

THE DOMINANCE OF *POLIS* FOR ARISTOTLE

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It has recently been said that "The possession of power and the employment of it were not questioned by the Greeks as they are by us", while "we ourselves prefer to regard power as intrinsically immoral, as a vehicle of corruption."¹ If true, this would mean that Aristotle recognizes that the state (*polis*) must have much control of its members, though contemporary thinkers would question this control. We find this very situation permeating the appraisal of Aristotle's view on the extent of the power of the *polis* over those within it. In particular, while Sir Ernest Barker thinks Aristotle to be an enemy to the autonomy of the individual, Professor D. J. Allan sees Aristotle as endeavoring to limit greatly the state's interference in individual lives.² Both of these authors seem to manifest a modern aversion to power in their interpretations of Aristotle.

I will try to elucidate Aristotle's true position with respect to the dominance of the *polis* by criticizing these authors. I will show the faultiness of the arguments used by Professor Allan to suggest that Aristotle means to be quite restrictive of the influence of the laws and magistrates and will counter Sir Ernest Barker's opinion that Aristotle hardly restricts the domination of the law and magistrates. My investigation will disclose how Aristotle must take a moderate position on the domination of the government. He recognizes that government has just purposes, but also abuses.

¹ A. G. Woodhead *Thucydides on the Nature of Power*, Martin Classical Lectures XXIV, Harvard University Press, 1970, pp.9-10. In this article I confine citations of Aristotle's texts to the body of the paper. For the sake of brevity: Pol = Politics, NE = Nicomachean Ethics, EE = Eudemian Ethics, MM = Magna Moralia, Rhet = Rhetoric.

² Sir Ernest Baker, "The Dominance of the Polis", in his introduction to *The Politics of Aristotle*, Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. l-iii, D.J. Allan, "Individual and State in the *Ethics* and *Politics*", in *La "Politique" d'Aristote* Foundation Hardt, Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique, Tome XI, 1965, pp.55-95. These two well-known authors have written the most recent lengthy treatments of the topic of state power in Aristotle.

I

A

Allan makes two main points in his interpretation of Aristotle's position: 1) the law must be limited in its scope so that it does not obstruct personal choice; 2) although the law *aims* to produce well-motivated actions, it can only *require* deeds, outward compliance with the law. I will examine both points.

Allan gives three reasons why he believes Aristotle limits the law in order to allow the individual to make his own choices. I will argue that each of these three reasons is not supported by Aristotle, and then shall reveal Aristotle's true thoughts on the limits of the law.

The first reason presented by Allan is that when actions are made compulsory by law, the chance that they will be performed with noble motives diminishes. Aristotle does, in fact, think that the law has a *kind* of compulsory power (Cf. *NE*, 1180a21-22; *Pol*, 1269a20-24). However, this compulsory power derives from habitual observance which does not hamper choice. Lawful actions may be performed from habit, from fear, or from good motives, but the guidance of the law does not impede personal choice (*NE*, 1144a13-20). The good man should *choose* lawful acts and choose them for their own sake, i.e. because they are just and lawful acts.

Allan's second reason for having the law limited is that when acts are compulsory, observers of the actor have difficulty determining his true motive. We recall, however, that law does not have the sort of compulsive power that could create this problem. It might be just as difficult to determine the motive of an act done in some sphere which the lawgiver avoided as of a lawful action. Also, it is doubtful that this consideration about ascertaining motives of actors ever preoccupied a lawgiver when he formed legislation.

The third reason, that compulsory acts, even when reasonable, are challenged by independent men, is the only one for which Allan gives evidence. He refers to *Politics*, VIII, 1332b3-9, which states: "For men often act contrary to their acquired habits and to their nature because of their reason, if they are convinced that some other course of action is preferable." (Rackham, Loeb edition.) But this passage is not relevant to Allan's point, since Aristotle is not claiming here that men resent the authority of law. Moreover, Aristotle directly contradicts Allan in *NE*, I, 9, 1180a22-24 when he asserts, "while people hate *men* who oppose their impulses, even if they oppose them rightly, the *law* in its ordaining of what is good is not burdensome." (Ross)

