ARISTOTLE’S CONCEPTION OF MORAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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THE analogies which ethics and political science may bear to the natural sciences, as well as the analogies of moral and political actions to artistic and technical productions, are prominent in the first discussions of virtue and political institutions. The early formulations of those likenesses lay the pattern for efforts, much repeated subsequently, to make morals and politics more certain by imitation of the methods of science or, conversely, to make science more practical and moral action more efficient by relating them to principles of operation suggested by the arts and crafts. As Aristotle tells the story, Socrates, the first philosopher to concern himself with problems of scientific method, applied his speculations on method to morals rather than the natural sciences, while Plato continued Socrates’ interest in universals or definitions but, unlike Socrates, gave universals separate existence. In Plato’s presentation of the philosophic inquiry of Socrates, this search for definitions, which he shared with Socrates, leads to the development of a method of inquiry which proceeds by analogies of virtue with the arts—of the just, brave, temperate, or wise man with the cobbler, shipbuilder, physician, farmer,

1 Metaphysics i. 6. 987b1: “Socrates, however, was busying himself about ethical matters and neglecting the world of nature as a whole but seeking the universal in these ethical matters, and fixed thought for the first time on definitions.” Cf. ibid. xiii. 4. 1078b17 ff. and 9. 1086b2.
general, or money-maker—while the method and analogies are themselves defended by arguments against the supposition that men's actions are indifferent to evaluation or inaccessible to knowledge or that the standards by which virtues are determined and judged are "conventional." Like Socrates and Plato, Aristotle was convinced that moral and political actions could not be reduced to arbitrary decisions which turn on considerations of custom and calculations of power, yet he differed from both in his conception of the subject matter of ethics and politics and consequently of the bearing of the analogy of the arts and sciences on it. Socrates' solution, according to Aristotle, required the identification of virtue with art and therefore with knowledge, while Plato's solution required the further identification of the Good and Being. In opposition to Socrates, Aristotle denied that virtue is knowledge, or that men cannot knowingly do evil; in opposition to Plato, Aristotle denied that the Good is a substance or a principle, or that it could, if so conceived, assist in the explanation or direction of action.²

Aristotle does not criticize Socrates for his numerous analogies of virtues to the arts—although he must have known them well—but for the inference which he supposes Socrates to

² This tendency of the analogies of Plato to become literal in the criticism of Aristotle—to such an extent that the doctrine of Socrates in which virtue is said to be identified with science may be separated from that of Plato in which Good is taken as identical with Being—is more easily explained by considering the operation of Aristotle's method on the interpretations of the doctrines of his predecessors than by any supposition concerning the period or manner of Plato's influence on Aristotle, for the reduction of the analogy to a literal statement is usually followed by the statement of the partial respects in which the proposition might be justified. Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* vi. 12. 1144b28: "Socrates, then, thought the virtues were rules or rational principles (for he thought they were, all of them, forms of scientific knowledge), while we think they involve a rational principle." Cf. also *ibid.* 1144b18 and iii. 8. 1116b3. As a result of the identification of the Idea of the Good with a separate and independent existence, the proper refutation of the Platonic doctrine is referred to the *Metaphysics*, while its moral insufficiencies are brought out, paradoxically, by the opposition to it of Socratic analogies; cf. *Metaphysics* i. 6. 1096b8 ff., especially 21 and 1097a8: "It is hard, too, to see how a weaver or a carpenter will be benefited in regard to his own art by knowing this 'good itself,' or how the man who viewed the Idea itself will be a better doctor or general thereby." Cf. *ibid.* ii. 2. 996a22; xiv. 4. 1091a29-1091b3; 4-5. 1091b13-1092a17.
have drawn from those analogies (and the evidence in Plato's dialogues to support that inference is good) that the virtues are kinds of knowledge. Aristotle, for his part, makes use of like analogies, but his inference from them is that the virtues are similar to the arts, not in nature or definition, but in method and mode of acquisition. Both are produced by exercise of actions like those which they in turn cause; both are destroyed by the same cause that produces them; and both are directed to ends which are intermediate between two extremes.3 The treatment of causes in the Metaphysics and in the physical writings of Aristotle suggests that the prominence of causes in this comparison of processes of production and destruction, which depend on the efficient cause, isolates the point of likeness of the practical sciences, ethics, and politics, to the productive sciences or arts which is important in Aristotle's analyses. It is that likeness which permits Aristotle to call both practical sciences in a broad sense, as contrasted to theoretic sciences, while differentiating the subjects of the practical sciences, in a narrow sense, from those of the productive, because of the differences of their ends, for the actions of moral agents are separated by their principles of motion and rest from the productions of artists no less than from the natural motions of things.4 That dif-

3 Nicomachean Ethics ii. i. 1103a26: "Again, of all things that come to us by nature we first acquire the potentiality and later the activity (this is plain in the case of the senses; for it was not by often seeing or often hearing that we got these senses, but on the contrary we had them before we used them, and did not come to have them by using them); but the virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, e.g., men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts." Ibid. 1103b7: "Again, it is from the same causes and by the same means that every virtue is both produced and destroyed, and similarly every art; for it is from playing the lyre that both good and bad lyre-players are produced. And the corresponding statement is true of builders and of all the rest; men will be good or bad builders as a result of building well or badly. For if this were not so, there would have been no need of a teacher, but all men would have been born good or bad at their craft" (cf. also ibid. 2. 1104a27). For further points of similarity between the virtues and art, cf. ibid. 3. 1105a10; 6. 1106b8.

4 Metaphysics ii. 1. 993b20: "For the end of theoretical knowledge is truth, while that of practical knowledge is action (for even if they consider how things are, practical
ference of the virtues from the arts, notwithstanding all their likenesses to each other, falls precisely at the point at which Aristotle thought the analogies of Socrates implied an identity. The arts and the virtues agree in being principles of motion internal to the producer or agent; they differ in the relative importance knowledge has in initiating their respective motions, for judgments of value in art are based solely on the products of the art, while acts according to virtue are judged according to the character and intention of the agent, and therefore knowledge, which is of primary importance in the arts, is of secondary and reflected importance, Socrates to the contrary notwithstanding, in the virtues. Art, indeed, considered as a principle of production in the producer is a habit of the soul and an intellectual virtue, and it is distinct at once from prudence, the intellectual virtue which is concerned with the good and the expedient (since art involves excellence, while prudence does not) and from all the moral virtues (since the possession of art, unlike the virtues, requires the possession of knowledge).5 Art, men do not study the cause in itself, but in some relation and at some time).” Ibid. vi. 1025b19: “And since natural science, like other sciences, confines itself to one class of beings, i.e. to that sort of substance which has the principle of its movement and rest present in itself, evidently it is neither practical nor productive. For the principle of production is in the producer—it is either reason or art or some potency, while the principle of action is in the doer—viz. will, for that which is done and that which is willed are the same.” Cf. Nicomachean Ethics i. 1. 1094b3 ff.

5 Nicomachean Ethics ii. 5. 1105a27: “Again, the case of the arts and that of the virtues is not similar; for the products of the arts have their goodness in themselves, so that it is enough that they should have a certain character, but if the acts, that are in accordance with the virtues have themselves a certain character it does not follow that they are done justly or temperately. The agent must also be in a certain condition when he does them; in the first place he must have knowledge, secondly he must choose the acts and choose them for their own sakes, and thirdly his action must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character. These are not reckoned in as conditions of the possession of the arts, except the bare knowledge; but as a condition of the possession of the virtues knowledge has little or no weight, while the other conditions count not for a little but for everything, i.e. the very conditions which result from often doing just and temperate acts.” Cf. ibid. vi. 4. 1140a1 ff.; 1140b33 ff., esp. 1140b21: “But further, while there is such a thing as excellence in art, there is no such thing as excellence in prudence; and in art he who errs willingly is preferable, but in prudence as in the virtues, he is the
like prudence or any other intellectual virtue, is produced and destroyed, as are the moral virtues, but unlike them it is acquired by teaching, not by habituation.  

Plato preserved Socrates’ analogy of virtue to the arts and to knowledge, but added to it, since knowledge is of being as opinion is of becoming, an existential status for the subject of this knowledge. Aristotle’s criticism broke the development of the Platonic doctrine into two stages, separating the analogy of the virtues to knowledge from the analogy of the Good to Being, and while Aristotle continued to make use of both analogies, he derived opposite conclusions from each. Socrates’ comparison of virtue and the arts, according to Aristotle, made them both kinds of knowledge; Aristotle’s comparison of the two emphasized rather their status in being—both are habits to be acquired, not natural entities, and the further contrast he drew between the virtues and the arts distinguished them precisely in the greater dependence of art on knowledge. Plato’s identification of the Good with Being, according to Aristotle, is the result of an inference from knowledge which is changeless to reverse. Plainly then, prudence is a virtue and not an art.” Cf. also ibid. 13. 1144b17 ff., esp. 30: “It is clear, then, from what has been said, that it is not possible to be good in the strict sense without prudence, nor prudent without moral virtue.”

