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Education as Regime Change in Aristotle's Politics

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EDUCATION AS REGIME CHANGE IN ARISTOTLE'S *POLITICS*

BY

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THESIS

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To my father and mother, Bill and Rosemary Nunnally:

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Without your guidance, encouragement, and advocacy this thesis would not have been possible.

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ABSTRACT

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University of New Hampshire, May, 2015

Aristotle's *Politics* is a study of political science, established by Aristotle as the practical science of all things related to the *polis*, the highest human community, with the purpose of securing and promoting the good life, that of noble action and happiness, for its citizens. Aristotle observes that the political communities in existence around him all fall short of this lofty goal, and much of the *Politics* and subsequent commentary on the *Politics* is an attempt to establish what type of regime is best able to achieve this highest end of the *polis*. This paper argues that the relationship between the end of the city, the happiness of its citizens, and the methods used to achieve that end are reciprocal, and that as such only the ideal form of regime change is capable of producing the ideal regime. Through an analysis of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Politics*, and the *Constitution of Athens*, this study demonstrates that there is, according to Aristotle, only one proper method of regime change: education. Through proper education, of both the young and the old, both civic and intellectual, in what is noble and what is useful, the regime is able to progress towards the ideal regime simply. This ideal regime simply, then, is the rule of the virtuous multitude, in which all citizens of the city have achieved full virtue. Given that this may in fact be impossible, it is also apparent that it is only through proper education that the best regime possible is reached; any regime that has the ability, through education, to move closer to the regime of the virtuous multitude.

INTRODUCTION

Aristotle begins the *Politics* with the syllogism that “every city is some sort of partnership, and that every partnership is constituted for the sake of some good,” concluding that the partnership that aims at the highest good “is called the city or political partnership.”¹ In his first two sentences Aristotle establishes the purpose of politics, working together in partnership towards the highest good, and thereby also establishes the metric by which all political communities are to be judged—the extent to which the community aims at and is able to realize the highest good. Much of the inquiry into Aristotle’s thought has focused on the form of political community, or regime, that is best able to achieve the end of promoting happiness, or *eudaimonia*, and Aristotle himself seems to understand that this would be the case. He himself devotes much of the *Politics* to this question, and acknowledges “it is through hunting for [happiness] in a different manner and by means of different things that [groups of] individuals create ways of life and regimes that differ.”² The dispute over the best way of life, and the highest good, forms the central focus of ethical investigation just as the regime that best suits this highest good forms the central focus of political investigation.

It follows that the question of Aristotle’s ideal regime type should occupy much attention, but Aristotle implies that there are two components to the study of the ideal regime—the best regime itself, as the goal towards which all regimes should strive (whether this is the best regime we can pray for or the best regime simply), as well as the process by which any given regime can change and progress towards its proper end. Aristotle goes so far as to aver that these two aspects, the goal and the process, are consonant, for when discussing education at the opening of Book VIII of the *Politics* Aristotle states that as regards the different regimes, “one should educate with a view to each sort, for the character that is proper to each sort of

¹ Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. Carnes Lord (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 1252a 1-6.

² *Ibid*, 1328a 40-1328b 2.

regime both customarily safeguards the regime and establishes it at the beginning,” with the result that “the best character is always a cause of a better regime.”³ If education is the process by which the regime moves towards its proper end then the end is dependent upon the manner of education just as the manner of education is dependent upon the type of regime one desires. The goal that one is moving towards informs the manner and tenor of the growth within the city, but the manner and the tenor of the change also limits and informs the possible end. The implication, then, is that there is a certain necessary manner and tenor of change that will accomplish the best end.

Indeed, Aristotle devotes considerable time to the topic of regime change and growth in the *Politics*, and it thus follows that any commentary upon the end must also focus upon the means to achieve that end. Furthermore, just as Aristotle asserts that much attention will be paid to the ideal regime, he suggests that education, which this paper will argue is the proper method of change in a positive sense, or progress, tends to be overlooked. For he claims that the best laws are useless without proper education, but that the examination of education is “slighted by all.”⁴ This paper will examine the nature and manner of regime change, growth, and progress in Aristotle’s *Politics*. It will argue progress is a necessary good that the city must pursue as a component of its proper end, the promotion of the common good and the best life. Further, the paper will demonstrate that any change within the regime of the city must be concurrent with a change among the citizenry, as Aristotle repeatedly asserts that the happiness—that is, the exercise of the fullness of virtue—of the city is the same as that of the people.⁵ This in turn will demonstrate that any process of change must originate from within the city, rather than simply as the result of external force as some argue. Finally, this paper will argue that the proper mode of change is civic education, that is public and common for all, and

³ *Ibid*, 1337a 12-16.

⁴ *Ibid*, 1310a 12-15.

⁵ *Ibid*, 1323b 30-1324a 7.

that it is only this mechanism which is capable of producing the gradual progress towards the ideal regime necessary to improve the way of life of the citizenry without compromising the *polis*.

Several definitions and explanations should be offered at this point before moving forward. Throughout the course of this paper, terms used will correspond as closely as possible with the definitions that Aristotle offers for them. *Polis*, used interchangeably with city, refers to a self-sufficient political community aimed at the promotion of the highest common good, which Aristotle proffers as *eudaimonia*, or happiness in the sense of a complete flourishing in life, including both virtue and equipment. Virtue is excellence in action that results in excellence of character, both moral and intellectual, and in the case of the good person this is virtue not merely in any specific craft or activity but in fine and right action, encompassing courage, temperance, generosity, magnanimity, gentleness, friendship, justice, and the virtues of thought. Equipment refers to all of the necessary external conditions for happiness, such as a degree of wealth that allows for self-sufficiency and leisure. The *politeia*, or regime, refers to the organization of the political and cultural offices of the city, encompassing not only the authoritative governing body of the city but also the city's way of life and the end that the city pursues based upon its understanding of justice. This paper deals at length with the concept of regime change, which will refer in the broadest sense to any change, no matter how small or large, in the governing structure, culture, way of life, or purpose/direction of the city. The term revolution, used by Aristotle to denote a change in the essential character of a regime, will here be used to imply a more substantial change in the regime than the broader term of regime change, but this does not necessarily mean a complete change in regime type. Regime growth will be used synonymously with regime change, with the word progress signifying any growth or change that brings the city closer to its proper end, that is, closer to one of the ideal regime types that best promotes the common good and the happiness of the citizens and the city.

Moreover, it is necessary to delineate the meanings of the different types of regime change that will be considered. External regime change refers to any force that is able to alter a regime from the outside, be it Divine authority/revelation, conquest by another *polis*, a new founder or law-giver from outside the city, or any other instigator of change that is not endemic to the city. Internal regime change refers to any force that is able to alter a regime from within the city, whether this is under the control of the authoritative element of the city, in the case of new laws or education, or the result of internal factional conflict i.e. democratic partisans overthrowing an oligarchic regime.

Paideia, or education, following both John Burnet and Carnes Lord refers to the practical art of the creation and promotion of virtue within men, representing two of the three possible sources of virtue for Aristotle, leaving nature aside, habituation, *ethos*, and argument, *logos*. Education, as John Burnet points out, has a dual purpose for Aristotle reflecting the dual nature of man's soul (both appetites and intellect), on the one hand it is responsible for inculcating the type of character necessary for the city's pursuit of the common good and on the other hand for the intellectual instruction necessary for the individual's pursuit of the fullness of virtue. The former type refers to habituation, and will be glossed as moral or civic education responsible for civic or practical virtue, whilst the latter type refers to argument and will be glossed as intellectual education responsible for intellectual or philosophical virtue.⁶ A fuller discussion of the nature of education, both generally and in its two types, will follow in the body of the paper.

For the purposes of this argument the regime type considered will be that of the many as it approaches perfection. For Aristotle, there exist, as a simplification, six different types of regimes; these are based on the number of people involved in ruling and whether or not the regime is perverted in the end that it pursues. The possibilities, as far as the number of people

⁶ John Burnet, introduction to Aristotle, *Aristotle on Education*, trans. and ed. John Burnet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 1-2; Carnes Lord, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 36-37.

who may be involved in rule, are the rule of one, the rule of the few, and the rule of the many. When the one rules properly, pursuing the common good, this is called kingship, when unjustly it is called tyranny. When the few rule with an eye to the common good, it is called aristocracy, when they rule in their own interest it is called oligarchy. The rule of the many, when carried out properly, is called polity, and when improperly, democracy.⁷ Indeed, Aristotle concedes that not only are there multiple regime types, but that there are multiple good regimes, the best regime simply or the best regime feasible, and there remains disagreement amongst commentators, based upon Aristotle's own varied opinions, as to which segment of the polis rules in the ideal regime, the many, the few, or one.

However, the form of progress discussed involves not only a move towards happiness, the proper end of all political activity, but also to political virtue, that which enables the city to be ruled properly and directed towards proper virtue. For Aristotle political virtue represents, at the least, the most authoritative of all claims to rule, greater than number, fairness, wealth, or strength, for rule of the city should be directed not merely at the existence of the city, but "with a view to the good life," and as such "education and virtue above all... have a just claim in the dispute."⁸ Therefore, whichever segment within the city, taken as a collective, possesses the greatest amount of political virtue merits being the authoritative element of the city. And political virtue is the virtue of practical wisdom, the virtue of ruling and being ruled in turn amongst equals, with a view to the good of the city of the whole, including both the rulers and the ruled. In this sense, political rule differs from mastery, which looks only to the advantage of the rulers.⁹ In this sense, then, in any regime except the city in prayer the totality of the citizenry will not, barring an accident of fortune, all be possessed of political virtue. In such a case the authoritative element of the city will be at first the few but will, if the thesis of this paper is

⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1279a 25-1279b 10.

⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1283a 25-26.

⁹ *Ibid*, 1324b 32-35, 1325b 5-12.

correct, grow over time as more of the populace becomes virtuous to include an ever greater number. For, just as it is just that the ruled submit to a ruler who is greater in virtue, it would be unjust for the rulers to exclude those who become politically virtuous from having a share in rule, as all of those possessed of political virtue are similar in nature in the sense that they share in virtue and therefore have same just claim to rule.

This is consistent with Aristotle's earlier argument that only those who are naturally slaves may be ruled as slaves; any who possess virtue cannot justly be slaves, that is, "no one would assert that someone not meriting enslavement ought ever be a slave."¹⁰ Indeed, Mary Nichols makes this connection, stating that "the exclusion of the many from rule is no more just than slavery," but here perhaps does not stress the difference between the two examples.¹¹ Slavery *is* just when the slaves are not capable of virtue, and the exclusion of the many from rule *is* just when the many are not equal in political virtue to the ruler(s). But just as the master has an obligation to free those who are not natural slaves, the few have an obligation to include those capable of virtue. Moreover, mastery differs from political rule as noted above, and the rulers of the city are thus also *obligated* to attempt to instill political virtue in the ruled. Jeremy Waldron, Josiah Ober, William T. Bluhm, and Kevin M. Cherry also argue for Aristotle's understanding of the capability of the many to rule in an ideal way, amongst others.¹² A more detail discussion of the ideal regime, involving rule of the virtuous multitude, as well as the capabilities of the many, will follow in the body of the paper.

It should also be noted, however, that aside from any reasons contained within the work of Aristotle this paper seeks to examine education and progress with a view towards the rule of

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 1255a 25-26; 1287a 10-16; 1325b 5-12.

¹¹ Mary Nichols, *Citizen and Statesman: A Study of Aristotle's Politics*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1992), 82.

¹² Jeremy Waldron, "The Wisdom of the Multitude," *Political Theory* Vol. 23, no. 4 (1995): 564; Josiah Ober, "An Aristotelian Middle Way Between Deliberation and Independent-Guess Aggregation," Stanford University, September 2009: 4; William T. Bluhm, "The Place of the 'Polity' in Aristotle's Theory of the Ideal State," *Journal of Politics* Vol. 24 no. 4 (1962): 746-47; Kevin M. Cherry, "The Problem of Polity: Political Participation and Aristotle's Best Regime," *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 71, no. 4, (Oct. 2009): 1411-1412.

the many for the simple fact that most modern regimes, that is regimes that exist contemporaneously with this paper, at the very least *claim* that they are some form of the rule of the many. Aristotle, for his part, does believe that there is a form of rule of the many that is decent, and as this paper will argue there is a certain form of the rule of the many which may exist as an ideal form of rule. Politics is, for Aristotle, a practical “science” to use that term loosely, meant to be actively applicable, whereas philosophy is a theoretical science concerned with knowledge itself. Political philosophy, although Aristotle does not directly define it this way, is in some sense the attempt to take that which is knowledge for itself and find a way to apply said knowledge practically. Rather than turning lead into gold, it is the attempt to turn spider silk into steel. Whether or not Aristotle believes that the active life is better than the contemplative life, and to argue for the former requires much in the way of logical acrobatics in the face of his assertion in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that the best way of life is the philosophical, the work of political philosophy is a good as it serves the highest good.¹³ As Cicero states, “We are led by a powerful urge to increase the wealth of the human race; we are keen to make men’s lives safer and richer by our policies and efforts; we are spurred on by nature herself to fulfill this purpose.”¹⁴ Thus, if the author endeavors to draw practical lessons from the work of Aristotle to ‘increase the wealth of the human race,’ they must be applicable to current regimes that are, for the most part, at least nominally based upon the rule of the many. In the same respect, that is, with an eye towards practical application, this paper will examine not only the theoretical works of Aristotle (although this is the primary purpose) but will examine the classical city and the method and purpose of education as it existed at the time of Aristotle.

Finally, an aside must be made to explain the consistent use of male pronouns within this paper. As shall be explained later, within the body of the paper, there are ways in which

¹³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985), 1177a, 1094b 9-11.

¹⁴ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Republic*, trans. Niall Rudd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), I.3.

Aristotle's definition of the citizen can be expanded in the modern context to include women. It is, and this cannot be stated strongly enough, the personal belief of the author that this is the case. If there are any issues that the author must take with Aristotle, this is chief amongst them. It is the belief of the author that women are without a doubt equally capable of virtue, and virtue in the same manner as men. However, Aristotle himself considers only the male capable of reason. Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, the masculine will be used.