The three reasons presented by Allan for strictly confining the laws have been seen not to be Aristotle's reasons. According to Aristotle, the law is "limited" in two fundamental ways. The law is universal in its application and does not deal with particulars (Cf. *NE*, 1137b13; *Pol*, 1269a9-12; *Rhet*, 1374a28-33), and, says Aristotle, "this is the reason why all things are not determined by law, which might more accurately be considered a limitation (or that a decree is needed)."³ The other fundamental limitation of the law, which might more accurately be considered a limitation (or direction) of the lawgiver rather than of the law, is that "the laws are bound to be adapted to the constitution (*politeia*)" of the *polis*. This means the lawgiver must endeavor to make laws consistent with the fundamental principle of the constitution (*Pol*, 1282b10-13; 1289a13-15; 1269a29-34).⁴ We will be seeing that the laws' and government's being oriented toward certain ends is really the heart of Aristotle's position on the dominance of the *polis*.

B

Let us now examine Allan's second main point: that the law, which may aim at noble, well-motivated actions, can only *require deeds*. Since the lawgiver aims for desirable motivations among the people in the *polis*, it seems unlikely that he would, on principle, avoid trying to require these motivations. Allan has not seen the complex considerations involved in this question. First, we must recognize that in no case does the lawgiver aim at getting *all* people to act from a particular motive. Only from the *citizen* of the *polis* will the lawgiver expect better sorts of motivation. Even in the most extreme democracy, for example, there will be slaves who have only lower motives (*Pol*, 1319a27-32). Second, other than in monarchical and aristocratic regimes, truly *noble* actions are not even the aim of the astute lawgiver. Instead, he leads the ruling group to act moderately in accordance with the principle of the constitution, and he tries to get the subjects to support the constitution. He makes

³ *NE*, 1137b27-29, and see *Pol*, 1287b19-23. M. Aubenque, in the discussion following Allan's article (p.87), makes just this point, but Allan dismisses it. An additional consideration of some interest is that the laws, if they are to be effective, must be graspable by those who are to obey them (Cf. *NE*, 1113b33-1114a3; 1137a11; 1110b28-1111a2; *Athenian Constitution* IX, 2; *Metaphysics* 995a3-6).

⁴ *Politeia* is translated as constitution or regime. *Politeia* is the form of the *polis* and not merely a document. According to Aristotle, the *politeia* is the arrangement of offices, the distribution of power, and the determination of the end in the *polis* (*Pol*, 1289a15-20). He also says it is the "mode of life of the *polis*" (1295b1). The major types of regime are: monarchy, aristocracy, polity, democracy, oligarchy, and tyranny.

men good citizens rather than truly good men (*Pol*, 1278a40-b5). Having recognized these matters, we are prepared to explore whether Aristotle does think motives can be required.

Aristotle separates those lawgivers who have been *merely* framers of laws from those who have been this, but also designers of a constitution (*Pol*, 1273b32-33). Hence, the constitution and the laws must be distinguished. In drawing up a constitution the lawgiver is certainly "requiring" specific motives from various classes of people. We can say this not only because the *polis* has particular ends and that the *polis* to continue existing must have the support of the majority of men, but also because the constitution establishes which should be the sovereign element within the *polis*. The lawgiver does his best to guarantee that the ruling element is selected from those that have the proper motivation with regard to the end of the *polis*. He *requires* certain sorts of motivation in the rulers (*MM*, 1199b20-26; *Pol*, 1273b5). When men with undesirable motives become rulers, the lawgiver's design is foiled, and a revolution in the aim of the *polis* has occurred (*Pol*, 1303a13-18).

As a general and compelling argument that the *law*, within certain spheres of its application, requires moral characters, and that the *polis*, through its magistrates, demands good motives of men, I note Aristotle's emphasis upon the limited size of the *polis*. Aristotle contends that too large a number of men cannot participate in good order (*eutaxia*), which is the purpose of the law to bring into being. The *polis* must have a limit in size so that citizens may know each other's character, "in order to decide questions of justice and in order to distribute the offices according to merit."⁵ In a moderate-