6 Ibid. ii. 1. 1103a14.

7 Habit is contrasted both to nature and to reason as a possible mode of acquiring virtue. Ibid. ii. 1. 1103a18: “From this it is also plain that none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature. . . . Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.” Cf. ibid. iii. 3. 1112a31 and x. 9. 1179b20: “Now some think that we are made good by nature, others by habituation, others by teaching.” We are not made good by nature, and therefore consideration of nature is not important in ethics; but we are adapted to virtue by nature, and therefore in politics both nature and the rational principle are joined to habit in the treatment of virtue. Cf. Politics vii. 13. 1332a39: “There are three things that make men good and virtuous; these are nature, habit, rational principle. . . . We have already determined what natures are likely to be most easily moulded by the hands of the legislator. All else is the work of education; we learn some things by habit and some by instruction.” Cf. ibid. 15. 1334b6 and 17. 1336b40: “The poets who divide ages by sevens are in the main right: but we should observe the divisions actually made by nature; for the deficiencies of nature are what art and education seek to fill up.”
an eternal subject matter. Aristotle's comparison of morals and politics with scientific knowledge, brought out, not an identity of subject matter in the practical and theoretic sciences, but a similarity of principles, for the analysis by which the moralist arrives at principles is like the analysis of the mathematician, while the process by which art or morals operates from the principle is like the processes of physics. The comparison of the practical with the theoretic sciences, however, must be supplemented by a distinction, since the direction of analysis and action in politics is different from the establishment of principles and the direction of demonstration in either mathematics or physics, the hypotheses which serve as principles in mathematics being supplanted by final causes in ethics, and the efficient cause of the process in morals becoming an idea in the mind of the agent. 

8 Nicomachean Ethics vii. 9. 1151a15: "For virtue and vice respectively preserve and destroy the first principle, and in actions the final cause is the first principle, as the hypotheses are in mathematics; neither in that case is it the argument that teaches the first principles, nor is it so here—virtue either natural or produced by habituation is what teaches right opinion about the first principle." Ibid. iii. 3. 1112b12: "We deliberate not about ends but about means. For a doctor does not deliberate whether he shall heal, nor a statesman whether he shall produce law and order, nor does anyone else deliberate about his end. They assume the end and consider how and by what means it is to be attained: and if it seems to be produced by several means, they consider by which it is most easily and best produced, while if it is achieved by one only they consider how it will be achieved by this and by what means this will be achieved, till they come to the first cause, which in the order of discovery is last. For the person who deliberates seems to investigate and analyse in the way described as though he were analysing a geometrical construction (not all investigation appears to be deliberation—for instance mathematical investigations—but all deliberation is investigation), and what is last in the order of analysis seems to be first in the order of becoming." Cf. ibid. i. 7. 1098a39 and Metaphysics vii. 7. 1032b22: "The active principle then and the starting-point for the process of becoming healthy is, if it happens by art, the form in the soul, and if spontaneously, it is that, whatever it is, which is the starting-point of his making for the man who makes by art, as in healing the starting-point is perhaps the production of warmth, and this the physician produces by rubbing." The practical sciences are compared with the arts and the theoretic sciences in the use of principles; they are contrasted to both in their ends. Cf. above, n. 4, and Nichomachean Ethics ii. 2. 1103b26: "Since, then, the present inquiry does not aim at theoretical knowledge like the others (for we are inquiring not in order to know what virtue is, but in order to become good, since otherwise our inquiry would have been of no use), we must examine the nature of actions, namely how we ought to do them; for these determine also the
the analogy of science, Aristotle found a status of becoming for
virtue through its analogy to art; in the place of knowledge and
principles of knowledge suggested as the nature of virtue by the
analogy of the arts, Aristotle found a principle of action in the
practical sciences through their analogy to the theoretic sci-
ences.

The meticulous concern of Aristotle to treat of the doctrines
of his predecessors, and even to rearrange and preserve in his
own analysis pieces of them, not always easily recognizable as
such, his recurrence to the analogy of the virtues and the arts,
and his emphasis on the distinction of the practical from the
theoretical and the productive sciences, should not be permitted
to conceal the scientific insights in which these formal interests
originate or the practical consequences which they entail.
Ethics and politics are comparable in method with the theoretic
sciences, but in the practical sciences, since their end is action,
the method is itself part of the subject matter. The importance
of action in ethics and politics is comparable to the importance
of production in the arts, but the emphasis is on the product in
the arts and only secondarily on the state of mind which may
be inferred as its cause, while the emphasis in morals is on habit,
character, and intention, and only when they have been taken
into account can the action which results from them be judged,
since it may often, under other circumstances, have followed
from morally indifferent conditions.

Method and subject matter may, therefore, be distinguished
analytically in ethics and in the arts, in the sense that the
method in each is directed to action or production while the sub-
ject matter consists of the entities involved in either process.
In the theoretic sciences they are contrasted without danger of
confusion, since the things known are prior to and apart from

\[\text{\textit{Ibid. x. 9. 1179a35:}}\]

"Surely, as the saying goes, where there are things to be done the end is not to survey
and recognize the various things, but rather to do them; with regard to virtue, then, it
is not enough to know, but we must try to have and use it, or try any other way there
may be of becoming good."
the study of them, and the formal analysis and demonstration of knowledge, which constitutes method, is employed on a natural or abstract subject matter whose conditions of existence are independent of the requirements or influence of knowledge. Within the more limited range of actions and products, moreover, virtues and institutions, which form the subject matter of political philosophy, may be contrasted in their mode of existence to artificial objects, which form the subject matter of art, notwithstanding the similarity of their genesis, in much the fashion that the analytic processes of mathematics are opposed to the physical processes of natural philosophy. When Aristotle analogizes art and politics to the theoretic sciences, he uses examples from the arts and from the physical sciences, sometimes to clarify art by analyses from physics, sometimes to clarify distinctions in physics by analysis of the arts; political institutions and moral habits, on the other hand, usually suggest mathematical principles rather than physical phenomena. The objects of art are produced as nature would have produced them, and both in the processes of production and in the objects produced, art imitates nature. As process and as analytical method the greater clarity in these analogies lies on the side of art, for it is possible to distinguish ends and necessary conditions clearly in the arts (since the end is in the mind of the artist, the conditions in his materials), whereas in nature they are only the successive stages of a process continuous in time: Aristotle thus usually distinguishes form and matter or the four causes in physics or metaphysics by isolating them in the example of the builder and his house or the sculptor and his statue. As

9 Art is usually contrasted to nature, chance, and fortune as possible modes of production (cf. ibid. ii. 4. 1103b21; vi. 4. 1149b18; Metaphysics xii. 3. 1070b6). Physics ii. 8. 199b11: "Now intelligent action is for the sake of an end; therefore the nature of things also is so. Thus if a house, e.g., had been a thing made by nature, it would have been made in the same way as it is now by art; and if things made by nature were made also by art, they would come to be in the same way as by nature. Each step then in the series is for the sake of the next; and generally art partly completes what nature cannot bring to a finish, and partly imitates her." Cf. ibid. 2. 194b21; Meteorology iv. 3. 381b6.

10 Metaphysics v. 2. 1013b24; vii. 3. 1029b2; xii. 4. 1070b25; Physics ii. 3. 194b16; 8. 198b8 (the analogy of art even suggests mistakes in nature, ibid. 33 ff.); De generatione
modes of existence, on the other hand, the criteria of unity in an artificial work are borrowed from those of natural objects, and even the equivalent of "life" and "soul" are sought in the definition of a tragedy. The virtues in counterdistinction from the arts are described best, not by the analogy of their mode of production to nature, but by their relation to a rational principle, and the conditions of existence therefore both of moral states and of political institutions are usually stated in terms of mathematical proportions. Mathematical analysis has greater clarity and precision of method, since conclusions follow in it simply from hypotheses, while moral analysis has the advantage of greater concreteness of specification and existence.11

ei7 e70 Ii. 2. 357b14; De partibus animalium i. 1. 640a27. Similar examples may serve to distinguish the products of man's intelligence from nature, chance, and necessity (cf. Nicomachean Ethics iii. 3. 1112a32 ff.).