Before turning to the beginning of the argument, it will benefit those who do not inhabit the mind of the author to outline the shape of the paper to come. First, in Chapter I the concept of regime change in Aristotle's *Politics* will be examined, entailing a more thorough definition than that offered above and examination into why and how regime change is possible. This will necessarily involve an explication of the nature of the city and man, as the regime is composed of men and operates within the city. Moving from man, to the city, to the regime in this manner reflects the order in which Aristotle moves from the man in the *Nicomachean Ethics* to the city at the opening of the *Politics* and thence to the regime. Furthermore, it is only by understanding the nature of the regime, defined as it is in relation to the city and to man, that one can understand the methods through which regimes can change. Secondly, in Chapter II the different possible methods of regime change shall be considered with an inquiry into which method best suits the positive change that leads towards the ideal regime and the promotion of the highest human good. This will include an examination of the instances of regime change identified by Aristotle's school in the *Constitution of Athens*, consideration of external versus internal sources of change, the role of the divine in regime change, and the importance of stability and the problem of factional conflict. In this manner the proper nature of regime change will become clearer, as the proper form of regime change must avoid certain ills as well as meet certain criteria. Next, in Chapter III, a consideration of the exact form of change that Aristotle believes is best, which this paper will assert is civic education. It will be demonstrated that education as regime change is capable not only of moving the regime properly towards its end,

but is also capable of remedying the problems faced by the regime, chief amongst them the philosopher's desire to withdraw from the city and the spiritedness of the citizenry. Then, in Chapter IV, a discussion of what a program of civic education looked like in the classical Athenian *polis* and a description of what Aristotle believed such a program should look like. This will ground the analysis in historical context as well as reinforcing further the importance of the nature of man and the city to regime change. Next, in Chapter V, the proper end of regime change will be examined, that is, what sort of change is a good, towards what should it be directed, and how does it serve the highest good; this discussion will necessarily involve a more detailed discussion of the rule of the many as referenced above in relation to Aristotle's ideal regime. This regime, the rule of the virtuous multitude, constitutes not only the ideal regime of the many, but the ideal regime possible. Finally, in Chapter VI, a concluding look at both regime change and civic education and what this tells us about the best regime and the implications for politics and education today.

Chapter I: Whether Regime Change is possible, and a Good?

Before undertaking to examine any further aspects of regime change and growth, one must first ascertain whether or not Aristotle believes that regime change—that is, the development of a given regime from its current state of existence into a more or less perfect form—is possible. Moreover, if such change is possible, why is it possible and what purpose does it serve, e.g. does it promote the good? The question is not, at first glance, a difficult one to answer as Aristotle devotes considerable time in the *Politics* to outlining how regimes may be sustained and how they degenerate. To paraphrase Harry Jaffa, if Aristotle did not believe that such change was possible, why write (or lecture) the *Politics*?¹⁵ But such a quick acceptance of the possibility of regime change does not really tell us anything about how regimes should be constituted, the city or the goal of the city, nor the proper method of regime change.

Rather, let us consider the possibility of regime change by first examining the relationship between the regime and the city. In this, of course, one must first understand the nature of the city. This paper began, as Aristotle began the *Politics*, with the assertion that the city is a community that exists for the purpose of the promotion of the highest human good; the city exists as a self-sufficient partnership meant to help its citizens flourish and live the good life.¹⁶ The city, however, is not “created” for this purpose, it is not artificial. Nor is the city divine, granted by the gods to man, except possibly in the sense that all things that exist, and existence itself, must have some first origin, and that the ideal city presented in Books VII-VIII is a city in prayer.¹⁷ Rather, as Aristotle states repeatedly, the city “exists by nature,” and not only does it exist by nature but serves as the necessary and proper end of all human relations and

¹⁵ Harry V. Jaffa, “Aristotle,” in *History of Political Philosophy* 2nd ed., ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1972), 84.

¹⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a 1-6.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 1288b 22.

communities.¹⁸ This does not mean, however, that individual cities are not constituted or founded, they are not eternal or fixed; indeed, Aristotle reserves special praise for those who found cities as “responsible for the greatest of goods.”¹⁹ But it is perhaps more accurate to describe cities as cultivated rather than created, for all natural things come into existence but they are not necessarily immediately complete. Aristotle compares the city to human beings, horses, and households, and states that their nature is in their completed state, as all things are defined for Aristotle by their end. The horse first exists as an embryo, then as a foal, a yearling, a colt or filly, and finally as an adult horse, that is a mare or a stallion. The horse is not “created” anew at each stage of its development though we may speak of each level of development as a new beginning but the horse remains the same horse. So the city progresses from individuals who cannot exist without each other to the family, the household, the village, and finally the city.²⁰ However, as Mary Nichols notes, “unlike the growth of other natural beings... the development of cities is not inevitable.”²¹ This reflects the distinction that Aristotle makes between human beings and all other animals.

All natural, living things share one end, that of growth and flourishing in the sense of mere existence, the end of the newborn horse is to grow into an adult horse, to live as healthily as possible in such a way as to put off death as long as possible. Humankind, too, shares this end—the baby grows into a child and eventually an adult, and endeavors to live as healthily as possible before the coming of death. So the first end of the city, as is natural to both man and beast, is to secure “living.”²² One must go even further with this statement, as Aristotle himself does, that is not only the *first* end of the city but the *very reason* for its generation; the city “com[es] into being for the sake of living,” just as its precursors the household and the village

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 1252b 30-35.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 1253a 30.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 1252a 25-1252b 30.

²¹ Nichols, 17.

²² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b 29-40.

came into existence to fulfill “daily needs” and then “nondaily needs.”²³ On this reading, the city does indeed aim at the highest good and end of man, fulfilling the definition that Aristotle set forth at the beginning of the *Politics*, as he states that self-sufficiency is “an end and what is best.”²⁴ And yet, Aristotle established in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that the proper end of man, the highest good, is complete happiness, or the activity of the soul in accord with the highest virtue.²⁵

If all things have one end, and the city comes into existence to fulfill its end, the securing of self-sufficient living, how can it also promote this second end? For Aristotle continues that the city that came into existence for the sake of living, “exists for the sake of living well;” he later restates this even more clearly by stating that the city “exists not only for the sake of living but rather primarily for the sake of living well.”²⁶ The city has two ends: firstly self-preservation and self-sufficiency, secondly the promotion of the good life, and is capable of pursuing both of these ends. Now, it must be noted that the first end of the city appears to be what Aristotle refers to as a “lower end” that is “pursued for the sake of the higher,” second end, and by Book III he asserts, in the same chapter in which he restates the dual ends of the city, that the sole end of the city is the promotion of the good life. Here, however, Aristotle must, in some way, contradict himself as the statement, “the political partnership must be regarded, therefore, as being for the sake of noble actions, not for the sake of living together,” seems to disregard the fact that the city originally came into existence for the sake of living.²⁷ The answer, and resolution to this contradiction, comes from the fact that cities, composed of men, are in their nature like men who are composed of two parts and thus also, unlike all other living things, have two ends.

²³ *Ibid*, 1252b 10-30.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 1.2.9.

²⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177a 10-19.

²⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b 30; 1280a 31.

²⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a 15-16; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1280b 39-1281a 3.

For Aristotle states that men are made up of both body and soul, and that the soul itself is made up of both rational and non-rational parts; the existence of man encapsulates an inseparable duality.²⁸ In the fact that man has a body and a non-rational part of the soul, he is like all other living creatures, and is thusly just as bound by his nature as all other living creatures. Men may come together in a city for the sake of living, and in this he may be comparable to herd animals or bees that join together for the sake of living in accordance with their nature, and indeed may even form cities as they are more self-sufficient and a better guarantee of life than villages. But because man is also possessed of a rational part of the soul he is also capable of transcending his original nature,ⁱ capable of not merely living, but living well, for rationality (*logos*) allows man alone to consider the “good and bad and just and unjust and other things [of this sort].”²⁹ Not only is he capable of doing so, it is part of his very nature to do so as Mary Nichols points out, “humanity’s overcoming of nature in one sense is thus a means for fulfilling its nature in another.”³⁰ The man who is incapable of transcending his original nature as body and non-rational soul is incapable of truly ruling himself, as he becomes a slave to his passions; he is the definition of the natural slave.

The man who abandons the natural needs of his body and focuses only on the higher nature of his rational soul is likewise not a man, but a god. It is this distinction that is implied when Aristotle notes that, “he who is without a city through nature rather than chance is either a mean sort or superior to man,” and again, “one who is incapable of participating,” that is, the mean sort of man incapable of the use of reason, “or who is in need of nothing through being self-sufficient,” one who has completely transcended and thus abandoned the original nature of man, “is no part of a city, and so is either a beast or a god.”³¹ The city is thus like man, it has not

²⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097b 39-1098a 7.

²⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a 1-18.

³⁰ Nichols, 18; see also Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C.I. Litzinger, (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1984), 126; Jaffa, 75.

³¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a 3-4, 27-28.

only the ability to transcend its original end but also an obligation to do so; the city that does not do so is not properly a city, hence Aristotle's remarks in Book III regarding the difference between living together and living in a city.³²

This understanding of the duality of man and the city will continue to have serious implications for the undertaking of this paper, as shall be seen. But the upshot of the above discussion to our immediate examination of the nature of change within the city is as follows. Because the city is concerned both with living and with living well and because, like man, it is composed of both the rational and non-rational, it changes in two ways. As man changes both in body and mind, so the city grows by choice, but also by chance and organic development. Moreover, even a development that is the result of rational choice, for example the modern development of Internet technology, may change the city unintentionally by changing the way in which citizens are able to interact with one another—the choice was to develop the Internet, not to explicitly refashion the manner of citizen interaction that arose as a result. Additionally, because the city is composed of men, and men grow old and die, the composition of the city is constantly changing. This does *not* mean that the city of 350 BC is inherently a completely different and new city than that of 250 BC, but certain aspects of the city will have changed; Aristotle compares the city to a river or a spring that remains the same although the water itself is forever moving, and eventually asserts that its only primary change when the regime changes is that the city changes³³ However, these are changes, amongst many others of a more explicitly non-human type such as environmental change, cannot be decided upon by the ruling element of the city.

As well as accidental or organic change, there is also a second manner by which the city may change, rational choice as exercised by the ruling element of the city. This, in essence, is the political art—making, enacting, and enforcing decisions that should promote the common

³² *Ibid*, 1280a 30-1280b 40.

³³ *Ibid*, 1276a 33-1276b 10.

good of the city. The regime, however constituted, is a reflection of the values of the people—the end towards which they wish to direct their city and the understanding of justice contained therein, as well as the sum totality of the beliefs and way of life of the city.³⁴ The regime is also, however, the authoritative element responsible for making decisions such as the distribution of offices, creating and enforcing the laws of the city, ensuring the self-sufficiency of the city, and most importantly, as Aristotle himself says, seeing to the education of the young.³⁵ Aristotle moves fluidly from using the term regime to describe the whole of the political community to describing only the authoritative element of the city, as in Chapter Six of Book III, where Aristotle states that “the regime is an arrangement of a city with respect to its offices, particularly the one that has authority over all [matters]. For what has authority in the city is everywhere the governing body, and the governing body *is* the regime.” In his explanation, Aristotle immediately turns to looking at “what it is for the sake of which the city is established,” and it becomes apparent in the following paragraphs that the form of the governing body, the source of political authority that Aristotle calls the regime, is dependent upon the end agreed upon by the city. Indeed, only “those regimes which look to the common advantage are correct regimes according to what is unqualifiedly just, while those which look only to the advantage of the rulers are errant, and are all deviations from the correct regimes.”³⁶ Any city that is ruled with a view to the private advantage is ruled by a regime in name only; in its essence said authoritative element is *not* truly a regime.

It would seem, given that the regime is the source of political authority within the city, that only the governing body can be responsible for intentional change within the city. This is the point that Strauss highlights in his consideration of Aristotle’s *Politics*. Considering the relationship between the regime and the polis, Strauss argues that the regime is the “form” of

³⁴ *Ibid*, 1289a 14-19; 1295a 40; 1296b 13-40; 1301a 26-38.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 1290a 7-11; 1337a 10-12.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 1278b 8-12; 1279a 16-20.

the city whereas the constituent inhabitants of the city are the “matter.” He claims that it is the regime, meaning the authoritative element, that is higher in dignity due to its more direct connection to the end of the city, stating that “the character of a given city becomes clear to us only if we know of what kind of men its preponderant part consists, *i.e.* to what end these men are dedicated.”³⁷ In this reading, it is the regime as the authoritative element that is solely responsible for determining the end of the city and shaping the populace accordingly. In one respect, Strauss is correct, as it is only the authoritative element that controls the laws, education, defense, etc. of the city according to Aristotle, whether this is one man or the many. However, Aristotle acknowledges that there are various ways in which the authoritative element is itself shaped by the populace, as his lengthy discussion of regime preservation in Book V of the *Politics* indicates that the regime must make decisions that at the *very least* appease the populace, and at best work to reshape the regime so that it bridges the conceptions of justice and equality held by the rulers and the ruled.³⁸

Moreover, Strauss himself turns from this discussion of form and matter to a consideration of the nature regime change, using the historical example of France to underline his points. And here, indeed, in the history of France, one has some of the most striking examples of the ends of the city, and regime change, being directed not by the regime but by the populace, for in 1789 it was the people, and not the government, that determined the future destiny of France. Of course, once the people, or some segment of the people, had seized control they in effect became the regime of the city, but several distinctions must be noted. First, at the very moment of regime change, at that most crucial catalytic point, the direction of the regime was determined by those *not* a part of the governing body, whose beliefs and understandings of the end of the city and the means to achieve those ends were developed *before* they were in power.

³⁷ Leo Strauss, *The City and Man*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964), 46.

³⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1308a 3-18; 1309 1-10; 1313a 14-23; see also Curren 108-109.

Of course, Aristotle did not consider the French Revolution in his *Politics*, but he does discuss the problem of *stasis* at length, and acknowledges the ability of those that are without the regime, inhabitants of the city who do not have a share in rule, to violently upend the political order, noting that it is at least sometimes the result of those who wish to see the values and direction of the regime changed, as Stephen Skultety argues, that Aristotle believed that conflict between the rulers and the ruled is one of the most frequent sources of constitutional change.³⁹

In sum, the constitution of the regime is defined by two choices, that of the proper end of the city and the manner and actions whereby that end is pursued. These decisions, although made by the regime, are influenced by the populace, and when this is not the case violent factional conflict may occur. And yet, Aristotle asserts in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that deliberation, which must precede choice, can only be about “things that promote an end, not about the end,”⁴⁰ and as Stephen B. Smith point out, this presents a problem of sorts when discussing regime change, as it implies that the end is never in question. Indeed, Aristotle asserts that the goal of the city is always the promotion of the common good, happiness for all its members, in the opening of the *Politics*, and reiterates in Book VII “that everyone strives for living well and for happiness is evident.” Additionally, even in those regimes that are deviant, the ruling part of the city still aims at “advantage,” the same phrase that is used for proper regimes, they simply fail to aim at the *common* advantage.⁴¹ It is then, perhaps, not that the end itself is disputed, all aim at happiness, but that there is disagreement upon what precisely constitutes happiness, and surely this is evident from Aristotle’s discussion of happiness at the very opening of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he posits that while almost everyone agrees that happiness is the highest of goods, people “disagree about what happiness is, and the many do

³⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1301b 6-13, 26-30; Skultety 364.

⁴⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*,

⁴¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1279b 4-10, 1331b 39-40.

not give the same answer as the wise,” and that some believe, mistakenly, that happiness is pleasure, wealth, honor, health, or Plato’s Idea of the good.⁴²

Strauss suggests, however, that just as Aristotle will demonstrate that all of these ends are in fact subordinate to *true* happiness, he is also “satisfied that there is no serious disagreement on this subject among sufficiently thoughtful people,” but Aristotle admits that cities are not always ruled by “sufficiently thoughtful people.” It is not only possible but evident that regimes may be constituted with one of these lesser ends as its goal; the regime of the Spartans is criticized because “the entire organization of the laws is with a view to a *part* of virtue,” and that they consider the “good things” that are fought over as “better than virtue.”⁴³ Bartlett suggests that regimes which incorrectly posit “that the part of excellence they call their own is the whole of excellence... would have to yield,” before those that possessed a true understanding of the whole of excellence, but that in reality Aristotle acknowledges that such a transition may be resisted, and even if it is not it requires the populace of the city to acknowledge the outstanding virtue of the new regime.⁴⁴ Action to produce change must always occur, but this action is not always preceded by choice.

Furthermore, as noted briefly above, there exist regimes that improperly understand the relationship between the individual and the city, in two distinct manners. The first, referenced by Strauss as typical of modernity, aims at the common advantage by purporting to secure, for the entirety of its citizens, the ability to pursue their own individual happiness, but Aristotle states that a partnership which exists for the security of possessions and the prevention of injustice between citizens is not truly a city but an alliance, in which law is merely a guarantee of the just, “but not the sort of thing to *make* the citizens good and just [emphasis added].” Alternatively, regimes are also flawed that fail to acknowledge the importance of individual happiness and aim

⁴² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095a 16-1097a 14.

⁴³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1271b 1-11.

⁴⁴ Robert C. Barlett, “Aristotle’s Science of the Best Regime,” *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 88, no. 1 (March 1994): 148.

only at collective happiness and view all things in common, as Aristotle's criticism of Socrates' "communist" regime evidences, "it is impossible for (the city) to be happy as a whole unless most [people], or all or some of its parts, are happy." The proper regime, then, must be simultaneously directed at the active promotion of the common good as well as allowing for and promoting the individual good, it can neither "reduce a consonance to a unison," nor "a meter to a single foot."⁴⁵ The second mistake is to assume that it is enough for the regime to promote the happiness of one part of the city, most commonly this would be the happiness of the rulers but as Jaffa points out Aristotle also criticizes a sort of martyr-like rule that aims only at the good of the ruled, because individual happiness is achievable even whilst other individuals are not happy.ⁱⁱ But the city's natural end is the good of all its members, and so a proper regime must aim at the good of the whole city.⁴⁶ All of this serves to demonstrate that there is no contradiction between Aristotle's statement on deliberation, or that there is more than one proper end of the city or man.

That regimes may change in regards to the actions and methods by which they pursue their ends perhaps needs far less explication. To begin with, it is consistent with Aristotle's statement from the *Nicomachean Ethics* regarding deliberation referenced above. Secondly, Aristotle distinguishes the proper regimes after the way in which they distribute shares in rule, that is, the method by which the regimes pursue governance, suggesting that the foremost or at least most obvious difference between regimes is their manner of action. That is, while regimes are divided based upon the end which they pursue—the good of the many, the few, or the one--they are also divided on how they govern, by giving power to the many, the few or the one, and this style of governance constitutes a sort of method by which the regime pursues its end. Additionally, education, laws, military security, and all of the other concerns of the regime come

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 1263b 30-35, 1264b 15-21, 1280a 25-1280b 13.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 1278b 30-1279a 21, see also Aristotle's criticism of the Guardians in the *Republic* 1264b 15-22; Jaffa 101-102

into being through action, and it is obvious even to the most casual of observers that different regimes have different modes of education, laws, and forms of military defense. And finally, just as Aristotle criticized the Socratic and Spartan regimes for their ends, he criticizes them for the means by which they achieve their ends.⁴⁷

A brief example of how this reflects upon the actual action of regime change is as follows. When men first came to live together it was in pursuit of the common advantage in respect to mere living; that is, the desire for self-sufficiency. This agreed upon end characterized the first regimes, which were ruled by kings, whom Aristotle characterizes in Book III as being first and foremost capable in matters of war, the distribution of land, and the founding of the city.⁴⁸ As long as the agreed upon end of the city was merely living, this regime type was acceptable in that it was the best means of securing self-sufficiency. Kevin Cherry here argues that the move away from this form of kingship to other forms of rule reflects a change in the actions of the regime; self-sufficiency remains the goal of the city, but as the city develops it is better able to achieve self-sufficiency under a different form of rule and it is the end of self-sufficiency that justifies this change.⁴⁹ But, the move away from early kingship based upon paternal rule to political rule must also be based upon a change in the end of the city. For Aristotle states that once brought together men are able to use speech to reason about the good and the just; this will lead to political science, which will in turn lead people to understand that the proper end of the city is not merely living, but living well, and they will subsequently reorient the direction of the regime towards this end.⁵⁰ The move away from early pre-political kingship, then, is for Aristotle based both upon a change in the direction of the regime as well as the actions (distribution of offices and responsibilities) through which it pursues that end.

⁴⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1279a 33-37, II.5, II.9.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 1252b 18-22; 1285b 5-12.

⁴⁹ Cherry, 1412.

⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a 14-19; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.2-3; Nichols, 35-36.

For Aristotle, the above-discussed is the manner in which regimes must change if they wish to pursue their proper end, the promotion of the common good which entails both the security of self-sufficiency for living and the promotion of virtue to allow for living well, that is, happiness. For Aristotle states that:

There are two things that [living] well consists in for all: one of these is in correct positing of the aim and the end of actions; the other, discovering the actions that bear on the end. These things can be consonant with one another or dissonant, for sometimes the aim is finely posited but in acting they miss achieving it, and sometimes they achieve everything with a view to the end, but the end they posited was bad. And sometimes they miss both. In connection with medicine, for example, [doctors] sometimes neither judge rightly what the quality of a healthy body should be nor achieve what is productive in relation to the object they set for themselves. But in all arts and sciences both of these should be kept in hand, the end and the actions directed to the end.⁵¹

The regime must understand the proper end of the city, and it must understand by what method and through which actions this end is best pursued, it must then actually choose to pursue this end, through the right actions, and it must actually execute these actions correctly. A failure in any one of these areas results in the failure of the regime's move towards the good. The example of the doctor not only makes clear the need for proper execution in all aspects, but also demonstrates the interrelation of the end and the means. If the doctor incorrectly believes that the end of human health does not involve the possession of legs, he may amputate his patient's legs to achieve this end, in this case there is consonance between the means and the end but, because he assumed the end incorrectly, he has not actually promoted the true end of his patient's health. If, on the other hand, the doctor correctly understands that the true end of his patient's health involves the possession of legs, but he mistakenly amputates his legs nonetheless he has not only failed to promote the true end of his patient's health but has, in so doing, changed the end which he was pursuing, as his patient's health can no longer include the possession of legs. Certain actions of the doctor have the ability to alter the end pursued, some of these changes are correctible but some are not. Likewise, a city may make mistakes in relation to its end or actions that are correctible, but they may also make mistakes that lead to

⁵¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1331b 26-38.

the downfall of the regime, or, more gravely still, the destruction of the city. The only way to ensure right movement towards the good, not only in the governance of the regime but as Aristotle notes in all arts and sciences, is to ensure that both end and means are correct and compatible.

As we have seen, then, regime change is possible. More importantly, however, an examination of the nature of man, the city, and the regime has led to an understanding of some stipulations upon how such change must occur if it is directed at the good. Man has a dual nature because he is possessed of both a body and a soul, and the soul is further divided into both rational and non-rational components. This dual nature leads man to have two ends, both living, and living well. Because man has two ends, the city also has two ends, the promotion of living and living well. Additionally, the city is divided into two parts, based upon the division of man, the rulers and the ruled. The regime's existence is also twofold; it is both the sum of all the beliefs and way of life of the disparate elements of the city as well as the ruling element of the city. All of this means that men, cities, and regimes are capable of change in two manners. Because men and cities are natural, they change both through organic or non-controlled growth as well as intentional choice. Furthermore, change may arise from within the man or the city, or from without, in which case it is also beyond their control. Change within the city may originate from the ruling element or the ruled. The same is true for regimes, regime change may occur from within or without the regime, and in both cases this may be due to organic non-controlled growth or intentional choice. Change may occur in only one part of the regime, the rulers or the ruled, but the two elements should be in alignment in order to pursue the good. Likewise, regime change may involve change in the end of regime or in the actions to pursue this end, but again, the two elements should be in alignment in order to pursue the good. It is clear then, that not only is regime change possible, but also that when it is accomplished correctly it moves the city towards its natural end and is therefore a good. Let us turn, then, to an examination of these different possibilities for change.

Chapter II: Methods of Regime Change

Let us begin our investigation of change by ascertaining whether it is better for change, in the city and the regime, to originate internally or externally. It is clear that change can in fact originate both within and without the city, as Aristotle acknowledges several different manners in which an external force may exert its influence upon the city, resulting in a change in the city or the regime. Amongst these, he notes the possibility of the influence of the divine upon the city, the possibility of a rival city asserting its will upon the city, and the more general possibility of the influence of chance.⁵²

All of these possibilities are further attested to in the *Athenian Constitution*ⁱⁱⁱ, wherein it is asserted that there have been eleven changes to the Athenian constitution since the city's founding. The second change was brought about by Theseus; the demigod son of Poseidon who founds Athens by bringing together the twelve settlements of Attica and then gives Athens its first constitution. Not only this, but, as Fustel de Coulanges asserts, Theseus was able to unite Athens politically at least in part because he was able to unite it religiously. Thucydides notes that Theseus established the *Synoikia*, the celebration of the city's unification, as a festival in honor of Athena, the implication being that it was not only Theseus who was responsible for the city's founding but also Athena.⁵³ The tenth change, the institution of the Thirty, was brought about by Lysander's victory over the Athenians in the battle of Aegospotami and the ensuing surrender of Athens to Sparta that ended the Peloponnesian War.⁵⁴ The sixth change, the rule of the council of the Areopagus, was the result of chance, "not through any

⁵² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b 23-27, 1271b 30-32, 1303a 1-13, 1307b 20-25.

⁵³ Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution*, trans. P.J. Rhodes (London: Penguin Books, 1984), 41.2; Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City*, trans. Willard Small (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Books, 1956), 130-131; Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Steven Lattimore (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), II.15.

⁵⁴ Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution*, 34.2-35.1.

formal decision,” as it had provided the money to outfit the fleet that won victory over the Persians at the Battle of Salamis.⁵⁵

All of these changes, however, are beyond the control of the legislator, and thus appear to be impractical methods of ensuring that the city progresses towards its proper end. For political science is concerned with action, the action of securing and preserving the good of the people and the city, and as we have seen above this involves making the proper choice in regards to the end and the actions that promote the end as well as the proper execution of those actions. Mary Nichols goes so far as to aver that, “It is such choice that defines *human* action...and political life as well. The city is an association of human beings rather than of slaves or animals because its members share lives lived ‘according to choice.’”⁵⁶ Of the three examples of regime change given above, the legislator makes the choice regarding the end of the regime only in the first instance, but Theseus is not merely a man but a god, and Athena guides his choosing. Although Aristotle asserts that theoretically this sort of divine kingship represents the best form of rule, he also claims that such rulers do not exist, moreover, even if they did exist justice would necessitate that they were excluded from the partnership of the city due to their superior virtue.⁵⁷ Because there is a lack of choice as regards the ends of the city in the reliance upon external sources of change, there is also no way of guaranteeing that the end pursued is that of the highest good.

Progress is not inevitable; of the eight possible arrangements of choices made by the regime (the end, the actions, the execution of the actions, all rightly or wrongly)^{iv} only one arrangement is guaranteed to yield the proper result. The *Athenian Constitution* glosses the changes leading to the rule of Theseus and the council of the Areopagus as good due to the good nature of the two regimes, but the change leading to the rule of the Thirty as degrading the

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 23.1-2.

⁵⁶ Nichols, 36.