⁵ *Pol*, 1326b14-18. One might consider here some reflections by Soren Kierkegaard on the distinction between the modern "public" and the ancient "people" (*demos*) and the implications of that distinction. He says in *The Present Age*, tr. by Alexander Dru, Harper Torchbooks, 1962, p.60: "The public is a concept which could not have occurred in antiquity because the people *en masse, in corpore*, took part in any situation which arose, and were responsible for the actions of the individual, and, moreover, the individual was personally present and had to submit at once to applause or disapproval for his decision. Only when the sense of association in society is no longer strong enough to give life to concrete realities is the Press able to create that abstraction 'the public', consisting of unreal individuals who never are and never can be united in an actual situation or organization —and yet are held together as a whole." And (p.62), "the ultimate difference between the modern world and antiquity is . . . that 'the whole' is not concrete and is therefore unable to support the individual, or to educate him as the concrete should (though without developing him absolutely), but is an abstraction which by its abstract equality repels him and thus helps him to be educated absolutely —unless he succumbs in the process. The *taedium vitae* so constant in antiquity was due to the fact that the outstanding individual was what others *could not be*: the inspiration of modern times will be that any man who finds himself, religiously speaking, has only achieved what *every one can achieve*."

sized and well-run *polis*, the proper persons will receive office and the officers will deal directly and sensibly with the character of the persons under their jurisdictions.

We see direct evidence of the role of the law in requiring desirable motivation in Aristotle's discussion of the courage of the citizen of the *polis*. Aristotle says, "Citizen-soldiers seem to face dangers because of the penalties imposed by the laws and the reproaches they would otherwise incur, and because of the honors they win by such action; and therefore those peoples seem to be bravest among whom cowards are held in dishonor and brave men in honor." (*NE*, 1116a18-21.) The combination of the law and the intimacy of the moderate-sized *polis* imbue the citizen, not with true virtue but, with a lower kind of civic virtue (nevertheless, a form of virtue) which "is due to shame and desire of a noble object (i.e., honor) and avoidance of disgrace, which is ignoble" (*NE*, 1116a28-29).

The magistrates governing in certain regimes obviously press for fine motives. According to Aristotle, "peculiar to the states that have more leisure and prosperity, and also pay attention to public decorum, are the offices of Superintendent of Women, Guardian of the Laws, Superintendent of Children, Controller of Physical Training . . ." (*Pol*, 1322b37-1323a1, Rackham.) These magistrates certainly are concerned with the motives of those they oversee. Furthermore, Aristotle himself seems to think it desirable that a magistrate be established to watch over, and perhaps reorient or intimidate, those leading objectionable lives. He states, "since men also cause revolutions through their private lives, some magistracy must be set up to inspect those whose mode of living is unsuited to the constitution" (*Pol*, 1308b20-22).

I have shown that there is an important sense in which the constitution, the laws, and the magistrates do *require* virtuous characters and motives from men. We see then that the role of law in the *polis* is more complex for Aristotle than Allan recognizes, and that the activity of the government must be more extensive than Allan thinks necessary. Hence, Allan is mistaken in both the main points of his article. Neither does Aristotle limit the extension of the law to make room for choice for the reasons Allan gives, nor does Aristotle think that the lawgiver can only require deeds and not motives. I am not quite through with Professor Allan yet, however, because another area of his argumentation allows us to attain an even clearer view of Aristotle's true intentions concerning the dominance of the *polis*.

In Book X, 9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle makes some assertions which directly contradict Allan's position. Allan expresses much consternation concerning Aristotle's statements. Aristotle asserts, "But it is surely not enough that when (most people) are young they should get the right nurture and attention; since they must, even when they are grown up, practice and be habituated to them, we shall need laws for this as well, and generally speaking to cover the whole of life; for most people obey necessity rather than argument, and punishments rather than the sense of what is noble." (1180a1-5, Ross.) What disturbs Allan about this passage is that Aristotle does not shy away from having the lawgiver deal with adults as well as children, that the generality of adults receive such a poor moral estimation, and that laws are said to cover the whole of life. Let us examine Allan's reservations in our attempt to show that Aristotle means what he says.

Aristotle thinks that men are born with varying natural capacities to be fully virtuous. This congenital moral aptitude, which must be ethically developed by habituation and inculcation of moral precepts, he calls natural virtue, *physike arete* (*NE*, 1144b1-17). According to Aristotle, it must be the responsibility of the *polis* to see that its citizens receive the requisite moral training (*NE*, 1179b31-35). Allan contends, however, that since men have different natural capacities for virtue and each man is ultimately responsible for his own moral character, the lawgiver and *polis* cannot be uniformly successful in getting men to be virtuous, and they ought to restrict their activity to allow men to develop themselves (pp. 74-75). But while Allan is correct in noting that differences in natural virtue help explain why the politician cannot be uniformly successful in making people virtuous, they do *not* help us see why the laws and state activity should be limited. In fact, Aristotle thinks that the less aptitude men have for virtue, the more they need authoritarian direction. Those who are truly virtuous need little direction from written laws (*Pol*, 1287b37-41; 1284a3-15; *NE*, 1167b2-16). In general, we might say that the high-minded men, who have been well trained, are convinced by such ethical arguments as appear in Aristotle's *Ethics*, and will gladly make their actions conform to rational principle, while the majority of men will act within the laws but from mere custom and habit associated with fear of punishment or shame (Cf. *NE*, 1095a6-11; 1116a27-29; 1179b4-20; *Pol*, 1269a20-24). Precisely because natural virtue varies in magnitude, Allan is most tellingly refuted. Since the majority of men will not