12 Cf. the definition of moral virtue, Nicomachean Ethics ii. 6. 1106a26 ff.; or the distinction of distributive and rectificatory justice and the discussion of reciprocity, ibid. v. 3-5. 1133b10 ff.; or the discussion of equality and inequality in friendship, ibid. viii. 6-7. 1158b1 ff.; cf. also ibid. v. 8. 1136a1. Similarly in politics, proportion and the mean enter into the nature of the constitution, the explanation of revolutions, and the bases of education. Politics v. 7. 1307a26: "The only stable principle of government is equality according to proportion, and for every man to enjoy his own"; ibid. 3. 1302b34: "Political revolutions also spring from a disproportionate increase in any part of the state. For as a body is made up of many members, and every member ought to grow in proportion, that symmetry may be preserved; but loses its nature if the foot be four cubits long and the rest of the body two spans; and, should the abnormal increase be one of quality as well as of quantity, may even take the form of another animal: even so a state has many parts, of which some one may often grow imperceptibly; for example, the number of poor in democracies and in constitutional states"; ibid. viii. 7. 1342b34: "Thus it is clear that education should be based upon three principles—the mean, the possible, the becoming, these three." Cf. ibid. iii. 12. 1282b18; 13. 1284b3; iv. 11. 1295a25; 12. 1296a14; v. 1. 1301b29; 8. 1308b10; 9. 1309b18; vii. 4. 1326a33; viii. 6. 1341a10.

13 Thus, both the appetitive part of the soul, which is the locus of the moral virtues, and mathematical properties have a principle—λόγον ἐξευ—_the one in the sense of being subject to persuasion by reason, the other in the sense of being deducible from principles. Cf. Nicomachean Ethics i. 13. 1102b29: "For the vegetative element in no way shares in a rational principle, but the appetitive and in general the desiring element in a sense shares in it, in so far as it listens to and obeys it; this is the sense in which we speak of 'taking account' of one's father or one's friends, not that in which we speak of 'accounting' for a mathematical property." Deliberation is comparable to mathematical analysis (ibid. iii. 3. 1112b20). The fact that the objects of mathematics exist by abstraction, whereas the principles of prudence, physics, and philosophy come
Comparison of methods in art and politics involves comparison of their subject matters, and conversely if no account is taken of methods and ends, no sharp distinction or clear comparison is possible in their subject matters. The arts are different from the virtues and prudence, since they are concerned with making and not doing. Political and moral activities are neither arts nor subject to art, and the conditions of artistic presentation are not determined by consideration of moral habits or actions. Yet notwithstanding this separation of moral action and artistic production, each may be treated subordinate to the other once abstracted from its proper context: moral principles may become parts and matter for constructions in the arts, and the arts may be treated as instruments in the training of moral character. Moreover, since the arts of poetry and of rhetoric are likewise distinguished from each other in the analysis of Aristotle, poetry is removed from the dominance of moral and political criteria, and rhetoric does not masquerade as political science, although as an instrument of persuasion it is recognized to be a part of ethics. Similarly, comparison of methods in the sciences and in politics involves comparison of their subject matters. The virtues are at once the means of pre---

from experience accounts for the possibility of youthful precocity in mathematics as contrasted to these other subjects (ibid. vi. 8. 1142a12). Final causes in the practical sciences are comparable to hypotheses in mathematics (ibid. vii. 9. 1151a15). Indeed, the distinction is reproduced in the hypotheses of mathematics, some of which are concerned with the meanings of terms, some with existence (cf. Posterior Analytics i. 1. 71*11).

14 Nicomachean Ethics vi. 4. 1140a1; vii. 12. 1153a23: "The fact that no pleasure is the product of any art arises naturally enough: there is no art of any other activity either, but only of the corresponding faculty; though for that matter the arts of the perfumer and the cook are thought to be arts of pleasure." Politics ii. 8. 1268b35: "Such changes in the other arts and sciences have certainly been beneficial; medicine, for example, and gymnastic, and every other art and craft have departed from traditional usage. And, if politics be an art, change must be necessary in this as in any other art. . . . The analogy of the arts is false; a change in a law is a very different thing from a change in an art." Cf. the treatment of art in education, ibid. viii. 5. 1359a11. Conversely, consideration of the virtues and of political institutions may be useful in the arts of rhetoric and poetic (cf. Rhetoric i. 8–9. 1356b22 ff., and Poetics 25. 1461a4).

15 Rhetoric i. 2. 1356b25; Nicomachean Ethics x. 9. 1181a13.
serving first principles (comparable to the first principles used in mathematics) and also themselves the chief subject matter of the practical science (comparable to the natures studied in physics). The subject matter of ethics is unlike that of mathematics since it is not abstract; it is unlike that of physics since it is not fixed by "natural" properties or "natural" movements. Yet the method of ethics is like that of mathematics in the use made of principles, although moral inferences proceed from final causes, not from antecedent hypotheses. It is like the method of physics, since both inquire into antecedent conditions of motions and changes or into the ends in which they eventuate if unhindered. The subject matter of such inquiry in physics is natural motion and change; the properties, functions, and changes of a thing are therefore sought in terms of its definition, its end, or its matter. Virtues, actions, and institutions on the contrary are inaugurated in politics and ethics—as artificial things and motions are produced in art—by acquired skills and habits which utilize existent situations as antecedents to ends not yet accomplished.

Virtues, actions, and institutions cannot be explained by things alone or by natures, as natural motions are explained in physics, for they originate from habits, not from natural powers. Neither the habit nor the action which results from it is susceptible of exact scientific definition; what is done is guided by precepts, commands, and rational rules, and these determine the form and, therefore, the definition of the virtues. Since the method of the practical sciences is directed to operation, while the method of the theoretic sciences is directed to knowledge, the artist and the moral agent use actual situations to achieve possible ends, instead of inspecting, as the physical scientist does, actual natures and ends to infer necessary antecedents. Like physical changes, moral actions must be understood from the material potentialities they realize and the purposes they achieve, that is, from their necessity and their ends. Nature is encountered in political and moral problems at two extremes,
in the "natural" passions and powers of individual men and in
the "natural" associations which are essential to life and the
ends of living. The proper subject matter of political and moral
philosophy is to be found, between these two manifestations
of nature, in actions and more particularly in habituations and
institutions which result from actions and which in turn de-
terminate actions. Happiness and the virtues are functions both
of the potentialities found in the individual and of the institu-
tions which are brought to bear on the actualization of those
potentialities in family, social relations, and state. Happiness
and virtue are acquired; they are not the gift of nature, provi-
dence, or chance, nor are they imparted by teaching or ac-
quired by learning, although their acquisition is often influenced
by the effects of inclination, fortune, or precept; happiness is ac-
tivity in accordance with virtue, and the virtues are habits
formed through performance of actions like those which are in
turn consequent on virtue.

These differences between the practical and theoretic sciences
in method and subject matter remove the possibility of a sharp
separation of kinds in the practical sciences such as is charac-
teristic of the theoretic sciences in the Aristotelian philosophy, for
the precept that there is a science for each genus of things does
not apply to habits, actions, and institutions, which cannot be
separated and defined like the substances and motions studied
in physics. The principles set up in the practical sciences are
not rendered relevant or effective by consideration of natures
alone, and the method is dialectical as contrasted to the strictly
scientific method of the theoretic sciences. Ethics and politics
are not separate sciences treating of independent subject mat-
ters, but are dialectically distinct approaches to common prob-
lems, and in each approach the effect of the other must be taken
into account. Although they are properly considered in terms
of the capacities and potentialities of individual men, moral
actions nonetheless reflect the influences exercised on men by
social groups and by political states. Although they are prop-
erly considered in terms of the ends of communal life, social aims are nonetheless conditioned in their practicability by the characteristics of the individuals who participate in the group. The state is one of the determining influences in ethical considerations, and conversely the solution of political problems would be indeterminate and utopian without consideration of the character, occupations, and material environment of citizens. The two considerations may on occasion be distinct and antithetical rather than complementary, for the moral characters of citizens may be hindrances to, as they are also materials for, the political aims of a state; and the political constitution may either systematize or disrupt the forces in a state which operate toward the acquisition of virtues and the ends of moral aspiration. Laws may aid men to virtue or supply motives in the absence of more specific virtues, but they do not alone make men good; and virtues may incline men to social consciousness, but they do not in all states make men politically effective. Ethics and politics approximate to each other only in the ideal case, for in the perfect state the good citizen would coincide with the good man.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Politics} iii. 5. 1278a40: "As to the question whether the virtue of the good man is the same as that of the good citizen, the considerations already adduced prove that in some states the good man and the good citizen are the same, and in others different. When they are the same it is not every citizen who is a good man, but only the statesman and those who have or may have, alone or in conjunction with others, the conduct of public affairs." \textit{Ibid.} 13. 1283b42: "And a citizen is one who shares in governing and being governed. He differs under different forms of government, but in the best state he is one who is able and willing to be governed and to govern with a view to the life of virtue." \textit{Ibid.} iv. 7. 1293b5: "In the perfect state the good man is absolutely the same as the good citizen; whereas in other states the good citizen is only good relatively to his own form of government." The importance of this limiting case in which moral and political considerations coincide may be judged by the frequency with which Aristotle returns to the problem of the relation of the good man to the good citizen (cf. \textit{ibid.} iii. 4-5. 1276b16 ff.; 8. 1288a37; vii. 14. 1333a11; \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} v. 2. 1130b28). Such important problems as the relation of law and morality and the function of the state in the regulation of education are concerned with aspects of the relation of man and citizen. The extension of these problems to philosophy itself is well expressed in the saying attributed to Aristotle (as it was also to his friend Xenocrates): "When asked what advantage he had ever gained from philosophy, he replied, 'This, that I do without being ordered what some are constrained to do by their fear of the law.'" (Diogenes Laertius \textit{Lives of Eminent Philosophers} v. 20).
Political philosophy, then, has both a broad and a narrow sense. In its broad sense political philosophy includes both ethics and politics, while in its narrow sense it is limited to consideration of the associations of men in social groups in counter-distinction to ethics, which is limited to consideration of the actions and virtues of men. Political philosophy assumes priority over moral philosophy in this distinction, since it treats of ends while moral philosophy treats of means to such ends, and for the same reason it exercises, as architectonic science and art of arts, supervision over all other sciences and arts. Unless careful distinction were made between theoretic and practical sciences, there would be danger that politics usurp the functions of metaphysics (as it has indeed in some philosophies subsequent to Aristotle's), but if knowing and doing are distinguished, the supervision which politics exercises on the sciences may be examined realistically without confusion with the treatment of scientific principles in metaphysics. Politics involves supervision or control of arts and sciences in so far as they are thought relevant to the character or training of citizens; metaphysics supplies the technique for testing scientific principles to determine their adequacy to demonstrations and their appropriateness to subject matters.\footnote{Nicomachean Ethics i. 2. 1094a25: "If so, we must try, in outline at least, to determine what it [sc. the good] is, and of which of the sciences or capacities it is the object. It would seem to belong to the most authoritative art and that which is most truly the master art. And politics appears to be of this nature; for it is this that ordains which of the sciences should be studied in a state, and which each class of citizens should learn and up to what point they should learn them; and we see even the most highly esteemed of capacities to fall under this, e.g. strategy, economics, rhetoric; now, since politics uses the rest of the sciences, and since, again, it legislates as to what we are to do and what we are to abstain from, the end of this science must include those of the others, so that this end must be the good for man." Cf. ibid. 9. 1099b29: ",,.. for we stated the end of political science to be the best end, and political science spends most of its pains on making citizens to be of a certain character, viz. good and capable of noble acts." Politics iii. 12. 1282b15: "In all sciences and arts the end is a good, and the greatest good and in the highest degree a good in the most authoritative of all—this is the political science of which the good is justice, in other words, the common interest." These judgments are not in contradiction with the frequent statement that wisdom or first philosophy (i.e., metaphysics) is the most authori-}
ARISTOTLE'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