⁵⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1332b 16-23, 1284a 4-15; see also Curren 65, 74.

city due to the bad nature of their rule.⁵⁸ Thus, if the regime is to be guaranteed to move the city towards its proper end, the cause of the change must be rooted in intentional choice, and this choice must therefore arise from within the city.

The role of the divine in progress cannot be so easily dismissed, however, but nor can the relationship between politics and the divine in Aristotle be fully discussed here. Let it suffice to briefly examine the subject and some of its implications for the task at hand. Robert Bartlett argues that Aristotle, in his *Politics*, attempted to replace faith in the divine with the use of reason as the backbone of the laws as much as was possible. Indeed, the references to religion in the *Politics* are brief, especially when compared to Plato's political works. Bartlett claims that Aristotle's belief that the highest human happiness was possible in this world, and that this happiness was perfect in the activity of philosophy, leading to the conclusion that, "Aristotle's political science would therefore seem to deny the necessity, in order to be happy, of the support that providential gods supply. There is, so to speak, nothing left for such gods to do."⁵⁹

Yet Aristotle, as Bartlett himself is forced to admit, does not drive religion from the city, and in his ideal city in prayer of Book VII Aristotle notes the need for "superintendence connected with the divine," and that "it is proper for the gods to be honored by citizens."⁶⁰ Further, in his description of the physical layout of the city in prayer, Aristotle creates a division between a "higher" city and a "lower" city; the division seems to reflect the division between man's body and soul, as the "higher" city is concerned with living well and the "lower" city with merely living. The "higher" city contains a market which Aristotle "regard(s) as the one for being at leisure," the lower market is constituted "with a view to necessary activities."⁶¹ Moreover, the "higher" city contains the religious temples, the common messes for the "most authoritative official boards" and the priests, and present a place for the old men of the city to mix with the

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution*, 41.2, 23.2, 36.1.

⁵⁹ Bartlett, 151-152.

⁶⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1328b 11, 1329a 29.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 1331b 12-13.

officials of the city, just as the officials should mix with the young men of the city. The officials are present amongst the young men to “engender respect and the fear that belongs to free persons,” that is, to help to make them good citizens. Are the old men, those from whom the priesthood is drawn, meant to mix amongst the officials for a similar reason, to help them become good men? The whole “higher” city, which includes both the houses and representatives of the divine, is glossed by Aristotle as “the sort of place whose position is adequate for the manifestation of virtue.”⁶² It is still not clear, however, whether Aristotle believed that the divine could actually aid in the creation of laws, tempered by and in concert with reason, as Mary Nichols asserts, or was interested in setting up a sort of political religion that would give force to the laws and make the citizens loyal to the city, as Thomas K. Lindsay argues.⁶³

Whatever the exact relationship between the divine and the city, it is clear that Aristotle believes that the divine must be accounted for by the city, capable as it is of inculcating virtue and as a concern of the same class of people who are capable of philosophizing and engaging in leisure. However, it is also clear that the divine alone cannot be responsible for progress, although it alone of all external forces *always* aims at the good insofar as it is *truly* divine and not merely bearing the name of the divine. And indeed, Aristotle criticizes those things that are called divine but are not, rejecting both the anthropomorphization of gods and the deification of human beings.⁶⁴ For the true nature of the divine is to be completely self-sufficient, always in activity, that of study, and thus in man’s pursuit of the highest good he is told by Aristotle to imitate the life of the gods, “for the whole life of the gods is blessed, and human life is blessed to the extent that it has something resembling this sort of activity.”⁶⁵ But, for the reasons that were

⁶² *Ibid*, 1331a 23-1331b 17.

⁶³ Bartlett, Robert C. and Mary Nichols, “Controversy: Aristotle’s Science of the Best Regime,” *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 89, no. 1 (March 1995): 152, 155; Thomas K. Lindsay, “The ‘God-Like Man’ vs. the ‘Best Laws’: Politics and Religion in Aristotle’s *Politics*,” *The Review of Politics* Vol. 53, no. 3 (1991): 508.

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1159a 8, 1178b 9-25.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 1154b 26, 1177b 40, 1178b 26-29.

noted above, man cannot rely upon the divine alone to be responsible for the progress of the city towards its proper end. Additionally, in the absence of a divine king, which Aristotle believes is not a possibility that can be counted on, it would be, as Bartlett points out, the work of men to interpret, promulgate, and enforce divine laws, so that “even if the law is as perfect at its outset as one would pray for, it must nonetheless be administered by subsequent generations of human beings.”⁶⁶ Although one could respond to this claim by asserting, in the tradition of the Abrahamic religions, that subsequent generations of human beings are still guided by the divine or that all human laws are derived from divine law, Aristotle himself does not seem to make this conclusion regarding any of the laws he mentions.^y The divine, then, like all other external causes of regime change, cannot be the proper cause of regime change that leads the city towards its proper end.

Given that Aristotle believes that one cannot rely on progress originating outside the city, it must originate within the city. Rather than resting on a negative proof, however, Aristotle demonstrates repeatedly throughout the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* that this is the case. He claims that it is laws especially that have the ability to make the many good, and that therefore those who wish to improve the condition of the many have a need to study legislative science with the implication that one must be a legislator, capable of enacting good laws, to improve the city.⁶⁷ And indeed, as has been noted above, the work of politics involves the work of intentional choice, and the only way in which progress can be attached to such a choice is if the choice is made by the regime. As Aristotle himself states, “the actions of the city belong on the one hand to the rulers, on the other hand to the ruled. The task of a ruler is command and judgment,” Aristotle insists that when it comes to distributing offices on the basis of merit and judgment of the just things, “it is not just to improvise.”⁶⁸ The ruling element, in cooperation with

⁶⁶ Bartlett, 145.

⁶⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1179b 20-27, 1180a 20-25, 1180b 24-29.

⁶⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1326b 12-20.

the ruled, is responsible for the three-fold choice referenced above—determining the end of the city, the actions that will promote the end, and the correct execution of these actions.

Moreover, Aristotle is concerned with the stability of the city, as an unstable city risks destruction and can compromise the first component of man's end, for it is impossible to live well if one is not living. Thus Aristotle warns against factional conflict as a chief source of the destruction of regimes, and this factional conflict is in turn caused by differences between the parts of the city, whether this be a difference between "virtue and depravity... between wealth and poverty," or for some other reason, the cause of all factional struggle, for Aristotle, is inequality.⁶⁹ This is evident in the factional conflict following the rule of Cylon, when Athens was divided into "the notables and the masses," and the "poor were enslaved to the rich," and the factional conflict following the rule of Solon when the three factions of Athenians named themselves after their bases of power (the coast, the plain, the hill) but represented the middle-class, the well-off, and the poor. In this second case, the factional conflict allowed Pisistratus to gain the support of the poor and seize control of Athens, establishing tyranny.⁷⁰

Further, Aristotle warns against making changes in the laws too quickly or broadly, or with the possible change not bringing enough of a benefit to the city to justify a change in the laws. For, as Harry Jaffa states, Aristotle believed that "changing laws weakens their power, it loosens the bonds of the community, and this requires the greatest circumspection."⁷¹ It is not that laws cannot be changed, indeed Aristotle argues that "it is *not* best to leave written [laws] unchanged (emphasis added)," and that "some laws must be changed at some times." However, by changing laws too frequently, or too quickly, the ruling element risks habituating the ruled to not being ruled at all, to not following the laws, and thus threatening in the most

⁶⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1303b 15-17, 1301b 26-30.

⁷⁰ Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution*, 2, 13.4-16.9.

⁷¹ Jaffa, 88.

extreme case the existence of the city, and in less extreme cases the ruler(s) will have lost the ability to improve the ruled.⁷²

In fact, the ruling element must be prepared to make changes if they wish to preserve the regime and prevent factional conflict. For, as Stephen Skultety argues, “politicians who want to prevent *stasis* had better be prepared to intervene earlier rather than later in the social dynamics of their cities,” since once the conditions of inequality are set any small action, as Aristotle argues in V.4, can trigger revolution.⁷³ The ruling element must ensure that the city is properly configured, that, so to speak, everything is in its right place. For Aristotle asserts that the causes of factional conflict can be either justified or unjustified.⁷⁴ In the first place it seems to be the responsibility of the ruler to respond to the demands of the potential rebels by ensuring that shares in rule are justly distributed within the city, so, as was argued above, the ruling element must admit those who are equal in virtue to themselves to a share in rule. In the second place it seems to be the responsibility of the ruler to properly educate the potential rebels as to what justice is, so that they will not find occasion to undertake factional conflict based upon a false understanding of justice. Thus, the method of regime change within the city must not be based upon factional conflict, due to the evils of instability inherent in such a process, indeed Aristotle asserts that “whatever is engaged in factional conflict is weak,” and one need only consider Thucydides’ description of the Corcyran civil war and his observation that “every form of viciousness was established in the Hellenic world on account of the civil wars,” to understand Aristotle’s problems with factional conflict.⁷⁵ Additionally, the proper method of regime change must be one that is gradual, or that at the very least is not so frequent and sweeping as to erode the foundations of the rule of law, that is, it must not weaken the ties of community nor the attachment of the populace to the laws. Finally, it must provide the opportunity for the ruling

⁷² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1269a 1-25.

⁷³ Skultety, 353-354.

⁷⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1302a 28-30; see also Skultety 367.

⁷⁵ Aristotle, *Politics* 1305b 17; Thucydides III.83.

element to prevent the vicious from threatening the city by making them less vicious and/or by teaching the populace what the true nature of justice is, thereby preventing the vicious from gaining power.

The proper method of regime change, then must arise from within the city. It must be a matter of deliberate choice on the part of the ruling element with a view towards the good of the whole city, and it must be a peaceful and gradual change that does not threaten the existence of the city nor weaken its communal bonds or fidelity to the law. It must, as was seen in the prior section, involve consonant change within the different parts of the city, and whatever method is used must be consonant with the end pursued. As has just been demonstrated, this consonance is assured by change directed by the deliberative element. The exact method, then, that should be used to improve the city, to bring about regime change, to move the city towards its proper end, is education. For, as Aristotle states, “the legislator must... make the education of the young his object above all.”⁷⁶ And again, “the legislator would have to make it his affair to determine how men can become good and through what pursuits,” and for Aristotle men are made good through education and habituation.⁷⁷ The process of education is gradual, not so abrupt as to weaken the city, and it presents an avenue for those who are capable of ruling to demonstrate their ability so that the ruling element may include them in rule. Education, however, also allows for the possibility of different types of education, reflecting the different parts of the city and the different parts of man. As Carnes Lord points out Aristotle notes that proper equipment (proper number of citizens, the size and nature of the city’s territory, access to the sea), is necessary for the best regime, and thus perhaps for progress also, but that this is due primarily to chance, “whether a city possesses the virtue necessary for a right use of that equipment is, however, no longer a matter of chance but of knowledge and deliberate choice.”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1337a 10.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 1333a 11-15.

⁷⁸ Carnes Lord, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 36.

Education is what allows for knowledge and proper decision-making, as Aristotle compares the *Politics* in the closing of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to the type of instruction that a doctor must receive if he wishes to heal others. Not only must the legislator be made good but the concern of the legislator is to make the city as a whole good. To return to Lord, “A city can become morally good only if its citizens are serious or decent persons (*spoudaioi*). What must be investigated, then, is the question how people become morally good.”⁷⁹ Let us now turn to a consideration in greater detail of the possibility for education to promote the good, the exact nature of the proper form of education, and the different ways in which education is beneficial to the progress of the city.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Chapter III: Civic and Intellectual Education

Now, the use of education as a means of improving the city hinges upon the ability of education to improve the *members* of the city, those who are as individuals its constituent parts and as a whole form the community that is the city. In order to determine whether or not education can improve the city, one must first, it seems, answer several further questions. First—can education, through habituation and intellectual instruction, make any man virtuous? Second—if any one man can be made virtuous in this manner, can all men be made virtuous? Third—who exactly *is* a member of the city, that is, who is a citizen? And finally, what exactly does Aristotle believe is the relationship between the good man and the good citizen, and how does the nature of this relationship impact the answers to the above questions?

It seems, at first, readily apparent that Aristotle believes that education can make man virtuous, after all he devoted his *Nicomachean Ethics* not only to the explication of the nature of the best life, but also as to how one could attempt to lead that best life. He states rather succinctly that the good life is that which is lived in accordance with virtue, and that the best life is therefore that which is in accordance with “the supreme virtue, which will be the virtue of the best thing.”⁸⁰ The virtuous person, according to Aristotle, is the one who repeatedly commits morally virtuous, just, and intellectually virtuous actions, actions that represent a mean in relation to certain states of the soul. For Aristotle, actions are the markers of virtue or vice. Using the example of bravery, Aristotle states, “Every activity aims at actions expressing its state of character, and to the brave person bravery is fine; hence the end it aims at is also fine, since each thing is defined by its end.”⁸¹ This does not mean that bravery is fine only for the brave person, but shows how through the undertaking of brave actions a person becomes brave, yet at the same time the brave person undertakes brave actions because he is brave,

⁸⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177a 11-15.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 1115b 20-24.

Aristotle makes a similar statement regarding generosity, but adds the caveat that it is not only the generous person who aims at what is fine in giving, but all other people who wish to be virtuous in their actions and thus become virtuous.⁸² Since it is through actions that we attempt to achieve our ends, it is also through actions that we develop our state of character, either virtuous or vicious, yet it is based on the state of our character that we determine which actions to undertake.

For Aristotle virtue and vice are dynamic and reciprocal in relation to action. As to how one becomes virtuous either in thought or character, Aristotle states, "Virtue of thought arises and grows mostly from teaching, and hence needs experience and time. Virtue of character results from habit... Hence it is also clear that none of the virtues of character arise in us naturally."⁸³ Aristotle farther states that when we desire an end, then think about and come to a conclusion on what we must do to achieve that end, our subsequent actions to achieve that end are voluntary since they are an expression of our decision as to what best achieves that end. Given that, "The activities of the virtues are concerned with [what promotes the end]; hence virtue is also up to us, and so is vice."⁸⁴ This means that any rational person is, at least at some point in their life, capable of moving either towards or away from virtue. The answer to the first question, whether any person is capable of becoming virtuous through education, is thus answered. For a person may become virtuous through his or her own actions, based upon choices made regarding what is and is not virtuous. This understanding of what is and is not virtuous arises, as says Aristotle, from either education or habituation, from being told or being shown by another what is and is not virtuous.