listen to argument and discern the right, they must have written law and magistratical supervision. Hence, when Allan concludes his article by suggesting, "Aristotle's careful analysis of *proairesis* would have put him on the path towards political liberalism if he could have discarded certain social prejudices", I suspect that Aristotle's supposed "prejudices" turn out to be his key conviction that men are differently capacitated for virtue, and this conviction makes him draw back from extreme democratic liberalism.⁶

If Aristotle credits most men with merely a moderate capacity for virtue and wants them to have laws and guidance, does this mean that Aristotle is doubting human rationality and treating men like children, as Allan suggests (p.76)? I think not. For Aristotle, it is solely because men are 'rational', which in part means being able 'to rule and be ruled', that there are any laws at all (Cf. *NE*, 1134b13-15; 1161b6-7). It is man's peculiar distinction that he both has and needs laws. Aristotle claims, "it is the special property of man in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and just and unjust," and "as man is the best of the animals when perfected, so he is the worst of all when sundered from law and justice." (*Pol*, 1253a15-17 and 31-33) Moreover, I should re-emphasize that not merely for most men does Aristotle feel laws are necessary, but also to guide and control most rulers (*Pol*, 1287b41-1288a5). And neither should we think that having laws and magistrates backed up by punishments is treating men like children. Adults are threatened with imprisonments, fines, banishments, etc., which are certainly not the sorts of punishments we use on children.

What are we to make of Aristotle's contention that laws are needed "to cover the whole of life"? We have seen that Aristotle thinks man is distinguished in that he requires a system of law. The law ought to be adapted to the constitution of the *polis* in which it operates (*Pol*, 1282b10-11; 1289a11-15). Now the *polis* is, for Aristotle, the most embracing human association, which subsumes the purposes of the others under its own purpose (*Pol*, 1252a1-7; *NE*, 1160a9-28). Since man, if he is not either "a beast or a god", lives in association with others, he must, for fullest development, live under the conditions of the *polis* (*Pol*, 1253a32-33). The sort of *polis* under which he lives depends on its constitution, which is primarily the determination of which class of men rule and the purpose of the *polis* (*Pol*, 1289a15-20). The laws adapted to the constitution

⁶ It seems to me, then, that the main-purpose of the last chapter of the *NE* is not merely to emphasize the need of training for the young, as Allan suggests, but also of control of the many, since they will not comprehend the kinds of arguments used in the *NE*. I.e., the chapter motivates the attention that Aristotle goes on to give to the matters of the *polis* in the *Politics*.

regulate how the rulers are to govern. Hence, the laws extend as far as political rule extends, except for the inevitable restriction of the law to universals. Since political rule is concerned with all human goods, because its proper objective is the good life, so is the law (*NE*, 1094a25-b11; 1145a6-11, especially 11; *Pol*, 1292a32-34). Therefore, we should not be surprised when Aristotle says that laws should be made "to cover the whole of life".

II

From observing the difficulties encountered by Professor Allan's attempt to push Aristotle too close to modern liberalism, we have gained insight into Aristotle's true intentions regarding the dominance of the *polis* over individuals. Further light on his position will appear when we investigate Sir Ernest Barker's exaggeration of Aristotle's totalitarianism. I will concentrate on Barker's three principal points.

1) Barker recognizes that Aristotle is not a totalitarian in the sense that he sacrifices all individuals to the state. Barker sees that for Aristotle the *polis* exists primarily to morally develop its members. But Barker thinks that this development extends only to *citizens* of the *polis*; others, including slaves and perhaps the laboring classes and resident aliens, are, according to Barker, "sacrificed". 2) Barker claims that the Greek philosophers never considered the 'limit of state interference' and did not hesitate to regulate all aspects of family life as well as the arts. 3) Barker asserts, "Neither Plato nor Aristotle allows weight to the fundamental consideration that moral action which is done *ad verba magistri* ceases to be moral direct promotion of morality by an act of state-command is destruction of moral autonomy. The good will is the maker of goodness; and the state can only increase goodness by increasing the freedom of the good will." (p.li).