The *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* are the two parts of a single inquiry or science: what is assumed as given in the one constitutes the problem to be solved in the other, and what is fixed and natural is found first in the individual man, then in the group, in the passions and actions which as subject to regulation by habit are the natural bases of ethics, and in the needs to be satisfied and the ends to be achieved by association which are the natural conditions of politics. The *Nicomachean Ethics* moves from the consideration of potentialities to ends: it begins by finding in the parts or functions of the soul distinctions which prepare for acceptable conceptions of the good, of happiness, and of activity according to virtue; but it closes, after the virtues and happiness, friendship and pleasure, have been treated, with the recognition that in practical questions knowledge is insufficient or even impossible of acquisition without the group influences of custom, rewards, and punishments which are wielded by law.

But it is difficult to get from youth up a right training for virtue if one has not been brought up under right laws; for to live temperately and hardily is not pleasant to most people, especially when they are young. For this reason their nurture and occupations should be fixed by law; for they will not be painful when they have become customary. But it is surely not enough that when they are young they should get the right nurture and attention; since they must, even when they are grown up, practise 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.\textsuperscript{18}

The \textit{Politics}, conversely, proceeds from the consideration of ends to individuals: it begins by showing that the various forms of human association are "natural" because they supply needs and achieve ends; but it closes, after the kinds of states, actual as well as ideal, have been enumerated and after the mutual influences and determinations of institutions and citizens have been examined, with the consideration of the oppositions of citizens and state and the means by which states are preserved or destroyed.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} x. 9. 1179\textsuperscript{b}31. Aristotle observes in this context that the problems involved in laws had not been examined by his predecessors, notwithstanding the interest in moral questions which he remarked as dominant among philosophers since Socrates and the detailed knowledge he displays of Plato's political theories. Cf. \textit{ibid.} 1181\textsuperscript{b}\textsuperscript{13}: "Now our predecessors have left the subject of legislation to us unexamined; it is perhaps best, therefore, that we should ourselves study it, and in general study the question of the constitution, in order to complete to the best of our ability our philosophy of human nature."

\textsuperscript{19} Statements about the sequence of problems treated in the \textit{Politics} are rendered difficult and questionable by the uncertainties scholars have found in determining the order of books in that work. The philological grounds for those uncertainties need not be examined here, since the dialectical interrelations of the discussion of individuals in associations is not drastically affected (as a scientific demonstration might have been) by a change of order. The method which is used in the \textit{Politics} is a dialectic which proceeds by analysis of wholes and parts. The state is conceived as related to lesser social groups and eventually to citizens, as a whole is related to its parts, and in this sense as form to matter. Social groups are therefore analogized to physical compounds, since the qualities and functions of the composite whole cannot be inferred simply from consideration of the qualities and functions of the simples which enter the composition (cf. \textit{Politics} vii. 7. 1328\textsuperscript{a}21), yet notwithstanding the disparity of part to whole or even the necessity that services which are indispensable to the state be determined by the state and imposed on citizens, the end of individuals and of state is in general the same (\textit{ibid.} 15. 1334\textsuperscript{a}11). Two possible relations of citizens to a state, therefore, call for special consideration, and all political problems fall between the extremes determined by them: at one extreme the ends of the citizens or important groups of the citizens may coincide with the ends pursued by the state, at the other extreme the ends of men may differ from those of the state, and between those extremes are ranged the innumerable examples of institutions altering the traits of citizens and men changing the organization of institutions. Scholars have tended in recent years to arrange the books of the \textit{Politics} in such fashion that the discussion culminates in the former of these two possibilities, which is achieved, except for momentary accident, only in the best state. That coincidence is specific in the case of the best man and the best constitution, and it would be appropriate, therefore, that the relation of citizen and state receive its final treatment (as it does in the latter portion of Book VII and in Book VIII) in the
The subject matters of the two treatises—actions and associations, virtues and constitutions—have no absolute status in ex-
consideration of the rearing and education of children, since these are the crucial means for establishing or preserving a perfect state. On the other hand, in the traditional order of the books, which is dialectically preferable and which is assumed in the statement to which this note is attached, the discussion culminates in differences between the ends of individuals or groups and states rather than in their coincidences. In the differentiation of various types of institutions the perfect state would be treated first (in Books VII and VIII which were formerly IV and V), then less perfect constitutions, and the inquiry would conclude with a discussion (in Book V which was formerly VIII) of revolutions and their causes, as well as the means which might be used in particular states for the preservation of their peculiar constitutions. Revolutions are explained by means of the relations of individuals to one another and to the constitution of the state. "In the first place we must assume as our starting-point that in the many forms of government which have sprung up there has always been an acknowledgement of justice and proportionate equality, although mankind fail in attaining them, as indeed I have already explained. . . . All these forms of government have a kind of justice, but, tried by an absolute standard, they are faulty; and, therefore, both parties, whenever their share in the government does not accord with their preconceived ideas, stir up revolution. Those who excel in virtue have the best right of all to rebel (for they alone can with reason be deemed absolutely unequal), but then they are of all men the least inclined to do so. There is also a superiority which is claimed by men of rank; for they are thought noble because they spring from virtuous and wealthy ancestors" (ibid. v. 1. 1302a25). By means of this distinction among the kinds of equality found in men as associated in states, Aristotle differentiates two kinds of revolution, the one effecting a change in the constitution of the state, the other effecting a change in the administration of the government without altering the constitution, that is to say, changes respectively in the character of the state and in the persons of the officials. In all cases revolutions arise from a disproportion of men, or more precisely from a disparity between the ends of men and those of the state. "Everywhere inequality is a cause of revolution, but an inequality in which there is no proportion—for instance, a perpetual monarch among equals; and always it is the desire of equality which rises in rebellion" (ibid. 1301b26). The treatment of revolutions and of the means of preserving states, carried out in shrewd and ingenious detail, not only forms an appropriate emphasis in which the dialectic of the Politics might be expected to eventuate, but it supplies still one more indication of the rigorously practical character of Aristotle's approach to political problems, for only the stress of circumstances has in the subsequent history of political theory brought revolutions and the preservation of states periodically (as it has in the language of current political discussions) to the center of political inquiry. In such an interpretation of the relation of the Politics and the Nicomachean Ethics, the list of problems enumerated in the last lines of the latter work, presumably for discussion in the Politics, need not be interpreted as imposing an order of discussion in the Politics, for it would be appropriate that political problems be ordered dialectically from a moral point of view in a work on ethics—and so ordered culminate in the discussion of the conditions of the perfect state—and yet require dialectical reordering in the appropriate sequence of political inquiry, since in politics the influence of institutions on individuals takes precedence over the influence of moral considerations on political ideals and operations.
istence or natural sequence of change. Neither treatise follows the usual pattern of the Aristotelian sciences, which is determined by the search for essential or scientific definitions and natural causes. Habits and constitutions are defined and differentiated from each other by reference to "natural" bases from which criteria of practical appropriateness, effectiveness, and value are derived to serve as genera and differentiae. Such natural bases are found for moral inquiry in the actions and passions of the mind, since the virtues are then defined by means of the habits which regulate or perfect human powers and passions. Comparable "natural" bases are found for politics in the traits and functions of men and classes of men in association, since constitutions and citizens are then distinguished and classified by means of the interrelations of smaller within larger groups. The virtues which envisage ends are defined relative to the natural potentialities which may be treated as their matter; institutions which are inaugurated to supply the needs of men are defined relative to the ends they are designed to achieve. The natural bases of ethics are material or psychological potentialities; the natural bases of politics are ideal ends. For this reason, laws may, in the absence of virtues, supply an end which substitutes the single virtue of justice for all the virtues; and virtue may, in the absence of equality and proportion in the state, restore a balance by the revolutionary institution of a better-grounded state. Neither men nor states, neither citizens nor associations, are absolute in substance, fixed in quality, or specifically determined in evolution. Either may effect the alteration of the other, and inquiry concerning either is possible only if the other is held fixed for the purposes of that investigation. For moral inquiry "nature" is found in the powers and passions which may be regulated according to rational principles; for political inquiry "nature" is found in the powers by which citizens balance and supplement one another for the promotion of a common good life in the constitution of states.