However, this answer immediately provides a negative response to the second question. If only rational actors are capable of becoming virtuous, this necessarily excludes all those

⁸² *Ibid*, 1120a 24-26.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 1103a 15-19.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 1113b 3-7.

whom Aristotle considers natural slaves, those that are not capable of reason or who are not capable of fidelity to reason. Moreover, the truly virtuous man possesses virtue in two kinds—moral virtue, or virtue of character, and intellectual virtue, or virtue of thought. Moral virtue may be acquired, as implied above, through a process of habituation with the use of reward and corrective punishment. Intellectual virtue, on the other hand, requires the use of teaching and scientific and/or rational calculation. Now, any rational person is capable of growth through habituation, as Aristotle notes that “we are by nature able to acquire (virtues), and we are completed through habit.”⁸⁵ This does not mean that everyone *will* be able to perfect moral virtue through habituation, but that everyone is at least *capable* of achieving such virtue, aside from natural slaves.

Intellectual virtue, on the other hand, is less readily accessible. In order to acquire intellectual virtue, one must be capable of being taught, that is, one must have the ability to listen to arguments and to understand them, using the knowledge contained therein to build one’s own intellectual acumen. Yet Aristotle clearly states that, “Arguments and teaching surely do not prevail on everyone, but the soul of the student needs to have been prepared by habits for enjoying and hating fiercely, like ground that is to nourish seed.”⁸⁶ Not all those who are in pursuit of virtue meet these prerequisites, and so Aristotle acknowledges that arguments will work on some, those that are “the civilized ones among the young people,” or those with a “well-born character that truly loves what is fine,” but not on the many.⁸⁷ The first, and clearest, prerequisite for intellectual virtue is the possession of moral virtue, something that anyone who has been properly habituated and educated can possess. But Aristotle does seem to argue that there is a second criterion for intellectual virtue. Now, intellectual virtue is divided by Aristotle into five types: craft (*techne*), scientific knowledge (*episteme*), prudence (*phronesis*), wisdom

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 1103a 25-26.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 1179b 24-26.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 1179b 8-10.

(*sophia*), and understanding (*nous*).⁸⁸ Of these, it is prudence, or practical wisdom, which is necessary for the proper synthesis of the moral virtues as well as the ability to understand which actions lead to what is fine.⁸⁹ Prudence is also the virtue of thought that allows for participation in politics. And indeed, prudence is achievable by all those possessed of moral virtue. The theoretical virtues of wisdom and understanding, however, do not seem to be achievable by all. Aristotle does not ever assert this directly, but there seems to be plenty of secondary evidence. In his discussion of wisdom, Aristotle asserts that wisdom is concerned with knowledge that is, “extraordinary, amazing, difficult, and divine, but useless, because it is not human goods that [the wise man] looks for.”⁹⁰ Moreover, at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle asserts that a life lived in theoretical study “would be superior to the human level,” since “understanding is something divine in comparison with a human being,” and that “each person seems to be his understanding, if he is his controlling and better element.” The implication, however, is that this state of life in accordance with the divine, true happiness, is not easily achievable by many. Finally, the virtue of understanding is described as being “separate” from the compound of prudence and the virtues of character.⁹¹ If Aristotle does not explicitly state that some further precondition is necessary for the cultivation of theoretical virtue, he at the very least strongly implies that there is a marked difference between practical and theoretical intellectual virtue, and that the latter is found with less frequency than the former.

If Aristotle asserts that is attempting to move towards the best regime, so defined by its possession of the fullness of virtue, how can one proceed when the city itself is composed of not only those who have the ability to achieve fullness of virtue, but also those who do not have this capability? Further, even amongst those who can become truly virtuous, many will never achieve full virtue as even those who have a proper understanding of what is virtuous and act

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 1139b 15-20.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 1144b 16, 31.

⁹⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1141b 5-9.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 1177b 27-1178a 25.

upon this understanding accordingly require the fullness of time and a long life to become virtuous. How, then, can the city ever hope to approach virtue?

The answer is to remember that the city is dynamic, not static, that it grows and changes with time just as its constituent members grow, change, and eventually die, to be replaced with the next generation. Thus whilst the city at any one point may be composed of x number of people capable of full virtue, and y number of people incapable of full virtue, in the next generation there may be $x+1$ and $y-1$ people in the city, wherein the number of people capable of virtue increases. Alternatively, however, there could be $x-1$ and $y+1$ people, in which case the city ceases to progress towards its ideal form. Progress, in this sense, is not inevitable, but it is possible. Indeed, Aristotle sets forth the requirements for intellectual virtue and how they may be obtained. The “truly fortunate ones” are those who are born with a natural predisposition towards the good, but Aristotle acknowledges that this cannot be controlled, as it is the result of “some divine cause in those who have it.”⁹² But even those without the blessing of nature can be capable of intellectual virtue, provided that they are raised under the correct laws, as laws that properly habituate one towards what is fine and away from what is bad in youth will prepare one for intellectual virtue.

Here, one may return to Aristotle’s farming analogy. Some soil is, due to its location or some other natural factor, better suited to the growing of crops than the soil in other locations, such as the Great Plains today or the fertile river valleys of antiquity. This does not mean, however, that crops cannot be grown in other places. Although the soil of the west coast of Ireland is rocky and sandy, not naturally hospitable to farming, it can be made to grow crops. Through the careful removal of rocks and sand and the addition of fertilizer and soil from elsewhere, over time a small plot of land can be made arable, and over the generations this small plot can be enlarged. So Aristotle suggests that “laws must prescribe (people’s)

⁹² *Ibid*, 1179b 21-24.

upbringing and practices,” and through the adherence to these laws—not only in youth but throughout one’s life—one can be made suitable for the reception of intellectual as well as moral virtue.⁹³ However, Aristotle asserts that the excellent person is the only true judge of what is excellent, for what is excellent in virtue is most in accord with his person.⁹⁴ Thus, it follows, the education that aims towards the creation of the ideal city—that which is most excellent—must be stewarded and developed by those that are excellent themselves, with increasing levels of excellence as education progresses.

Given that education is capable of making individuals morally good, it must be examined what the nature of civic education would have been for Aristotle, that is, what form it would take and to what end would it be directed? The first question that must be answered, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, is who exactly is to be educated? This raises further questions—depending on who is to be educated, are they all to be educated in the same manner, and will their education all be aimed at the same end? To begin with, it is clear from what was stated above that the city has no obligation to provide education for those who are natural slaves. Further the city, for Aristotle, has no obligation to provide an education for those who are not citizens, which, for Aristotle, excludes resident foreigners and women. In the end, however, the citizen is one who is “entitled to participate in an office involving deliberation or decision,” that is, one who is able to, through their actions, promote the common good of the city.⁹⁵ Indeed, Aristotle himself admits that the definition of citizenship will vary dependent upon the form of the regime that rules the city, but that at the last the best city will not make a “vulgar person” a citizen; to be a citizen one must be capable of a share of rule, that is, capable of virtue to some degree.⁹⁶ While who may or may participate in rule varies from city to city, in the best cities, as already established, the criterion for rule is the possession of virtue, and in the best

⁹³ *Ibid*, 1179b 35-1180a 6.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 1176b 25-29

⁹⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1260a 9-15, 1275b 16-20; see also Curren, 91-92.

⁹⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1275b 1-5, 1278a 7.

city all of those who are capable of virtue must be included in ruling, and therefore everyone capable of virtue must be a citizen. Susan Collins advances this claim to citizenship, and argues that in the best city, it must include even those who are not capable of a share in rule but who are capable of benefiting the city in some way, since even Aristotle admits that the city is made up of dissimilar parts, and proper justice demands that these people, if not given a share in rule, are at least given a share in the benefits of living in the city; presumably this would include education.⁹⁷ Collins appears to be correct on this point, but as shall be demonstrated, this is not the only reason for the city to include these people in education. Finally, Aristotle does admit that even slaves and women, whom he views as incapable of the sort of virtue necessary to help promote the common good of the city, do merit some form of education, but that this education is a domestic affair and not the obligation of the city.⁹⁸

Now, the purpose of this paper is to, on some level, benefit the modern society in which the author resides. In such a society, we have realized (although it took us far too long to do so and the task is far from complete) that women are capable of promoting and sharing in the benefits of the common good. Thus, while this paper must continue to use masculine pronouns in accordance with the explicit statements of Aristotle, it is the author's belief that the final criterion for citizenship—the capacity for virtue which makes one a useful citizen of the city—includes women. The defense of this viewpoint would require more thought, research, and argument than can be properly presented in this paper. One, very brief, possible explanation is as follows. Margalit Finkleberg, in an examination of the civic conceptualization of *arête*, notes that in Greek civilization of the archaic and classical ages, there existed an ideal of man separate from religion and philosophy, and the popular concept of human excellence, or *arête*, came from this ideal. "According to this concept, *arête* is only valid when being proved in action

⁹⁷ Susan D. Collins, *Aristotle and the Rediscovery of Citizenship*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 126.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 1260a 1-20.

purporting to benefit the common good.” Finkelberg states that for that time, actions benefiting the common good included war and politics, and so *arête* applied only to, “Male citizens of the upper and middle classes and did not apply to those whose circumstances prevented them from exercising it, that is, slaves, women, and in most cases also the poor.”⁹⁹ So, while in a historical sense the understanding of who was able to become virtuous was limited by social and political realities of the time, in a more abstract and theoretical sense we are left with the understanding that anyone who is able to contribute to the pursuit of the common good is able to become virtuous, at least in a civic sense.

If it is all citizens who must share in education, will this education be the same for all citizens? For Aristotle asserts that not all rational persons are capable of intellectual virtue, as all are capable of moral virtue. Moreover, there seems to be a contradiction between Aristotle’s comments about education in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* he states that “education adapted to an individual is actually better than a common education for everyone,” although he admits that this education must be grounded in a knowledge of universals, but in the *Politics* he states that “it is evident that education must necessarily be one and the same for all, and that the superintendence of it should be common and not on a private basis.”¹⁰⁰ This seemed contradiction is not actually a contradiction however, if one realizes that Aristotle’s program of education is divided into multiple parts, something both Carnes Lord and Randall Curren agree upon, although I believe that there may be some oversight in both cases. Aristotle envisions first an education that corresponds to living simply, an education of the body and of useful things, and then an education that leads to living well, an education of the soul and of the noble things that leads towards virtue. The first education is useful not only for living, but also because it prepares the student for the second education.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Margalit Finkelberg, “Virtue and Circumstances: On the City-State Concept of *Arête*,” *The American Journal of Philology*, vol. 123, no. 1 (2002): 47-48.

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1180b 7-25; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1337a 21-25.

¹⁰¹ Lord, 58; Curren 89-91

Aristotle makes this distinction multiple times, noting the difference between the education of the first seven years, which takes place at home, and then the difference between the ages of seven to puberty and puberty to twenty-one. He also states that the earlier education “should prepare the road for (one’s) later pursuits,” and that “education through habit must come earlier than education through reason, and education connected with the body earlier than education connected with the mind.”¹⁰² Due to the dual nature of man education must therefore be divided, but it seems that Aristotle separates it in more ways than Curren or Lord assert. All citizens must participate in the first education, that of the body, which is based upon habituation. However, it seems that Aristotle believes that all citizens should participate in the second education as well, as it is this education that produces moral virtue and *phronesis*, and Aristotle states that the young should be educated not only for what is “useful or necessary,” but also for liberality and nobility.¹⁰³

Everyone, then, must participate in the education that makes one into a good citizen, and all three phases of education mentioned by Aristotle above are necessary to make one into a good citizen. But one must remember that Aristotle claims that there is a difference between a good man and a good citizen. Aristotle discusses this divide in Chapter Four of Book Three of his *Politics*, a chapter he begins by asking, “Whether the virtue of the good man and the excellent citizen is to be regarded as the same or not the same.”¹⁰⁴ Aristotle states that, “It is possible for a citizen to be excellent yet not possess the virtue in accordance with which he is an excellent man,” for the virtue of a citizen is, “know(ing) and hav(ing) the capacity both to be ruled and to rule.”¹⁰⁵ The virtue of the good man, however, encompasses in its entirety the virtue of the good citizen, as well as all other virtues of thought, morality, and justice, so just as every square is a rectangle but every rectangle is not a square, every virtuous man is a virtuous

¹⁰² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1336b 1, 36-40, 1338b 4-6.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 1338a 30-32.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 1276b 16-17.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 1276b 34-35, 1277b 14-15.

citizen but every virtuous citizen need not be a virtuous man. Presumably, then, the education that is individualized would be an education in the intellectual virtues, focused not on creating good citizens but on creating philosophers.

It is important for all citizens to share in education in another manner, beyond that of the instillation of moral virtue that allows for them to rule and be ruled in turn. For, as we have seen above, there exist multiple methods of regime change that must, in a sense, be guarded *against* if the regime is to properly move the city towards its highest end. For the legislator, this seems in part to involve the ability to make decisions properly, to respond to external forces and internal forces that threaten the existence of the regime, although this would presumably be included in an education that taught how to rule and be ruled in turn. For the ruled, this would involve obedience to the ruler as well as the ability to act in the manner required by the situation to preserve the regime, most notably this would include military service. Loyalty and love of the regime must be taught for the regime to survive, so that in the face of factional conflict or external force the citizens of the regime will rise to its defense. For just as Jaffa states that “except as he lives in a polis a man cannot live a fully human existence, he cannot function as a man,” it is also true that it is only under a certain type of regime that the city can be advanced towards its proper end.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, this desire for the preservation of the regime also has the effect of, in deviant regimes, the ability to “move the legislator towards the good of the citizens, and thus the city as collective whole, through an appeal to his self-interest,” as Aristotle seems to argue that the ultimate solution to the problems that threaten the existence of the regime is to improve the city, moving it closer to its highest end.