To the first point, that those residents of the *polis* other than the citizens "are sacrificed", Aristotle would certainly take exception. In the best types of constitutions, monarchy, aristocracy and polity, the rulers are concerned with the common interests of the citizens, and the citizens should be those of ample virtue to participate in the state (*Pol*, 1279a28-b10). Clearly in a polity, a regime in which those with "military virtue" (fighting-men) have the supreme power, there would be a large body of citizens who stand to gain from their participation in the *polis*. But in a monarchy and an aristocracy, the rulers must care for the ruled so that great numbers benefit (*Pol*, 1319a1-4). Can it be said, however, that these regimes sacrifice the

non-citizens? Non-citizens include slaves, resident aliens, and sometimes others, but even children are not citizens *in the full sense*. Certainly children are not sacrificed, but neither are the slaves, according to Aristotle, if they are truly “natural slaves” (*Pol*, 1255b4-15; 1278b32-37; 1333b38-1334a2). For Aristotle, those groups excluded from citizenship of a good constitution are obtaining as much as their natures warrant, they are receiving life, and a secure one, even if not a good life. Where men may be sacrificed, according to Aristotle, is in the deviation regimes: tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy, in which the rulers are not ruling in the common interest and so are not working to achieve the best life for the *polis* (*Pol*, 1287b39-41; 1279a17-21).

In regard to Barker’s claim that the philosophers *never* considered the limits of state interference, there are crucial objections. Aristotle distinguishes between what is naturally just and what is merely conventionally just (*NE*, V, 7; *Rhet*, I, 13). This distinction sets boundaries, though somewhat imprecise ones, between what is proper and improper for the *polis*, both with respect to other states and with respect to its own families, citizens, and non-citizens. Aristotle might argue, for example, that subjecting foreign states to despotic rule, depriving Antigone of her familial right to bury her brother, preventing deserving men from getting ruling positions, and enslaving the undeserving, are all unjust uses of state power (*Pol*, 1333b29-31; *Rhet*, 1373b9-11; *Pol*, 1283b27-30; 1255a24-32). Contributing to the force of this point is Aristotle’s doctrine of natural virtue. The general level of moral endowment of the *polis*, the moral aptitude of the various groups of men in it, justifies a particular sort of constitution for the *polis*, which implies certain modes of rule, and disqualifies other forms of rule. Another indication that Aristotle was willing to limit the government is his allowing for men of such exceptional virtue that the state can have no authority over them. He says, “there can be no law dealing with such men . . . for they are themselves a law” (*Pol*, 1284a13-14). Further, Aristotle thinks practical wisdom (*phronesis*), the intellectual virtue involved in political rule, is not supreme over the speculative intellectual virtue, *sophia* (*NE*, 1145a7-11). *Phronesis* “issues orders” for the sake of *sophia* “but not to it.” And “to maintain its supremacy would be like saying that the art of politics rules the gods because it issues orders about all the affairs of the state.” In the well-ordered *polis*, then, politics will not rule philosophy. Finally, Aristotle does not have the *polis* interfere with the family to the extent that Barker fears. In the discussions of the family, outside that of the family in the very best *polis*, Aristotle

seems most concerned only that women and children be guided in directions that conform to the purpose of the *polis* and that family size be controlled to prevent economic problems from overpopulation (*Pol*, 1269b12-19; 1265b6-12; *NE*, 1180a25-32).