As a result of this peculiarity of the subject matter of the
practical sciences and of the definitions appropriate to that subject matter, even the dialectical statement of the problem in those sciences differs from the similar statement of problems in the theoretic sciences. Aristotle usually sets forth fundamental problems concerning principles, definitions, and causes in physics, psychology, or metaphysics, by a preliminary dialectical examination of the doctrines of other philosophers or even of common opinion, and after the juxtapositions and refutations, partial or total, of those opinions he returns to make a fresh start in his own solution of the problems adumbrated. When the nature of the good is approached in the same fashion in the opening book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, however, general agreement is found in the statement of the solution, from which Aristotle does not dissent, but not in any of the elements which enter into the statement of the problems; and difficulties arise precisely in interpreting the term by which the good is to be defined—and political science is itself involved as a subject of that ambiguity, not merely as the science which treats it—rather than in enumeration of the properties or principles to be included in the definition.

Let us resume our inquiry and state, in view of the fact that all knowledge and every pursuit aims at some good, what it is that we say political science aims at and what is the highest of all goods achievable by action. Verbally there is very general agreement; for both the general run of men and people of superior refinement say that it is happiness, and identify living well and doing well with being happy; but with regard to what happiness is they differ, and the many do not give the same account as the wise.  

The character of the problem may be judged from the fact that for Aristotle "good" is an ambiguous term and figures, therefore, as one of the most frequently recurrent examples in the dialectical discussions of the *Topics*. Philosophers as well as the run of people define happiness by reference to an end to which action is directed, most people identifying it with the

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20 *Nicomachean Ethics* i. 4. 1095a14. 21 *Topics* i. 15. 107a4.
attainment of simple and obvious objectives, like pleasure, wealth, or honor, philosophers seeking some self-subsistent cause of the goodness of all things. Aristotle's refutation, therefore, turns wholly on showing those identifications to be erroneous (although he recognizes in his customary fashion that there must be some truth in these opinions), because the simple objectives of most men are inadequate, while the good has no claim to the independent existence attributed to it by Platonists and like-minded philosophers. Since his own definition requires reference to virtue, the ambiguity of the terms "good" and "happiness" cannot be supposed to be wholly removed until the end of the treatise, and indeed happiness is reserved to be the last subject discussed.

The method of inquiry in ethics is precisely the reverse of the method of that branch of the Aristotelian physics which is closest to ethics in that it too treats of the actions of man. In the De anima Aristotle refutes earlier definitions of the soul based on functions or properties and proceeds then, in the establishment of his own definition, to investigate in turn the nutritive, sensitive, and intellectual powers by examining first the objects on which those powers are exercised, determining from the objects the acts directed to such objects, and finally from the acts the peculiarities of the powers exercised in such acts. In the Nicomachean Ethics, on the contrary, he refutes definitions of happiness based on a choice of specific ends and proceeds then, in giving content to his own conception of happiness, to investigate the habits which accord with rational rules to regulate human powers otherwise oriented indeterminately to actions, good or bad. Happiness is activity of a certain kind, not an activity to a certain end; it is activity in accordance with virtue, and the kinds of virtue are determined, not by a "natural" good to which they are directed, nor by a "natural" action in which they are found, but by the powers, rational and irrational, distinguishable in the soul.23

22 Nicomachean Ethics i.8.1098b26; cf. also vii.2.II46b6. 23 Ibid. 13.1102a5 ff.
The moral and intellectual virtues are first differentiated, then, by means of psychological powers, but they are defined by means of their manner and criteria of activity, and their definitions are therefore distinct one from the other not only in form but also in the dialectical methods by which they are established. The moral virtues are habits which regulate those activities of the irrational part of the soul which, though capricious and irregular, are susceptible to the influence of persuasion and capable of submission to a rational principle. They apply, consequently, only to the functions of the soul which involve appetite and desire, for not all irrational activities—as, for example, the vegetative functions—can be made to share in a rational principle. The intellectual virtues are habits which perfect the activities of the rational part of the soul. They are concerned, therefore, with the perception and formulation of regularities and laws, sometimes for application in the regulation of life and techniques, sometimes to no other end than the acquisition and contemplation of truth. Moral and intellectual virtues differ thus both in nature and in mode of acquisition, for moral virtues are developed by habituation and discipline, intellectual virtues by practice, study, and instruction. Although both are "habits," their differences make necessary different methods of establishing their definitions and determining their kinds. The actions in which the moral virtues eventuate are to be judged and defined only relative to the experiences and character from which they spring, whereas the activities determined by the intellectual virtues tend to ends which must be considered apart from the peculiarities of individual minds. The problems of ethics shift therefore between two foci, the individual abilities and situations which are materials for the moral virtues and subjects for deliberation and choice and the rational rules according to which such deliberations may proceed and which are subjects for the intellectual virtues.

The definition of the moral virtues is a dialectical construction determined in part by scientific materials borrowed from
psychology, in part by analogies suggested by art and nature, and in part by criteria elaborated by the intellectual virtues. The genus of the moral virtues is determined by a dialectical choice among the three things in the soul: they are not passions or faculties but habits. Their differentia is determined in two fashions, relative to the person of the agent and relative to rational criteria. For the first, Aristotle draws an analogy from natural and artistic excellence to moral excellence, inferring that virtue as habit disposes one to choose in the right way among actions and passions, and that the right way involves a mean between extremes. Such a mean proportion may be determined in action by habit without explicit knowledge, but if it is to be stated it is made a rational rule and therefore subject in its second formulation to an intellectual virtue. The final definition therefore bears only a dialectical likeness to a scientific definition by genus and differentia: "Virtue, then, is a habit concerned with choice (ἐῶς προαιρετική), lying in a mean, i.e., the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the prudent man would determine it."24 In its construction the four causes, which are important also in determining the methods of metaphysics and physics, are all discernible. Physical definitions usually specify two of the causes, the matter and some formal determination of the matter.25 The virtues, however, are not themselves actions but are oriented to actions: the genus of virtue is therefore found in the efficient cause of actions, namely, habit concerned with choice, and the differentia supplies the criteria for such action stated either in the formal considerations of a proportion or in the final determinations of a rational rule. Moreover, this definition of the moral virtues in turn serves as a genus,26 and further specifications are made by introducing into the proportion the material causes—i.e., the passions and actions with which the virtues are concerned—to determine the

24 Ibid. ii. 6. 1106b35; cf. also 5. 1105b19 ff.
25 Cf. De anima i. 1. 403b25-403b16.
26 Nicomachean Ethics, iii. 5. 1114b26 ff.
distinct moral virtues: courage, temperance, liberality, magnificence, pride, ambition, good temper, friendliness, truthfulness, shame, justice.