Additionally, this education to love and be loyal to the regime helps to solve the problems of spiritedness and the philosopher. The philosopher, who has properly understood the best way of life as posited by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, desires to withdraw from

¹⁰⁶ Jaffa, 74.

the active life and dedicate himself to a life of contemplation. This presents a problem for the city, not only a problem of unity and community, but that of losing access to its greatest assets—the philosophers, men like Plato and Aristotle, who have the most to offer the city in terms of wisdom and guidance but by their very nature are prone to withdraw from the city. This highlights the conflict between the good citizen and the good man. Most generally, the virtuous man will desire to, and attempt to, lead the life that most approaches *eudaimonia*, a life of study and contemplation, which may lead him to withdraw from public life and thus not take part in the activity of the city.¹⁰⁷ For, as Collins points out, the magnanimous man is unlikely to be civically active, “Except when a great honor or work appropriate to his virtue is at stake, his singular dedication to virtue makes him tend toward inaction and idleness.”¹⁰⁸ So too, the man who wishes to achieve the greatest amount of magnanimity, “Would need to deviate so far from justice—in wresting rule from those who possess it and who may have equal claim to it—as to degrade his own virtue.”¹⁰⁹ However, Aristotle notes that the happy person is still human, and as such will require external goods, although only requiring external goods in moderation, at least one of these external goods, friendship, can only be obtained through contact with other people.¹¹⁰ As such the virtuous man who pursues the life of study will still be involved in civic life, if for nothing else but to secure friendship, and as a true friend the virtuous man will be concerned with the pursuit of the common good within the community, even if only due to his desire to see his friend(s) prosper, but due to his nature as a virtuous man he will still make decisions with a view to the common good, and not simply the good of his friend(s). This, however, is a somewhat clumsy guarantee of the inclusion of the philosopher in the active life of the city. The philosopher, however, would have undergone the same initial education as their

¹⁰⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177a 10-1178a 8.

¹⁰⁸ Collins, “Moral Virtue and the Limits of the Political Community in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 48. No. 1 (2004): 52.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1178b 33-1179a 9.

peers who were unable to continue their education in the intellectual virtues. The city must, then, at this common lower level, do as much as is possible to reinforce not only love and loyalty to the regime, but the good of active participation in the regime. The philosopher, brought up to value the promotion of the common good—and indeed Aristotle states in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that while it is good to acquire and preserve the good for an individual, “it is finer and more divine to acquire and preserve it for a people and for cities,”—will maintain some level of attachment to the regime and work, when necessary, to promote the common good.¹¹¹ The proof, it seems, is in the pudding, as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle all endeavored to educate in not only purely virtuous intellectual matters, but also in active, political matters, and Socrates at least actively served as both a soldier and on the boule.

Now, the problem of spiritedness seems to loom as the polar opposite as that of the philosopher. Spiritedness, for Aristotle, is a sort of disposition that makes men “expert at ruling and indomitable,” it is a kind of inclination towards freedom but also towards affection and friendship, a kind of heightened passion in the attitudes of men regarding what they view as theirs, whether it be their regime, their home, or their loved ones (and that seems not unlike the nature of many New Hampshireites).¹¹² As Carnes Lord puts it, “The human stock of the best regime must be spirited by nature if that regime is to survive; but the spiritedness threatens at the same time the very purpose or reason for being of the best regime.”¹¹³ The regime must, however, find a way to rule its citizens. The answer seems to be that in the process of education as described above, the regime must not only instill a love of the regime but also the understanding that the best way to govern and to preserve the regime, and the city, is for the citizens to rule and be ruled in turn. That is, it is only by allowing oneself to be ruled that one is able to best serve and preserve the things that one cares about. Spiritedness must be directed,

¹¹¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094b 2-11.

¹¹² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1327b 35-1328a 15.

¹¹³ Lord, 193.

through education, to be hostile to rule only when that rule is bad, when it aims not at the common good of the city, but at some other end. Even then, however, proper education would demonstrate that the best method of change for those who care deeply about their regime would not be violent action but education. Finally, Aristotle implies that the spirited will act harshly only “if they consider themselves treated unjustly,” and as long as the spirited are included in the same education, and are accorded a share in rule as befits their virtue.¹¹⁴

Now, Aristotle argues that the state is a better moral educator than an individual, since the state has a far greater power to compel people to do what is right, stating quite conclusively that, “It is best, then, if the community attends to upbringing, and attends correctly,” and that it is only if the community fails to do this that the individual should attempt to act as a moral educator, since any attempt at moral education is better than no attempt at all.¹¹⁵ Aristotle seems to believe that education should clearly be the concern of the state, but it remains to be seen in what manner this education will take place.

The first important aspect of this education is the necessity that it is public and common for all, for Aristotle states that, “Since there is a single end for the city as a whole, it is evident that education must necessarily be one and the same for all, and that superintendence of it should be common and not on a private basis.”¹¹⁶ Curren terms this argument in favor of public education the “Argument from a Common End,” and claims that this argument works on a number of levels for Aristotle. The argument seems to go as follows; that common education towards virtue will promote common participation in activities that promote the common end of the city, namely, the advancement of the common good.¹¹⁷ The idea that common education will lead towards cooperation in the achievement of the common good of the city is based on the idea that common schooling will promote concord among those who receive the common

¹¹⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1328a 10-11.

¹¹⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1180a 20-32.

¹¹⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1337a 21-23.

¹¹⁷ Curren, 127.

education, since it will foster feelings of trust and equality among those who receive the schooling, and Aristotle claims that both trust and proportionate equality must be present for political friendship to exist.¹¹⁸ Aristotle points to the benefits of concord when he states that, “A city is said to be in concord when [its citizens] agree about what is advantageous, make the same decision, and act on their common resolution.”¹¹⁹ Now, the ability to achieve concord relies upon trust and proportionate equality among decent persons, as stated above. Common education will foster both trust and equality in a number of ways. First, trust will be promoted by the continued communal interactions of the students, as well as the mutual recognition that all the students are undergoing the same education towards virtue, and as such the students are able to acknowledge their mutual possession of virtue when they are successfully educated towards virtue, with each citizen knowing that every other citizen is undertaking or has undertaken the same education. To quote Curren, Aristotle believes that, “The only *stable* foundation on which trust may be established is a mutual *recognition* of virtue,” based on a statement made by Aristotle in Book Eight Chapter Four of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹²⁰ In the same way, the shared manner of education will promote equality among those who are currently engaged in said education or who were engaged in it.

Common education, then, is beneficial due to the common nature of education but also because all those who receive it are taught the same things. The first matter that must be taught to all those who take part in such an education is the ability to rule and to be ruled in turn. This ability is necessary if the virtuous multitude is to rule, and as such it is imperative that all children learn how to do this. Now, the ability to be ruled, that is, obedience, can be taught to children as soon as they are able to interact with the world, through a process of habituation that curbs appetites, for as Aristotle states, if a child or the appetitive part of a man, “Is not obedient

¹¹⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1157a 21-24, 1158b 25-1159a 9.

¹¹⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1167a 27-28.

¹²⁰ Curren, 128; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1157a 21-25.

and subordinate to its rulers, it will go far astray. For when someone lacks understanding, his desire for what is pleasant is insatiable, and seeks its satisfaction from anywhere.”¹²¹ Thus a child must be habituated to become obedient, and it is not hard to imagine how this is done, as to this day parents strive to teach their children the very same thing. When the child is old enough to begin schooling, the habituation towards obedience will be reinforced by the instruction of the teacher as well as the rewards and punishments that come along with following the instruction of the teacher. Finally, when the student is old enough to serve in the military, he will do so, for as Aristotle states it is especially during military service that one learns how to rule because one is ruled by others for the benefit of the ruled.¹²² In addition to learning how to be ruled, knowledge that contributes to learning how to rule, the students will be taught through schooling the art of the politics.

Now, as Tessitore points out, and as was mentioned above, not everyone is capable of being taught through the use of arguments based on reason, that which I refer to as schooling. However, the habituation mentioned above serves to educate those who are deaf to the arguments of reason, Tessitore argues that, “The salutary application of force is necessary not only for the city... but also and especially for individual citizens, since it encourages them to live in accordance with the best thing in them.”¹²³ Habituation alone seems to be enough to cultivate moral virtues, since Aristotle claims that, “Virtue of character [i.e. of *ēthos*] results from habit [*ethos*]; hence its name ‘ethical’, slightly varied from ‘*ethos*’.”¹²⁴

Education, then, is capable of creating virtue in individual members of the city. As such, it is capable of making the city more virtuous, that is, of moving the city towards its proper end, as the city is not only governed by a portion of its members but it is, as we have seen, the end

¹²¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1119b 7-8.

¹²² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1277b 10-12.

¹²³ Aristide Tessitore, “Making the City Safe For Philosophy: Nicomachean Ethics, Book 10,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 84, no. 4 (1990): 1259.

¹²⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103a 16.

of the city to promote the common good of its citizens. While not all men are capable of attaining intellectual virtue, all are at least capable of moral virtue and the practical wisdom necessary to be ruled and to participate in rule. As the city progresses, however, this would entail as a matter of course proper education, and as the city comes closer to virtue it is reasonable to assume that a higher portion of the city's populace will be capable of intellectual virtue. The city, as we have seen, will continue to grow organically, it is only through the gradual process of education that the regime may safely adapt as the city it governs changes, as well as making the city capable of withstanding external threats through the decision making capability of the ruling element and the loyalty and military service of the ruled. Proper education can also temper the problems presented by those who pursue the life of contemplation, as well as those who are spirited, while common education works to unify the city and create bonds of trust between the members of the city. Let us consider, briefly, the form of education of the ideal regime as well as the form of education that Aristotle would have observed in classical Athens, before turning to the implications of education-as-regime-change for the form of the ideal regime.

Chapter IV: Education in Athens

In order to better understand Aristotle's suggestions regarding a system of education, it is pertinent to examine, briefly, the system of education that was in place in Athens around the time that Aristotle lived in the city. Doing so illuminates the context within which Aristotle made his conclusions and grounds interpretation of his work in examples that would have been familiar to the Philosopher. Moreover, the systems of education examined can be divided into three parts—physical education, moral education, and philosophical education, a division that corresponds to the tripartite division of man into body, irrational soul, and rational soul. This in turn serves to further demonstrate the relationship between the different parts of the regime and the city and to show that it is only education that is able to properly bring all of these parts towards its proper end. Finally, Athens at the time was ruled by the many, identified as such in *The Constitution of Athens*, and thus the system of education corresponds with the regime type that this paper is most concerned with.¹²⁵

Classical Athens did not have a system of common, public education such as that which Aristotle advocates. It did, however, have multiple education systems in place for the training of its citizens in the various roles necessary for the preservation of the city. Further, its citizens had access to various forms of private education, including Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum, for both the young and adults. The only area in which Athens did provide public education was military training in the form of "the *ephebeia*, which was publicly funded and compulsory for citizens aged eighteen to twenty."¹²⁶ Although focusing only on military training Aristotle heavily implies that such an education is beneficial for the city, not only in creating a capable military force ready to defend the city but also as a means of fostering community and virtue amongst those trained. He praises the common military training and the common messes of the Spartan

¹²⁵ Aristotle, *The Constitution of Athens*, 41.2.

¹²⁶ Curren, 12.

and Cretan regimes, insofar as the “soldiering life... involves many of the parts of virtue,” but criticizes them as far as they point *only* at war.¹²⁷ Military training is meant to help instill the virtues necessary for participation in ruling and being ruled, not merely to create soldiers, as well as preparing soldiers for the enjoyment of virtue, for “the element of nobility, not what is beastlike, should have the leading role.”¹²⁸ Kevin Cherry argues that Aristotle believes military training would prepare soldiers in three useful ways:

First, it provides the necessary experience with particulars essential for *phronesis*. Second, it develops the habits of obedience to the laws as well as those of ethical virtue, without which there can be no *phronesis*. Finally, it offers the possibility of improving the capacity for judging well through the observation of the judgments of others.¹²⁹

Aristotle, then, approved of the use of military training as practiced in Athens, Sparta, and Crete, although this training had to be directed at what was noble, not at what was “beastly.”

In addition to military training there did exist a system of formal education in classical Athens, but, as has been noted, this was private and not supervised by the regime. While Aristotle accepted private education, this was only for the final stage of education, that which leads to the cultivation of intellectual virtue, and was solely for adults. Aristotle states again and again that “education must necessarily be one and the same for all, and that the superintendence of it should be common and not on a private basis,” and that it is especially with a view to the young that the legislator must control education.¹³⁰ However, this education must continue when citizens are older, and it is necessary that this too is governed by the regime through law.¹³¹

This education would take the form of habituation and argument, and both in Athens as well as according to Aristotle such an education should include “letters, gymnastics, music, and drawing.” It is imperative, however, that this education is directed at the production of virtue and

¹²⁷ Aristotle, 1270a 4-5, 1271a 40-1271b 5, 1272a 13-20.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 1338b 29-31.

¹²⁹ Cherry, 1414.

¹³⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1337a 10-25; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1180a 30-35.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 1180a 1-5.

the ability to enjoy leisure, and not at lesser ends such as pleasure.¹³² Reflecting the dual nature of man, this education is broken down into different parts. The first level of education is concerned with the body, with living, and involves at the youngest ages the paternal instruction of the household and then moves, at the age of seven, to “gymnastic and sports training,” as “education connected with the body (must come) earlier than education connected with the mind.”¹³³ There must then be education, the formal education of the mind, between the ages of puberty and twenty-one, with a view not merely to living, but to living well.