Barker's third point about moral autonomy being inhibited by Aristotle's *polis* is somewhat difficult to deal with because it is posed in such Kantian language, and so loosely. Barker is certainly wrong in his suggestion that neither Plato nor Aristotle recognizes that action done *ad verba magistri* loses its morality. To show this, I need only call attention to Plato's fundamental distinction between having opinion about and knowledge of the good (cf. *Meno* 98a-b; *Phaedo* 69a-b; *Republic* 619c), and Aristotle's distinction between doing what the good man does and doing it *as* he does it, i.e., out of a fixed state of character directed toward the noble (*NE*, 1105b5-9; 1144a13-20). Barker's view that "direct promotion of morality by an act of state-command is the destruction of moral autonomy" has a questionable applicability to Aristotle's ideas, but is dubious even for Kant. It would seem that moral autonomy is perverted by the acting individual rather than merely by the state ("*self-incurred* tutelage"), and, furthermore, Kant himself seems ready to concede that a lesser degree of civil freedom may be a good preparatory training for an eventually freer state.⁷

III

We have now seen how Professor Allan strains too much to make Aristotle a liberal and how Sir Ernest Barker overemphasizes Aristotle's totalitarianism. Through our criticism of Allan we have shown that for Aristotle the *polis* has a definite purpose. In trying to achieve this purpose the lawgiver establishes magistrates and laws to guide the people. The laws deal with all universal matters of political concern and the magistrates are assigned to handle specifics. Since men's endowment with natural virtue establishes their accessibility to different kinds of guidance, the lawgiver expects the various groups of men to respond favorably to argument, punishment, shame, etc. He cannot allow men to be left without direction, because they will not see the right or do it on their own. From criticizing Barker we have gathered the significance for Aristotle of the distinction of natural and conventional justice. The *polis* has naturally best constitutions and natural limits to its exercise of governmental power.

⁷ I. Kant, "What Is Enlightenment", *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. by L. W. Beck, Bobbs-Merrill, Co., Inc., 1959, p.92.

So that we might have a fuller view of Aristotle's position on the dominance of the *polis*, let us consider what is, for Aristotle, the significance of the state's concern for virtue, when regimes are unjust, and what he thinks of political liberty.

Aristotle believes the *polis* simply cannot exist if it is not concerned at all with ethical virtue. In trading and military alliances, for example, there is vigilance that neither state harms the other, but there is no real concern about the moral character of the other, nor are there any magistrates common to the states to direct both (*Pol*, 1280a35-b6). Hence, there is here nothing but an *alliance* (a conventional agreement) for the sake of trade or defence. Suppose ten thousand men gathered together in a place merely for the sake of trading goods and defending each other, but otherwise lived in their separate houses just as if they lived in separate states. Would these men constitute a *polis* rather than merely a ten-thousand-member alliance? According to Aristotle they would not form a *polis*, any more than do separate states joined together in an alliance, since their association has no complete, unified natural purpose (*Pol*, 1280b13-35). What constitutes a *polis* is a "partnership of families and villages in perfect (*teleia*) and self-sufficient (*autarkes*) life", and this means "living happily and nobly" (1281a1-2). The *polis* must have magistrates and laws that work toward virtuous activity.⁸

It is crucial for the stability of the reigning political regime that the majority of the men in the *polis* support it, or that there be "consent of the governed" (*Pol*, 1270b21-22; 1272b30-32; 1294b34-40; 1296b15-16). But this clearly is not the most fundamental consideration for Aristotle. More important for him than that those under the regime favor it, since they may favor it for unsound reasons, is that it work in their true interests. This can be achieved by having the appropriate rulers, good laws, and rulers and subjects that are law-abiding. True law-abiding rulers and subjects are those that have been educated in the spirit of the laws (*Pol*, 1310a12-18). From the childhood training, habitual obedience to the laws, and the pervasive influence of the prevailing admired sorts of moral characters—all these being supported by the family, the magistrates and the intimacy of the *polis*—men develop and are upheld in the moral orientation for life.

One cannot stress enough the importance for Aristotle of the law as providing for the good ordering of the *polis*. Living by the law fits

⁸ It is obviously quite revealing about modern political thought to compare Aristotle's position in this passage, *Politics* 1280a35-1281a2, with a social contract theory such as Hobbes' in *Leviathan*. Hobbes gives to the state the purposes, peace and prosperity, which Aristotle rejects. Hobbes would agree with Aristotle, however, that a central government is necessary.

men to sustain it. The law is viewed as giving life and motion to the men in the city and not at all as interfering with their "freedom". In *The Movement of Animals*, 703a29-34, Aristotle states:

The constitution of an animal must be regarded as resembling that of a well-governed (*eunomoumenên*) polis. For when order (*taxis*) is once established in a city there is no need of a separate monarch to be present at every activity, but each individual performs his own task as he is ordered (*hôs tetaktai*), and one act succeeds another because of habit. (Loeb translation with some modifications).