The moral virtues are defined by means of the efficient cause of actions; the intellectual virtues are defined according to their final cause. Once again as in the case of the moral virtues a triple distinction is made in the soul, this time not of possible efficient causes, but of controlling causes of action and truth. Of the three, namely, sensation, reason, and desire, the latter two supply the final cause toward which choice operates. "The principle of action—its efficient, not its final cause—is choice, and that of choice is desire and reasoning for the sake of some end." The discussion of the intellectual virtues therefore supplements the discussion of the moral virtues, for every virtue both brings into good condition the thing itself of which it is the virtue and causes the work of that thing to be well done, and the intellectual virtues treat of excellences relative to the action or work by turning attention to the right rule and standard. As the soul itself is divided into two parts, rational and irrational, so the rational part is divided into two parts, one by which we contemplate things whose principles are invariable, another by which we contemplate variable things. Since moral virtue is a habit concerned with choice and therefore involved in variable things, it depends, like good choice, on the coincidence of true reasoning and right desire: truth in such applications is the object of the calculative part of the soul. Virtue in the scientific part of the soul, since it is not thus involved in variability, coincides with truth. Aristotle offers no general definition of the intellectual virtues apart from observing that they are ways in which the soul has truth by affirmation and negation:

27 Ibid. vi. 2. 1139*32.

28 Ibid. ii. 6. 1106*15; vi. 2. 1139*17. Cf. ibid. i. 1138b16 ff.; also 5. 1140b16: "For the principle of things done consists in the end for the sake of which they are done."

29 Ibid. 2. 1139*22; 3. 1139b25.
Scientific knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), stands in relation to the rest much as the definition of the moral virtues stands to its specific manifestations, for scientific knowledge is defined simply as the habit of demonstration (ἐξίς ἀποδεικτική)—as moral virtue had been defined as habit concerned with choice (ἐξίς προαιρετική)—and the remaining four are differentiated from it by specifying either the objects or the principles of such knowledge. The two virtues of the calculative part of the soul are distinguished by the activities they respectively direct, art being the habit of making (ἐξίς ποιητική) according to true reason, prudence the habit of acting (ἐξίς πρακτική) with regard to human goods according to true reason.30 The two remaining virtues of the scientific part of the soul are distinguished according to activities which are involved in the judgments and arguments of scientific knowledge itself: intuitive reason (νοῦς) is assigned by a process of dialectical elimination to the treatment and possession of principles, while wisdom (σοφία) is identified by a process of dialectical summation as the most accurate of the sciences, requiring the combination of intuitive reasoning and scientific knowledge, concerning the highest objects.31

In the dialectical ascent from the moral to the intellectual virtues, from the consideration of the passions and actions with which the virtues are concerned to the consideration of the rules and reasons according to which virtuous actions are performed, two distinctions are constantly at work: (1) the perpendicular distinction of efficient and final cause, of the materials by which choice is determined and the objectives by which reason and desire are determined, and (2) the horizontal distinction of part and whole, individual and group. The list of the moral virtues, thus, culminates in justice, which is the whole of virtue in one sense, that is, not in an absolute sense but in relation to our neighbor, and which in another sense is

30 Ibid. 2. 1139a23; 3. 1139b31; 4. 1140a9; 5. 1140b20.
31 Ibid. 6. 1141b9; 7. 1141b17 ff.
merely one of the virtues. In the individual, justice consists in fairness; but in relation to others, justice is lawfulness. The law may provide, at least in the case of overt actions which affect others, for the numerous contingencies consequent on dereliction of other virtues on the part of individuals. This dialectical ambivalence by which "justice" has different significances as related to the individual himself and to individuals associated in groups is found also in the treatment of the intellectual virtues. Prudence, like justice, has two forms, since the same habit may be concerned with the action of an individual or it may be directed to the regulation of a state. Prudence is identical with political wisdom. Similarly, in the ascending line of the dialectic, potentialities are treated in terms of actualities and actualities in terms of potentialities, efficient causes determine ends and calculation directed to ends insures rightness of means, until the argument culminates in the final cause or end of man, happiness, the activity which is according to what is best in us and which guides us to what is noble and divine in things. The moral virtues determine the right mark at which to aim actions; prudence determines the means to it; and wisdom in its possession and exercise determines happiness. Wisdom, the culmination of all other human activities, is discernible there-

32 Ibid. v. 1. 1129b25 ff.; cf. 1130a21, where the distinction between justice and virtue is summed up: "They are the same, but their being is not the same: as relative to others, it is justice; as a certain kind of habit without qualification, it is virtue."

33 Ibid. vi. 8. 1141b23: "Political science and prudence are the same habit, but their being is not the same. Of the science which is concerned with the city, that which is architectonic is the legislative prudence, that which deals with particulars has the common name political. . . . Prudence also is commonly thought to be that which is concerned with oneself and the individual; and this bears the common name prudence, while the others are distinguished as household management, legislation, politics, and the latter is subdivided into deliberative and judicial." The manner in which these distinctions are made sets them apart from the lists of meanings of terms which are drawn up in physical and metaphysical inquiries, since in the theoretic sciences a difference of essence permits a differentiation of univocal terms, that is, terms which retain a single meaning, while in moral and political inquiries identical habits may possess in different relations different modes of being manifested in different activities and subject, therefore, to different branches of knowledge.

34 Ibid. 12. 1144a3; 13. 1145a7; x. 7. 1177a12.
fore under two guises: it is found first and most easily in the most finished and perfect practitioners of any of the arts, and it is also the most finished of all the forms of knowledge, combining science and intuitive reason in the consideration and contemplation of the highest objects. As justice is a habit in which the individual virtues conceived as habits are brought into contact with the habit which insures submission to the law of the state, and as prudence is a habit in which calculation of the means to ends and the consequences of actions is brought into contact with calculation of the practicable ingredients of the common good, so wisdom is a habit in which the excellences of all conduct, art, and knowledge are brought into contact with the basic and pervading traits of men and things.

The virtues themselves also have a psychological context in the sense that other dispositions besides the virtues treat of the passions in man, and other activities besides those in accordance with virtue are good or achieve goods, even to the point of being mistaken by many men and by philosophers as well for the good itself and happiness. After the virtues have been treated, therefore, a fresh start must be taken to place the virtues among these moral states before the dialectic is completed and happiness itself can be treated. There are three moral states to be avoided: vice, incontinence, and brutishness; the contraries to the first two are virtue and continence, and since brutishness and its contrary are different in genus from virtue and vice, while continence and incontinence are of the same genus as virtue and vice although not identical habits, the discussion turns largely on continence and related habits. Pleasure and pain are in need of similar consideration, for the good may be either an activity or a habit, and pleasure, although it is not a habit, is, like happiness, an unimpeded activity of a habit, and may be good or bad, while pain is an evil, either absolutely or relatively. In addition to these habits and

activities which pass in the opinions of some for virtues and happiness, friendship too is comparable in many respects to virtue and particularly to justice, to such an extent indeed that it may be analogized to furnish a schematism for all communities, constitutions, and associations. If friendship shares the ambivalence of justice as a personal habit and a bond of associations, however, pleasure and pain retrace the stages of the ascent of dialectic, for on the first level pleasure and pain are matters with which moral virtues are concerned; again they themselves are comparable to virtue and vice, continence and incontinence, in being good and evil; and finally as an activity pleasure is comparable with happiness itself and it is an ingredient of happiness. The sprawling mass of moral problems is treated between two extremes determined by the “natures” of men, for the powers of man furnish, on the one hand, the materials of ethics and, on the other, the rational rules of action which are at once the product of human activity and its approximation to the truths and processes of science. The “matter” of morality in the actions and passions of men is oriented to its ends in the moral virtues; the “forms” of morality in those virtues are related to the means for their accomplishment; the “end” of moral action is in happiness; but the intermediate region in which actions and passions are regulated, precepts applied, and happiness sought, is vast and indeterminate except as repeated actions have sketched lines which may be checked against the determinations of the prudent man.

Ethics is a part of the science of politics, or more precisely it is the selection and treatment of those aspects of the problems of conduct which are pertinent to determination by the virtues and susceptible of control and judgment in the individual man. The same or similar problems can be treated in terms of the external associations and influences of men. Aristotle’s concep-

39 Ibid. viii. 1. 1155a1 and 23; 5. 1157b7; 9. 1159b26 ff.
40 Ibid. ii. 3. 1104b9; vii. 11. 1153b5.
41 Ibid. vii. 13. 1153b1.
42 Ibid. x. 4. 1174b32; 7. 1177a23.
tion of the relation of ethics and politics can almost be summed up in the opening sentences of the two treatises he devoted to those subjects. The Nicomachean Ethics begins with the statement that every action is directed to some good, and the problems involved in achieving the ends of action are thereafter treated relative to the potentialities and material discoverable in individual men. The Politics, on the other hand, begins with the statement that every community is established with a view to some good, and the problems involved in states and institutions are thereafter treated relative to needs and ends which transcend individual powers. The natural basis of the state is found in ends as the natural basis of the virtues was found in passions and actions. The simpler forms of association, such as the family and the village, derive their origin and nature from the union of male and female, master and slave, parent and child, none of whom could exist or continue long in existence without the other, and the natural bases of the household and the village are to be found, therefore, in those interdependences. The state is "natural" for the same reason, although its end is loftier and its organization more complex.