Finally, as mentioned above, it is necessary for education to continue for adults. For some, this would entail the continued habituation that began at an earlier age. For others, however, those capable of intellectual virtues and the pursuit of the contemplative life, this education would include an education in philosophy. It is here that education may be private, as not all are capable of this learning and thus it cannot truly be public and common for all. It seems, however, that the state must still superintend this form of education, making certain that it is directed at the proper cultivation of intellectual virtue whilst reinforcing moral virtue. For aside from the criticism of private education at younger levels in regards to the unity of the citizenry, there is a criticism based on the fact that private education allows for teaching people “whatever private sort of learning (a private individual) holds best.”¹³⁴

As well as a system of military training and formal education, Josiah Ober argues Athens had an active, engaged system of political education, that through the structure of its public offices and the participation of the citizens they received a form of education in the activity of ruling and being ruled. To quote, at length, Ober argues that the Athenian system of governance

Provided citizens with an ongoing—indeed, potentially life-long—practical education in the workings of the democratic machine. The result was that individual Athenians became more politically capable—still amateurs in that they served occasionally and

¹³² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1337b 23-27, 1338a 9-13; Curren 12-13.

¹³³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1260a 7-19, 1338b 5-10.

¹³⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1336b 37-1337a 6, 1337a 24-26,

in rotation, yet possessing some of the decision-making characteristics associated with experts.¹³⁵

Through service on the council and on juries, as well as other civic participation, the citizens of Athens were “educated” to become better active citizens. Aristotle seems, at the least, to support the understanding that such participation could create better politicians. As he states that “experience would seem to contribute quite a lot,” noting that people would otherwise not become better politicians through practice, so that “those who aim to know about political science would seem to need experience as well,” to be able to properly participate in ruling and being ruled one must actually actively participate in ruling and being ruled, for “those with experience in each area judge the products correctly and comprehend the ways and means of completing them.”¹³⁶ The extent of this experiential learning depends upon the form of the regime, however, as a regime that was not governed by the many would only want to have those who do share in rule participate in governance. Allowing the many this experience in another regime would lead to their increased desire for a share in rule and would also increase the justice of their cause, potentially leading to factional conflict. The ideal education of the city, then, would include experiential learning-through-doing.

Because of the way in which experience contributes to education, it is also necessary for the city to, in a sense, censor what its citizens are exposed to. The young, especially, must be exposed only to certain kinds of stories and music, and “generally, then, the legislator should banish foul speech from the city more than anything... and particularly from amongst the young.”¹³⁷ This is consonant with the idea that the city must control the curriculum of formal education, ensuring that students are being taught proper virtue as well as loyalty and obedience to the regime. It also highlights the need for the regime to guard against external

¹³⁵ Josiah Ober, *Democracy and Knowledge: Innovation and Learning in Classical Athens*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 123.

¹³⁶ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1181a 10-12, 20-25; see also Curren 121.

¹³⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1336a 25-1336b 6.

influences and change that is the result of chance. Proper education, including censorship, will help to prevent citizens from becoming bestial, just as education will allow the regime to withstand the tumults of fortune that could otherwise threaten the existence of the regime.

On the whole, the form of education in Athens was not too different from the ideal form of education offered by Aristotle. Both involved military training, formal education, and the education of experience. Whereas the military training in Athens was short-lived and not properly oriented towards virtue, however, in the ideal sense Aristotle's system of education would include military training that was properly oriented towards the end of virtue. Formal education was left private in Athens; it was perhaps on this point that Aristotle disagreed most strongly, insisting for the need for a public education that was common for all. Finally, Aristotle like Athens understood the importance of participation in the regime as a means of education. This, then, would extend further to a system of "censorship" through which the legislator ensured that citizens were exposed only to positive influences—experiences and influences that served to cultivate virtue.

Chapter V: The Ideal Regime

Given that it is through education that regime change must properly occur if the city is to reach its highest end, it remains to be seen exactly what form this regime would take. Now, as was discussed above, the type of regime determines the method of education that is proper within the city. However, it has also been demonstrated that the method of education will determine the type of regime that is in place; the end is restricted by the means just as the means determine the end. It sufficed earlier to assert that this paper is concerned particularly with the rule of the many, as this established the type of education that would be discussed and the goal towards which the regime should move. Let us now turn to the specific end, the ideal regime, to determine whether or not education-as-regime-change can produce such an end and what such an ideal regime would look like.

There is a certain permutation of the rule of the many that is of particular interest when considering Aristotle's best regime. At various points in the *Politics*, Aristotle puts forth the idea that, "The many, of whom none is individually an excellent man, nevertheless can when joined together be better—not as individuals but all together—than those [who are best]."¹³⁸ That the many, when coming together as a whole, can be better than either the one or the few, even when the many are not composed of excellent individuals, is an important idea in the development of the best city, as it puts forth the idea that on some level the group of people that controls the best regime is best not based on any of the inherent merits that belong to any of the groups that lay claim to rule, but on a new, and one hopes, broader and more just merit. For every group claims to rule on the basis of their merit as rulers, but the many, when taken as a whole, are able to claim their merit as being able to be virtuous in both ruling and being ruled, and that their ability to actively take part in both of these manners makes them more virtuous as

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 1281a

rulers. It must be determined, however, by what means this ability to exercise collective virtue is achieved.

For when Aristotle here discusses the rule of the many, he asserts that their claim to rule relies on their claim to merit not based on the fact that they are citizens of the city, nor on their presence as a majority within the city.¹³⁹ Aristotle rejects these claims to rule, not in their entirety but as claims to total rule, due to what he perceives as a lack of justice in their claim to rule. For Aristotle, there does exist a certain merit in comprising the majority of the city, but this merit is not sufficient to excuse the perceived injustice of the many's rule in this case. In Chapter Eleven of Book Three he states, "Having (the many) share in the greatest offices is not safe... On the other hand, to give them no part and for them not to share [in the offices] is a matter of alarm."¹⁴⁰

Rather, the proper and fuller claim to rule that the many, when they come together to act as one, put forth is that they are, again, when they come together to act as one, possessed of greater wisdom than any other subset of people. Jeremy Waldron codifies this as the "Doctrine of the Wisdom of the Multitude," and states this doctrine as follows: "The people acting as a body are capable of making better decisions, by pooling their knowledge, experience, and insight, than any subset of them acting as a body and pooling the knowledge, experience, and insight of the members of the subset."¹⁴¹

Waldron is able to put forth this doctrine, and not simply that the many possess more wisdom as a whole than any given individual since this is dependent upon the happenstance that such a multitude arises but that when the multitude comes together it is able to actively create the virtue that they claim as their merit. He does so through a simple process of logic, in which the many are able to possess greater wisdom than the one due to their coming together

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 1281a 15-19.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 1281b 26-29.

¹⁴¹ Waldron, 565.

in greater numbers, so any subset of people that comes together will not possess as much wisdom as any larger set of people that has similarly come together to deliberate.

Now, it is important to ascertain the way in which the multitude is able to put forth such a claim, as the nature of the multitude's, when coming together to act as a whole, wisdom may or may not rectify the problems of justice that other regimes face, as mentioned above. Tied up in this discussion is the examination of whether or not Aristotle actually believes that wisdom can be collective. What appears to be the most obvious (at least to me, as it is the first way in which I understood Aristotle's argument for the capabilities of this specific multitude) is that when the multitude comes together to deliberate it brings together a myriad of different experiences and viewpoints and that all of these different insights come together to form one greater insight, and it is from this multitude of ideas and beliefs that the one idea or belief that best suits the situation will arise, while one man or a subset of men will not have as broad a swathe of ideas to draw upon and is thus less likely to grasp the correct idea in a given situation. Yet, this view of the merit of the multitude must certainly be incorrect, in essence it is a "best-guess" theory and one that fails to hold water from a rational and logical standpoint. It represents a political system that in some cases will fail to produce a proper solution to a given problem, and also removes the necessity of the multitude coming together to deliberate, for the final decision of the multitude is merely one of the original ideas brought forth by an individual. Aristotle argues that the superior ability of the multitude to judge correctly, he uses the example of works of art, rely on the fact that, "Some [appreciate] a certain part, and all of them all the parts."¹⁴² So too Aristotle shows how if one person or the few in the governing body demonstrate they have superior virtue to any larger group of people in the governing body, then these people should have authority and not the remainder of the governing body.¹⁴³ So Aristotle shows that the collective wisdom of the multitude is not merely a gathering of viewpoints and the selection of the best one, for if the

¹⁴² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1281b 7-9.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 1283b 20-26

appreciation of only one part of a work of art is selected it is not enough to justify the many's claim as better than the few or the one, but only when the opinions of the many are taken as a whole so they may apply to the whole work and they are thus able to judge it with greater ability, and so too if it is based on the mere selection of one person's idea, then this person has shown he possesses greater virtue in regards to governing and thwarts the authority of the multitude, and so if this is the many's claim to virtue then it is self-defeating.

The merit of the multitude must be tied up in the act of its coming together as one, and not simply its existence as a multitude, for in various cases when referring to the merit of the multitude Aristotle is always careful to note that this merit exists when they are, "Taken together," or when the many are "combin(ed) into one,"¹⁴⁴ that they obtain this merit. The various ideas first put forth by the multitude are ideas that each individual member of the multitude has cultivated as an individual. It is only in the ideas developed by the multitude as a *whole* that are better than the ideas of the best men or man. Aristotle for his part seems to believe that wisdom can be viewed as collective, he compares the collective wisdom of the multitude to a potluck dinner, and claims that such a dinner may be better than a dinner prepared by a single person.¹⁴⁵ It is not immediately clear how exactly they are comparable, but the focus seems to be on both the variety of foods in the dinner and the variety of ideas of the multitude, and that just as all the separate foods combine to make one great feast, the various intellects of the individuals involved may combine as a sort of collective wisdom. Aristotle returns to metaphors involving food when he claims that the mixing together of ideas of various degrees of merit, works in a like manner as when, "Impure sustenance mixed with the pure makes the whole more useful than the small amount of the latter, but each separately is incomplete with regards to judging."¹⁴⁶ Thus wisdom may be collective in the same way that

¹⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1281a 40-1282a 40, 1283a 40 –1283b 1, 1292a 10-12.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 1281b 1-2.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 1281b 35-38.

combining various types of food creates one meal, just as the food is capable of being combined into a whole and is better as a whole, so too wisdom is capable of being collective, and it is possible that it is better for it. As Josiah Ober puts it, “The group achieves its excellence of judgment as a group– it is not a matter of deferring to the single best judgment in the group.”¹⁴⁷

With this understanding in mind, there remain three possible ways in which the merit of the multitude is achieved, the first of which is a utilitarian argument. Mill, in his essay *Utilitarianism*, writes that, “Utility... holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.”¹⁴⁸ The multitude, then, when it comes together, is better able to understand which ideas will promote the greatest happiness while promoting the least unhappiness, since they are able to understand how these ideas will affect all the members of the multitude. This argument is not altogether without merit, and is indeed one way in which the deliberative multitude is better disposed to act in matters of social welfare as opposed to the one or the few. The goal of the city, for Aristotle, is to promote both virtue and the corresponding good life among its citizens, and so when it comes time to make decisions regarding the city, as Waldron states, “Discovering that certain political decisions make life disagreeable for many people may be relevant to the assessment of those decisions.”¹⁴⁹

This argument alone, however, is not enough to justify the merit of the multitude, for it only puts forth a lens through which the ideas of the multitude may be viewed, and then only in matters of social utility. Yet the city is concerned not only with social utility, and thus the multitude must deliberate not only on matters of social utility but on matters of virtue, on what the good life is, and how the good life is best achieved. These are, to return to Waldron, “Issues

¹⁴⁷ Ober, “An Aristotelian Middle Way Between Deliberation and Independent-Guess Aggregation,” 4.

¹⁴⁸ John Stuart Mill, *Political Writings* (Franklin Center, Pa: Franklin Library, 1982): 363.

¹⁴⁹ Waldron, 569.

which go beyond the mere accumulation of individual experiences.”¹⁵⁰ For their part, the multitude seems better equipped to judge on certain matters of ruling due to their ability to both rule and be ruled, but it is only a multitude that is properly educated, through schooling and habituation, that is able to judge these matters well, but it will be shown how in this case they are better able to judge these issues than the one or the few.

The second of the remaining ways in which the multitude may grasp its claim to rule based on outstanding merit has been labeled by many commentators as the “summation argument,” based on the following passage in Chapter Eleven of Book Three,

The many, of whom none is individually an excellent man, nevertheless can when joined together be better—not as individuals but all together—than those [who are best], just as dinners contributed [by many] can be better than those equipped from a single expenditure. For because they are many, each can have a part of virtue and prudence, and on their joining together, the multitude, with its many feet and hands and having many senses, becomes like a single human being, and so also with respect to character and mind.¹⁵¹

While this passage does suggest that the merit of the multitude is based on its coming together, and the coming together of its ideas, beliefs, etc., it has led some to argue that it is based on the mere addition of various ideas that the multitude’s merit is derived. This viewpoint is superior to the first I have offered, in that the aggregation of the various beliefs of the multitude does create something that is conceivably better than original ideas of the individuals, and does reflect the process of the multitude’s coming together. Yet, it too seems to fall somewhat short of the true merit that the coming together of the multitude offers, not necessarily through any inherent shortcoming in the process of aggregation but because a richer, more fuller process is available. If one wishes to go from point A to point B, and one is given three different methods of transportation with which to journey from point A to point B, method x, method y, and method z, each with its respective strengths and weaknesses, one could use all three methods of transportation to reach point B, starting with method x and abandoning it when one reaches its point of weakness to be replaced with method y, and repeating this process over

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1281a 42- 1281b 7.

and over again each time one needs to journey from point A to point B. The overall method of transportation, then, may be termed method $x+y+z$. However, a more pragmatic and forward-looking way in which to go from point A to point B would be to examine methods x , y , and z , note their strengths and weaknesses, and then create a new method, call it q , that combines all the strengths of x , y , and z whilst discarding their weaknesses, so that the trip from point A to point B requires only method q .