It is seen here that law is viewed as upholding the ordering of the polis and as making unnecessary a ruler to be watching each individual in all his actions. When men are accustomed to live by the laws they support the regime and consider it just.

Men's fancies turn toward revolution when the regime is felt to be unjust. The principal injustice that precipitates revolution is unwarranted exclusion from political rule (*Pol*, 1201a25-b1; 1307a20-27). Any of the important groups of men in the polis: the rich, poor, middle class, the virtuous, farmers, laborers, may feel excluded. Aristotle believes that the rightly framed constitutions: monarchy, aristocracy, and polity, when the citizenry is equipped for them, are just. The deviation regimes: democracy, oligarchy, tyranny, "which aim at the ruler's own advantage only are faulty, . . . for they have an element of despotism, whereas a polis is an association of free men." (*Pol*, 1279a19-21.) This means that, for Aristotle, rule is oppressive when directed to bad ends. Concerning the conditions for just or unjust types of rule, Aristotle says, "there is such a thing as being naturally fitted to be controlled by a master, and in another case to be governed by a king, and in another, to exercise citizenship, and a different government is just and expedient for different people; but there is no such thing as natural fitness for tyranny, nor for any other of the forms of government that are divergences, for these come about against nature." (*Pol*, 1287b37-41.) It is especially, then, in the manner of the rule of the current regime in relation to the quality of the men in the polis, that we really encounter the possibility of the grossest abuses. As a spectator of the imperfect situations in the states of his time, Aristotle laments, "it has now become a habit in the states, not even to desire equality (justice in distribution of political power), but either to seek to rule or to endure being under a master." (*Pol*, 1296a40-b2.) Men had been habituated to injustice in the Greek polis and seemed no longer to understand justice or freedom.

The free man, as we can see, is one who participates in ruling the *polis*. Freedom or liberty (*eleutheria*) is, according to Aristotle, to participate in ruling and being ruled (*Pol*, 1217a40-b3). But he discloses another meaning men give to liberty, which is for men to live as they please (*Pol*, 1317b12). Democracy seems especially to aim at freedom, since it seeks equality in rule even for the poor. Yet democracy may also flirt with the second kind of freedom. For example, in an extreme democracy in which all free-born men have an equal share and which is populous and wealthy enough to allow the people to actively participate in government, there is the danger that the absolute sway of the people through its numerical superiority may disturb the wealthy and other notable citizens (*Pol*, 1319b11-18; 1293a4-12). The people, guided by demagogues, may take over the property of the wealthy and ignore the laws and rule simply according to popular will. In this case, certainly, the notables are turned against the populace, and there reigns, on the level of the *polis*, the second kind of liberty for the majority, i.e., the freedom to do as it pleases. Aristotle notes that there may be a lack of self-discipline (*akrasia*) in a state as well as in an individual (*Pol*, 1310a18-19). But license, whether on the level of the state or of individuals (which involves or contributes to lawlessness in the *polis*), cannot be accepted by Aristotle (Cf. *Pol*, 1319b39-19a1), since it destabilizes the regime by taking to excess the democratic principle. Aristotle would prefer to see men living in accordance with the principles of the respective regimes, but according to the principles taken in moderation. He contends that we "ought not to consider that democratic or oligarchic which will make the *polis* most democratic or oligarchic, but what will make it such for the longest time" (*Pol*, 1320a2-4.) Men ought not to seek to do whatever they please, but seek "to live in conformity with the constitution", since this is not "slavery but salvation (*soteria*)" (*Pol*, 1310a35-36). Aristotle will even contend that when the democratic populace or the oligarchs disregard the law, the regime is dissolved. "Where the laws do not govern, there is no constitution, as the law ought to govern all things while the magistrates control particulars" (*Pol*, 1292a32-34). Hence, it is law and justice that forms a *polis*. Living in conformity with a just constitution which gives one a share in ruling and being ruled, seems to be Aristotle's idea of liberty in the *polis*.

Aristotle's political thought may be seen as an analysis of the *polis* and its different forms. But it is such an analysis which keeps constantly focused upon the true end of political life, and the different manners in which different states view and seek this end. In most effectively working toward its proper *telos*, the *polis* ought to

be moderate and just, i.e., lawful. It is through considering the objective of political rule, the lawful manner in which rulers should operate, and how men are educated for rule and obedience, that we confront Aristotle's position on the extent of the dominance of the *polis* over individual men.

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