When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life. And therefore, if the earlier forms of society are natural, so is the state, for it is the end of them, and the nature of a thing is its end. For what each thing is when fully developed, we call its nature, whether we are speaking of a man, a horse, or a family. Besides, the final cause and end of a thing is the best, and to be self-sufficing is the end and best.43

It is in this sense that man is "by nature a political animal,"44 not in any of the less plausible senses which have been ascribed to the phrase suggesting the implication that man is obtrusively

43 Politics i. 2. 1252b27. Cf. ibid. 1253a18: "Further, the state is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part."

44 Ibid. 1253a3, 25-33; iii. 6. 1278b19.
and continuously cognizant of the responsibilities and ends of political action, but in the sense that he is incapable of existence and of a good life without the benefits of political associations.

The two directions in which “nature” is sought in ethics and in politics, respectively, in material potentialities and in ends, are discernible even in the criticisms by which Aristotle undertakes to refute Plato in those two sciences. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Socrates is criticized for reducing the virtues to knowledge, while the Platonists are criticized for separating action and end in the doctrine of a self-subsistent good which is inadequate to the multiplicity of goods and ineffective to aid in their pursuit; multiplicity of being and practicability of application are both achieved, according to Aristotle, by seeking the natural basis of virtues in actions and passions. In the *Politics* Socrates and Plato are criticized for reducing all forms of association and all kinds of rule to one, for trying to unify the state by making it a kind of family and by making all citizens the same; efficacy of appeal to social motivation depends, according to Aristotle, on the distinction of the state from other forms of association, and the natural bases for that distinction can be found only in the multiplicity of ends achieved by association. In moral and political philosophy, as in physics and metaphysics, multiplicity of classifications and pluralism of kinds are essential to Aristotle’s solution of philosophic problems.

Since the state is a whole and composite, it can be analyzed, on the analogy of natural composite bodies and organic compounds, by considering its parts and its ends: the constituent parts of the state are the citizens; the ends of states are to be found in their natures or constitutions, which in turn are to be determined by the manner and proportion in which the parts of states are combined. The schematic organization of kinds of constitutions according to their final causes falls under six

45 *Nicomachean Ethics* i. 6. 1096a17; vi. 13. 1144b29.
46 *Politics* i. 1. 1252a7; ii. 2. 1261a15 ff.
heads (which are the Aristotelian reformulation by means of three pairs of good and bad states of basic ideas which doubtless go back to Plato's scheme of five states in progressive stages of decline from the perfect state), and the ends which states pursue and attain are combined with schematisms of the possible distributions of powers and magistracies in states to indicate and order some instances among the infinitely diversified political possibilities under these six heads. It would be a mistake, however, to think of Aristotle's massive classifications of states simply as functional and mathematical determinations of conceivable political combinations, institutions, and ends. They are, rather, the multiple development, by means of the four causes, of answers to the problem, basic to politics as Aristotle conceived it, of how institutions and constitutions depend on and influence citizens associated in communities. Solutions to that problem determine the value, appropriateness, and stability of institutions.

The basis of classification which Aristotle uses for political problems may be compared to that of the classification of biological problems in the *History of Animals*. In biology a double classification is used to set forth difficulties and to classify phenomena, a classification of animals combined with a classification of the parts of animals. In politics too a double classification is introduced—once the doctrines of predecessors and the examples of good states have been dismissed in Book II—a classification of states and of the classes of citizens which form the parts of states.49 Since the first classification of the *Politics* is in terms of aims or *final causes*, states are there classified as good or bad dependent on whether or not they are directed to the common good, and the comparison of kinds of states leads eventually to the examination of the form of constitution which would be best in the abstract, much as the consideration of motions in the *Physics* led to the final cause and unmoved mover. In the best state the relation of part and whole is simple, for the

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end of the state and the end of the citizen are the same, and the
good man is the good citizen. The chief problem in such a state
is therefore the education by which to continue citizens at the
high level of perfection which alone would make such a state
possible.\footnote{The double classification is stated in Book III; the characteristics of the best state, its citizens, and their education are treated in Books VII and VIII. In the traditional order of books, as contrasted to the recent scholarly ordering which separates them, they follow as Books III, IV, and V. The traditional order is followed throughout in the application of the causes to the problems of the \textit{Politics} that follows.}

Single-minded pursuit of the good, however, is rare if not
unexampled in political history, and the philosophic discussion
of the perfect state would be impractical if its precepts were
treated as rules to be followed literally rather than as the limit-
ing case in which all consideration of particular and actual con-
ditions may be omitted. To supplement such consideration in
terms of the best as the limit to political development, states
must also be differentiated into the varieties of their kinds, not
merely as good or bad in general, but as well or poorly suited—
whether good or bad on abstract standards—to the situations,
characters, educations, and employments of citizens. Moreover,
to treat the appropriateness of political institutions to particular
situations, the various functions of the state must be differen-
tiated as well as the relevant traits of its citizens. The analysis
of the best state, which resulted from the consideration of final
causes suited to the realization of the best potentialities of man,
is supplemented therefore, by a second analysis, not of what is
best in the abstract, but of what is best under given circum-
stances. That change of emphasis is made possible by consider-
ation of the \textit{material} instead of the final \textit{causes} of states, as
they are found in the characters of possible or actual citizen
bodies, much as a similar reorientation in the problems of the
physical sciences was achieved by the use of material causes in
the \textit{De caelo}. The realizable potentialities of any actual group
of men fall short of the ideal potentialities of man, and the bad
as well as the good forms of constitutions are treated in terms
of the deviation, coincident with the deviation of the good citizen from the good man, of the justice of a state from simple justice.51

A third formulation of the problems of politics, moreover, is implied in the distinction of these two, for if one asks what is the best state in the abstract and what is the best state under particular circumstances, one should also ask what is the form of government which is best suited to states in general. That question can be answered by examining the proportions and functions of the parts and agencies of a state, and so determining their formal causes. In the pursuit of formal causes Aristotle systematized a distinction, which has had a long history of diversified applications, of the parts of the state into legislative, executive, and judicial functions, and these correspond as formal causes to three of the senses given to the intellectual virtue of prudence, considered as political wisdom.52

The character of political problems and subject matters is well indicated in the application of these three analyses to the six kinds of states. All six are treated in the first analysis, but since it is directed to the differentiation of good and bad and since it culminates in the consideration of the best state, emphasis is laid particularly on aristocracy and monarchy among

51 Politics iv (olim vi). 1. 1288b21: "Hence it is obvious that government too is the subject of a single science, which has to consider what government is best and of what sort it must be, to be most in accordance with our aspirations, if there were no external impediment, and also what kind of government is adapted to particular states. For the best is often unattainable, and therefore the true legislator and statesman ought to be acquainted, not only with (1) that which is best in the abstract, but also with (2) that which is best relatively to circumstances. We should be able further to say how a state may be constituted under any given conditions (3); both how it is originally formed and, when formed, how it may be longest preserved; the supposed state being so far from having the best constitution that it is unprovided even with the conditions necessary for the best; neither is it the best under the circumstances, but of an inferior type. He ought, moreover, to know (4) the form of government which is best suited to states in general; for political writers, although they have excellent ideas, are often unpractical. We should consider, not only what form of government is best, but also what is possible and what is easily attainable by all." The best state has been considered; the state that is best under the circumstances is treated by consideration of the various citizens of various states in the first ten chapters of Book IV.

52 Cf. above, n. 33.
the customary six states. It is unnecessary, since monarchy and aristocracy are good without qualification, to take them up again in the second consideration of states which are the best under particular circumstances, and they are therefore omitted in the second analysis, while the remaining four are treated in detail. The claims of polity and tyranny to consideration, however, are entirely due to their defensibility, in so far as they are defensible, under the press of particular situations, for they are not truly constitutions, polity being a fusion of oligarchy and democracy, and tyranny being either indistinguishable from monarchy or no form of government. They have no place, therefore, in the consideration of what is best in states in general, which depends on formal perfections of organization in the state treated so far as possible apart from any consideration of occasional outstanding virtues or possible degradations of citizens. Only two kinds of states—democracies and oligarchies—remain for consideration under this third head, and they are treated, not in terms of ends or in terms of distinctions in classes of citizens, but in terms of common qualities shared by citizens and in terms of proportions in the exercise of the three functions of the state.

The problems of politics involve, finally, in addition to questions of structure and purpose or questions of what is best in the abstract or in this particular case or in general, questions of generation, change, and destruction, questions concerning how a state of any given kind may be initiated and set up, how it may be continued once established, and how it may be overthrown. The pursuit of inquiry into efficient causes, which alone are suited to solve problems of generation, destruction, or preservation, led Aristotle to his shrewd analysis of revolutions, of the means by which to foment movements that lead to changes in a constitution, the devices by which to thwart them, and the precautions to be taken against them.

