virtue that requires deliberation**: it is not a form of wisdom that we develop on our own but one that only comes through interacting with others.

1. **Participation in politics** (as opposed to a social club or civil association) is the most perfect exercise of phronesis/practical wisdom, because it is concerned with the common good, not just the good of a particular group.

2. Thus, **eudaimonia and living a good life requires the exercise of phronesis, and the exercise of phronesis requires participation in politics, which requires a particular constitution that allows for participation.**

3. The good life is "a practical life" in which the citizens exercise their practical excellence to promote the common good." Cambridge Companion, 250
wisdom

keep here or in Pt 1, 2, 7 p. 6. am?
interest, p. 6
of Pt 1, 2, 7
over

1 ← fix

4.

skip

- F. **How to inculcate virtues** like phronesis: **habit** and **education**. 158,
 1. A person does not achieve happiness through **fortune**, or luck.
 2. Instead, a person becomes good and virtuous through **three means**:
 - a. "**natural endowments**" granted to us at birth
 - b. **Habits** of good action that we form
 - c. By acting according to "**rational principle**." This comes through education and habit. xx/314

more to Locke

- G. **Aristotle's conception of freedom**
 - x. "One component of freedom is ruling and being ruled in turn." 176/xx
 - x. Further, another component of freedom is that the poor have more authority than the rich. This implies that freedom is associated with democracy.
 - x. A third component is "to live as one likes." 177/xx
 - x. **Q:** Is this similar to our conception of freedom? How might it be different?
 - x. **Read:** 177/xx
 - x. **Q:** Is this kind of democracy similar to democracy as we know it?
 - x. Aristotle then goes on to argue that making good citizens and good person requires the regulation of marriage (so that men won't marry too young or too old), the health and physique of a couple, and the number of children they may raise. Book VII chap. 16.
 - x. **Q:** Are these things the proper concern of a legislator? Why is it for Aristotle but not for us? Does this contradict Aristotle's argument that the ideal polis will lead to happiness and the good life?

also in p. 6 of Polit 1, 2, 7 was del then?

more to do

all

L

- V. **Advice for reading political theory**
 - A. **Don't get bogged down in the details.** Look for the big ideas of a chapter or section. Get the main points first and let the details come later.
 - B. **Highlight key points of the text.** Make notes in the text, too. When it's time to write a paper, you don't have to reread the whole text or search the whole text for key ideas: they're already highlighted.
 - C. **Read your highlighted parts over again.** The more you read and reread, the more you absorb.
 - D. **Take notes:** in the margins, on paper or computer. Identify the key problem the author is trying to address, summarize the key points of the argument, note the strengths and weaknesses of the argument, and jot down any questions you might have, and bring them to class.
 - E. **Ask questions** about the text: If a passage or argument is confusing to you, chances are it is to other, too.

[potential RP question] What defines a "good person" for Aristotle? How is it that one can be a good citizen without being a good person? Can a person be good without living under a good constitution? [or:] Why can't mechanics be citizens, according to Aristotle? [think of the ruler/ruled relationship] see also book VII chap. 9

[misc. stuff]

- x. **Think like a Greek!**
 1. **Not natural equality** but natural inequality. Inequality has to be created through politics.
 2. **Not the individual vs. state**, with the state as the enemy of individual freedom, but individual freedom is possible only through the polis
 3. **Not race**, but civilized/barbarian.
- x. "Youth never resents being governed" —Aristotle, xx/316 Ha!
- x. **Aristotle on wealth and property**

- x. "Acquisition" and limits to acquiring wealth: xx/21-27, 28 (Bk. I chaps. 8&9)
 - x. Three systems of property (Bk. II chap. 5)
 - x. How it relates to ruling and being ruled
 - x. How it relates to his theory of the mean
- [need to take notes on this? His willingness to place limits on the amount of wealth a person can accumulate is interesting, but is there time?]

x. **The ideal polis** (Book VII)

x. Having defined the best or most choiceworthy sort of life, and having argued that the best sort of life is possible only in a particular sort of polis, Aristotle then has to define what the ideal constitution is that can help humans achieve the good life.

x. **Three elements of the best life:**

1. External goods: property, wealth.
 2. Goods of the body: health
 3. Goods of the soul: the virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice
- x. A good person has all of these elements, but the first two goods exist for the sake of the soul.

x. The best sort of life, then, is a life of goodness, in which external and bodily goods serve the goods of the soul.

x. **Read xx/282/259**

x. A polis is a **self-sufficient community** of persons. Aristotle then goes on to describe what the ideal size is of the ideal polis in terms of territory, population and naval power, that can achieve self-sufficiency without being too large. (chaps. 4-5) Note that in all these he tends to favor **moderation**, or a middle ground between extremes (not too large or too small, not too many or too few, etc.)

x. "The best constituted state is the state which possesses the greatest possibility of achieving felicity." xx/312

Sources used/read:

Barker ed. of *Politics*

Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, chap. 4

Cambridge Companion to Aristotle, chaps. 1, 7, 8

also in p. 5
of Bk 1, 2, 7
what here
or here
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