The true merit of the multitude, it would appear, is not merely in the aggregation of its ideas or the selection of the one best idea, but in the gradual creation of a best idea by the multitude, through the examination and synthesis of all the various ideas put forward by the members of the multitude, this may be termed the dialectical activity of the multitude. Aristotle claims that it is possible for the many to be better than the excellent few, “By bringing together things scattered and separated into one,” he does not, however, know whether or not this difference, “can exist in the case of every people and every multitude,” but he then states that, “nothing prevents what was said from being true of a certain kind of multitude.”¹⁵² So while Aristotle does not see a multitude acting in the above-mentioned way, he admits that it is possible. Waldron claims that Aristotle’s view is that the deliberation of the multitude is a method of, “Bringing each citizen’s ethical views and insights—such as they are—to bear on the views and insights of each of the others,” and in this process show the strengths and weaknesses of these insights, “providing a basis for reciprocal questioning and criticism, and enabling a position to emerge which is better than any of the inputs and much more than an aggregation of function of those inputs.”¹⁵³ Waldron brings as evidence in support of his view the fact that Aristotle begins his *Nicomachean Ethics* by examining what different sources have to say about ethics and happiness and the good life and moves from this towards his own conclusions, but he does not merely discard the opinions of others as he goes. Waldron uses the following

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 1281b 10-21.

¹⁵³ Waldron, 569-70.

passage from the *Nicomachean Ethics* as support of this belief, that in regarding the various views put forth on happiness Aristotle comments that some of the views, “Are traditional, held by many, while others are held by a few reputable men; and it is reasonable for each group to be not entirely in error, but correct on one point at least, or even on most point.”¹⁵⁴ Waldron concludes by stating that in the *Nicomachean Ethics* it is Aristotle’s job to synthesize the various viewpoints held on happiness, and in the case of the multitude it is the multitude as a whole that synthesizes the various ideas put forth, claiming that in the course of deliberation a consensus will emerge from the multitude on any given point.¹⁵⁵

While Waldron’s discussion of the multitude’s dialectical ability as quoted applies to matters of an ethical nature, the dialectic is not constrained to matters of that field. Waldron discusses the synthesis of ideas through the process of voting, and does not specify the nature of the vote, stating that due to the merit through which the multitude claim the ability to rule (that is, their ability to function as a whole and to achieve synthesis,) “The individual member of the multitude is required... not only to use his vote responsibly, but to use it in a way that interacts deliberatively with others,” and if the individual does vote in such a way then the, “Final vote in the assembly reflects a synthesis which is something more than a mere aggregation of its constituent parts.”¹⁵⁶ Indeed, Aristotle’s gathering of constitutions and his subsequent examination of both existing contemporary constitutions as well as the regimes put forth by Plato in the *Republic* and the *Laws* within his *Politics* suggests that Aristotle believed this synthesis could occur in realms other than the purely ethical.

The ideal regime, then, seems to be a form of the rule of the many in which the many are able, through dialectical activity, to govern in a form that is ideal. It becomes clear, then, that the more virtuous the multitude, the better the rule. Since it is through education that men

¹⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098b 27-29.

¹⁵⁵ Waldron, 569-71.

¹⁵⁶ Waldron, 575.

become virtuous, as well as regimes, it is clear that it is only through a proper system of education that a regime may reach this form. However, Fred Miller Jr., in his commentary on the *Politics*, notes that the idea of the rule of multitude when it comes together as a whole, “Fails to take into account problems of collective irrationality,” but then notes that the remedy for this is a mixed constitution “that prevents the sort of irrational excesses perpetrated under extreme democracy.”¹⁵⁷ Miller is right to point out that the rule of the multitude does not inherently resolve the problem of irrationality, a problem that encompasses problems such as the perversion of rule and the ostracism of the minority by the majority. The solution Miller presents, however, does not seem to be the correct one, since the presence of a mixed constitution implies that there will be at least two different sources of authority, and that one of these sources will advance its claim to rule in certain areas to the detriment of the other, and so in this way bring about the problems of injustice inherent in a city in which there are competing claims to rule. For if the one or few or the many who are qualified to rule do rule, then those who are not qualified are not given their fair share in rule because when acting together they have their own claim to rule based on their collective virtue, and their reception of an unequal share in rule is unjust. On the other hand, if all are given a part in rule, then those who are qualified are treated unjustly, since they are not the equals of those who are unqualified yet they are given an equal share.¹⁵⁸ Rather than preventing the problem of collective irrationality, Miller’s solution heightens the possibility of factional conflict.

The correct solution to the problem of human passions is proper education and habituation towards virtue. If the multitude, as a whole, is virtuous, then it will not allow the rise of demagogues, the oppression of a minority or majority, or other varied but similar situations from arising that do not lead the city towards the common good. For a virtuous multitude will choose those things which promote the common good as well as the flourishing of the citizens

¹⁵⁷ Fred Miller Jr., *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle’s Politics*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995): 262.

¹⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1283b 20-35.

of the community, since both of these things are held to be good, and those that are virtuous desire to achieve that which is good and virtuous, because virtuous people desire to achieve happiness in the same manner as all people. Unlike people who are not virtuous, however, the virtuous man will be able to understand correctly what brings about happiness, since, "What appear pleasures to him will also *be* pleasures, and what is pleasant will be what he enjoys."¹⁵⁹ Finally, as we have seen above the city is ever changing in its composition and time, as it is wont to do, continues to move forward. The ideal regime, then, cannot be static, as the city itself is not static. Whatever the form of the ideal regime, it must be capable of responding to the organic growth of the city as well as the changes of time that affect the city. The ideal regime is one that is capable of growth, and the rule of the multitude collectively, made virtuous through education, is able to change and adapt. For education towards virtue will allow for proper decision making and adaptation, as while the equipment and circumstances of the city will change, its end remains the same, and the properly educated will understand how best to orient the regime towards its highest end in relation to the city's current circumstances. The ideal regime, then, is marked by its activity, it is always in development, always continuing to progress towards virtue through the process of proper education. This ideal regime, then, is not only the ideal regime of the many, but the ideal regime simply.

¹⁵⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1176a 16-19.

Chapter VI: Conclusions

The end of the city is the promotion of common good of its citizens, that is, the promotion of virtue and happiness. The best regimes, then, must also share this as their end. As we have seen, it is not enough for regimes to posit the end correctly, however, they must also choose correctly which actions promote this end and then also execute these actions properly. Regimes have an *obligation* to pursue this good, and thus any regime that is not the ideal must change its form until it reaches an ideal state, that is, the form that is best able to promote the common good. As we have seen, the method of change necessitates the end that is achievable, the ends and the means must be consonant. Education, as we have seen, is the only form of regime change that properly moves the regime towards its highest end, and thus also moves the city towards its highest end. For the method of regime change must be internally controlled, for the ends and the means must both be *chosen* by the regime. The method of regime change must also be capable of adapting to or resisting the external and internal forces that may cause change that is *not* chosen by the regime. Not only is it education that allows for pursuit of virtue, that is, which allows the city to pursue its proper end, but it is also education that allows for the regime to choose properly.

Just as the method of regime change, education, must be consonant with the end it pursues, so the method of education must be consonant with the end that education pursues. Thus, a certain form of education is required. For Aristotle, this means that education must comprise military training, formal education, and experiential education. This education must be public, and common for all. It must include the inculcation of *phronesis* that allows for the ability to rule and be ruled in turn, as well as practical experience in ruling and being ruled. It must also promote unity, loyalty to the regime, the importance of actively supporting the regime, and faith in the process of education itself. It must also, however, aim towards the intellectual virtues, and

always seek to promote the totality of virtue, for activity in accord with the virtues is happiness, the end towards which all men and cities aim.

All of this means that the best regime is a certain permutation of the rule of the many, that based upon collective virtue which is a result of education. This regime must not be static; it must be dynamic, and capable of adaptation. For, as we have seen, the city, like man, has a dual nature, and thus changes in both ways. The regime must, therefore, be capable of adaptation in a choice-driven manner to correspond with the organic growth of the city as well as to resist outside sources of change. This regime, moreover, will be capable of resolving the problems of justice and inequality that Aristotle identifies in all non-ideal regimes, that is, that in any city there are various claims to rule and those who disagree with the recognized claim to rule view themselves as treated unjustly and unequally, but due to education towards virtue it may be recognized that virtue alone is the criterion for a share in rule, and all those who meet this standard are included in ruling. In the end, this regime would appear to be a developmental version of a mixed regime. Those citizens most capable as regards ruling will hold the highest offices, but when the multitude comes together as a collective it is even more capable of choosing rightly, as its collective virtue surpasses that of individual officials. Through the passage of time, as generations continue to be properly educated, it stands to reason that more people will be capable of intellectual virtue and that the regime, as a whole, will be able to govern better as it becomes more virtuous.

Education, then, is of paramount importance within the city. It represents the means by which the city is able to move towards its proper end, and proper education characterizes the best regime. Aristotle, understanding that cities are already in existence, understands that the ideal city cannot only be brought about through its foundation. All regimes are capable of reform and growth; indeed the wiping away of old regimes through violent revolution is actually harmful to the city and its citizens. Moreover, even if a city is founded properly, with an ideal regime, it is necessary for proper education to constitute a part of the regime, as it is through education that

individuals can approach virtue and happiness, and because it is through education that the regime may continue to be excellent whilst withstanding the ravages of time. Many of Aristotle's recommendations for education do seem to be present within the contemporary American system. We have public education, although any observer of the current education system will admit that it is not common for all, and the existence of optional private education further underscores the need for reform in this area. Aristotle would certainly object to localized control of education, as this leaves the decision as to what is virtuous in essentially private hands, and he would certainly note with disapproval the disparity between education in richer areas and education in poorer areas. American institutions do provide for the experiential learning that Aristotle regards as valuable, particularly in jury duty which de Tocqueville notes as "the most energetic means of making the people rule, is also the most efficacious means of teaching it how to rule well."¹⁶⁰ Aristotle would certainly criticize America's lack of uniform military training, and would note the disunity and lack of communal feelings that seem to be pervasive even on the state level. Most importantly, however, Aristotle would object to the fact that education in America does not seem to properly aim towards virtue. America may contain civic education, career-based education, education with a view towards knowledge, and education of the body. However, the state-run education system does not, in most cases, educate with the aim of virtue. And in the end, it is this that is most important for Aristotle. The city, the regime, education, all of these represent, at the last, a means to the end of happiness. All of these things are good only insofar as they serve the highest end of man, living well. The greatest responsibility of the regime, therefore, is to promote proper education towards virtue, as it is through this process that man achieves his highest end.

ⁱ Jill Frank offers a slightly different view. She argues that for Aristotle, nature is *not* immutable but changeable, and that nature lies somewhere between necessity and chance, that is, what happens for the most part. By this reading, man is not *obligated* to transcend his original nature just as a tree need not necessarily grow to still exist naturally as

¹⁶⁰ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve, ed. Francis Bowen, Phillips Bradley, (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 287.

a tree, there is room for error. Frank's article seems to suggest, then, that man's nature is changeable, that those whose nature does not change are still men, that those men whose nature changes in such a way as to abandon completely their original nature are also still men, but that for the most part man's nature will change in such a way as to produce the type of men for whom politics is a good. It remains, however, necessary that this change take place in order for man to achieve what Aristotle believes is his proper end.

ⁱⁱ As Susan Collins points out, however, because human beings within cities live in community with others the perfection of happiness involves not only individual flourishing, but proper moral actions towards others as regards the virtue of justice. Collins, 53. Alongside justice, the virtues of generosity, magnanimity, and friendship dictate that perfect happiness entails the promotion of the happiness of others, although not all. Still, unlike the city, individual perfection can occur outside of the perfection of others, even as the perfectly happy individual should be invested in the promotion of other's virtue. Aristotle does, after all, suggest that not everyone can be happy, as it requires, alongside possession of the ability for theoretical study, self-sufficiency to allow for leisure and the fullness of life to enjoy said leisure. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1120a 24-29, 1124b 10-15 1170b 6-19, 1171a 18-21, 1177b 5-26.

ⁱⁱⁱ *The Athenian Constitution*, elsewhere translated as the *Constitution of Athens*, was most probably not written by Aristotle himself. However, the work was attributed to Aristotle in antiquity, is consistent with the collection of constitutions referenced in the *Politics*, and was most probably composed by a member of Aristotle's school. As P.J. Rhodes argues in his introduction, the work, written by a student of Aristotle's, would have generally agreed with the thought of Aristotle and reflected his political outlook. None of the passages used in this paper appear to differ extremely from Aristotle's thought in the *Politics*, and in fact the example related to the rise of the Council of the Areopagus is also present in the *Politics*. Regarding the authorship question of *The Athenian Constitution*, see: P.J. Rhodes, introduction to Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution*, trans. by P.J. Rhodes, (London: Penguin Books, 1984); K. von Fritz, "Aristotle's Contribution to the Practice and Theory of Historiography," *University of California Publications in Philosophy* 28 (1958) 113-138; W. L. Newman et al., "Aristotle on the *Constitution of Athens*," *The Classical Review*, Vol. 5, no. 4 (1891): 155-169.

^{iv} The eight possible arrangements are as follows: Right end, right actions, right execution; right end, right actions, wrong execution; right end, wrong actions, right execution; right end, wrong actions, wrong execution; wrong end, right actions, right execution; wrong end, right actions, wrong execution; wrong end, wrong actions, right execution; and wrong end, wrong actions, and wrong execution.

^v Thomas Aquinas, in his *Summa Theologica*, makes the claim that all human actions are subject to the eternal law insofar as good actions are in line with the eternal law and bad actions represent a turning away from it, further that all human laws insofar as they are proper laws, that is that they promote the good and not the bad, are derived from the natural law. Thomas' thoughts on law are here greatly simplified, of course, but they do represent a Catholic approach to the origin of law and they are heavily based upon Aristotle, in the relevant sections on eternal, natural, and human law Thomas repeatedly quotes Aristotle as well as Augustine. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa of the Summa*, trans. The Fathers of the English Dominican Province, ed. Peter Kreeft (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1990), ST I-II 90-96.

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