Political science, as Aristotle treats it, supplements ethics by

54 Ibid. 8. 1295b30; 10. 1295a1.
55 Ibid. vi (olim vii). 1. 1216b31.
56 Ibid. v (olim viii). 1. 1301a19 ff.
treating man as a part of institutions organized in view of ends, as ethics supplements politics by treating ends in terms of the potentialities, abilities, and reasons of men. The one, ethics, adapts efficient causes of action to situations, rules, and ends; the other, politics, adapts ends to kinds of citizens, forms of government, and modes of political action. The *Nicomachean Ethics* proceeds from the habits to the ends of moral activity and analyzes the ways in which the potentialities of human action may be realized to their fullest, first in habits concerned with choice, then in habits concerned with reason and rules, and finally in activities and most particularly in the activity which is the end of man, happiness. The *Politics* proceeds from the ends of states and associations conceived as wholes to the activities, social and antisocial, of men who make up the state, and analyzes the ways in which those ends may themselves determine the form of a state, or how the form may be determined to particular conditions, or how the form may be treated apart from ends or conditions, or how changes occur from one form to another. The pattern of causes which governs these analyses is the contribution of metaphysics to moral and political philosophy. But more important than the source are the consequences of that conception of causes in moral and political philosophy, for the same four causes operate in Aristotle's treatment of physics, but with this difference, that powers are determined uniquely to ends in natural things and natural change, while moral actions are determined by habits which involve choice, and political associations and combinations are determined at least in part by men's conception of the good. The numerous acceptable analogies between physics, on the one hand, and ethics and politics, on the other, have frequently tempted philosophers to deny these differences. In the philosophy of Aristotle, however, they mark the crucial point at which practical sciences are distinguished from theoretical—as the analogies between physics and politics mark the difference between the practical sciences and the arts—for the indeterminacy of
habit and choice which stands between human powers and actions make necessary in politics and ethics a dialectical method which unites the subject matters of the two practical sciences in contrast to the scientifically discriminated subjects treated by scientific methods in the physical sciences.

The influence which Aristotle's moral and political theories have had in later ages has followed a tortuous path determined largely by the fact that Aristotle's cautious discrimination of the practical sciences from the arts and the theoretic sciences is rarely part of the influence he exercises, but instead some of the broad analogies—criticized by Aristotle in the doctrines of Socrates and Plato—by which doing is reduced to knowing and both are identified with making, have controlled the interpretation of Aristotle's doctrines. The influence of the Aristotelian ethics has been limited largely to the repetition in uncongenial contexts, usually traceable to Platonic sources, of his wise sayings concerning the virtues, choice, deliberation, free-will, friendship, prudence, wisdom, pleasure, happiness. Much of the language in which ethics and moral problems are discussed still bears an Aristotelian impress, but the particularity which his constant insistence on choice and the efficient causes of action brought to his words has been lost in the generality which has come into ethics by emphasis on forms, actions, and ends. During the Christian Middle Ages the ethics of Aristotle was introduced into a moral theory built on eternal goods and divine love which were often described in terms borrowed from Plato.\footnote{Cf. Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa theologica} Ia, q. 6, a. 4, \textit{ad resp.}, where Thomas undertakes to demonstrate, by means of the doctrine of participation, that the divine goodness is the exemplary, efficient, and final cause of all goods, and to effect that end goes so far as to reconcile the Platonist doctrine of ideas, at least in respect to the good, to the Aristotelian analysis. "Hoc autem quod est per se ens et per se unum, ponebat [sc. Plato] esse summum bonum. Et quia bonum convertitur cum ente, sicut et unum, ipsum per se bonum dicebat esse Deum, a quo omnia dicuntur bona per modum participationis.—Et quamvis haec opinio irrationabilis videatur quantum ad hoc quod ponebat species rerum naturalium separatas per se susbistentes, ut Aristoteles multipliciter improbat; tamen hoc absolute verum est, quod aliquid est primum quod per suam essentiam est ens et bonum, quod dicitus Deum, ut ex superioribus patet. Huic etiam sententiae concordat Aristoteles" (cf. \textit{ibid.} IIa, IIae, q. 27, a. 3). Much the}
Eternal goods have not been without defenders even since the Renaissance, but moral questions have been treated largely by reference to the functions of the mind or the directions of actions or the meanings of words, and inquiry has seldom returned to habits which are relative to passions and subject to rational formulation. In the place of a subsistent good, moral problems have been referred for a time to reason, moral sense, common sense, intuition, or some like power supposed to be possessed by all men, until in more recent times a like generality was achieved by actions subject uniformly to some pragmatic test or by terms like "good" or "value" supposed to extend in single or comparable meanings in all their applications.

The political theory of Aristotle has been continued and extended in like dismemberment, and the analogies used by Aristotle have been adapted, as in the case of ethics, to reformulate politics now as an art, now as a physical science. Such transformations are easily accomplished by removing the controlling influence exercised by final causes and the ends of the good life in his analysis of politics, for their place is then taken by political forms and laws which are imbedded, in appropriate Platonic fashion, in the nature of things, by the interests and intentions of individuals or groups, by power and agreements, by rights and duties, or by technical knowledge and competence. Inquiry into the bases of justice in "natural justice," particularly as continued by Stoics and Neo-Platonists, supplied the pattern according to which political theory turned, in Roman law and Christian theology, from the investigation of changing condi-

same transformation is achieved by the place of the theological virtues and particularly charity in the moral scheme (cf. ibid. q. 25, a. 2, ad 1). The will assumes, as a consequence, a unique direction and importance which it did not have for Aristotle, and it is extended by analogy not only from ethics to politics but to natural phenomena (cf. ibid. Ia, q. 82, a. 4, ad resp.: "Et hoc appareat tam in naturalibus quam in politicis. Caelum enim, quod agit ad universalem conservationem generabilium et corruptibilium, movet omnia inferiora corpora, quorum unumquodque agit ad conservationem propriae speciei, vel etiam individui. Rex etiam, qui intendit bonum commune regni, movet per suum imperium singulos praepositos civitatum, qui singulis civitatibus curam regiminis impendunt. Objectum autem voluntatis est bonum et finis in communi)."
tions to reiteration of the influence, rarely particularized, of "natural law," and the doctrine of natural law itself suggests the modes of analysis, much practiced since the Middle Ages, by which political problems are resolved by the unique determinations of Reason or Will. Aristotle's vocabulary and distinctions, the formal organizations of the study of politics and of the institutions studied in it, have contributed recurrent terms to the long literature of utopian projected states, to the scientific discussion of politics, to the pamphleteering preparation for governments, and even to the language in which laws and constitutions have been written and interpreted: thus, to mention only the most obvious cases, the formal distinction of the parts of a constitution has furnished, by way of Montesquieu, the practical precept of the division of powers, and Aristotle's manner of differentiating six states has become, more than any other classification of states, part of political language. In general, however, the effect of this formalizing of Aristotle's terminology and theory may be seen in the tendency of the two end-terms of his dialectic, the individual and the state, which are determined in endless ways each relative to the other, to become absolute in such fashion that all political problems may be treated as instances of the opposition of rights and duties, or even of Individualism and the Common Good. Even more subtle and pervasive, however, has been the tendency of Absolute Goods, when long established in discussion, to be translated, with little effort or consequence, into the actions or intentions which are turned to them; when philosophers have tired of formal causes, entitized as eternal beings, they have sought solace, if not a different analysis, in efficient causes, finding the common good in some manifestation of a common will, or accounting for political organizations, which had been called "natural," as conventional associations established by

58 The sources for the discussion of natural law in Aristotle are to be found not in the Politics (except as reflected in the perfect state) but in the Rhetoric (i. 13. 1373b3) and in the treatment of natural justice in the Nicomachean Ethics (v. 7. 1134b18).
social contracts. This tendency repeats the fate which has be-
fallen Aristotle's physical theory, for in politics as in physics
all four of the Aristotelian causes have been reduced to efficient
causes—contracts and covenants have been advanced as effi-
cient causes to account for the pursuit of the "common good,"
the division of powers has been made the efficient cause of the
persistence of states, not the form of their organization—and
the tendency reached its completion at the close of the Middle
Ages, when Aristotle's political theory was no longer fitted in a
scheme dominated by "eternal law," in the first and most in-
fluential of modern political theories, that of Machiavelli, which
is based almost exclusively on considerations, derived from
Aristotle's treatment of efficient causes in the Politics and of
persuasion in the Rhetoric, of means by which to move or main-
tain a state.

The influence and continuation of the method of Aristotle's
political theory must be sought in other regions than those
covered in later political and ethical speculation, for in the
philosophies which have abandoned the distinction between the-
oretic and practical sciences, the method of the practical sci-
ences may be found, universalized and extended to any sub-
ject, or even to all subjects. In pragmatisms, functionalisms,
operationalisms, instrumentalisms, and positivisms, some ves-
tiges of the dialectic of morality—with its emphasis on agents
and outcomes, its concern with organic interrelations, its limita-
tion of perspective to relative and proximate causal influences—
survive and have been made to disguise the uncongenial specu-
lations of metaphysics by supplying first principles which seem
to be based wholly on the confidence we can have in things
made or modified by man.

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