

## Past and Future Background Briefing:

### *Aristotle: The Practical Sciences - Politics and Ethics*

#### *Topics*

- *Aristotle and the Origins of Political Philosophy*
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#### **Abstract:**

This backgrounder provides an overview of Aristotle's historical context and explores the scope of his work before a more detailed account of his views on ethics and politics. Aristotle collected observational data and examined the nature of causation to interrogate received opinion, thereby hoping to achieve systematic knowledge and practical wisdom. The key concept of *eudaemonia* (*eudaimonia*), a sophisticated version of personal happiness, and the way that political life should contribute to this, are explored at length in his *Politics* and two works on Ethics. He developed a virtue ethics based on the idea of *the mean* as balanced, rational moderation in virtues, dispositions, and habits. Aristotle made a profound contribution to political philosophy and the terms we use today in political analysis, along with insights into the linkage among practical wisdom, political systems, and personal development.

#### **1. Aristotle and the Origins of Political Philosophy**

The importance of Plato in the history of Western thought is only matched by the importance of one of his students. Aristotle (384-322 BCE) is in many ways equally innovative, but provides strong counter-arguments to many of Plato's views. Interest in politics and political theory was driven by the vigorous political life led by the Greek city-states and their citizens during this period, often undergoing evolutionary change, political conflict, and revolution or *stasis*, indicating deep social divisions (a 'standing apart') that could lead to violence and civil war (Cartledge 2020, p24). It is not surprising, therefore, that the Greeks began to reflect upon these events and tried to develop some systematic account of political life. As noted by Cynthia Farrar: -

The period in which radical, direct democracy was created, and political power gradually devolved to the people in assembly and absorbed local and sacral authorities, raised deep questions about the sources of political order and harmony. (Farrar 1988, p26)

It should not surprise us, therefore, that the issues of justice and power, and how society should be organized, became areas of heated debate. Plato, too, was deeply interested in the way justice could be instituted in both the individual and the state, but his approach to this issue was to set up an a thought experiment to explore justice, *The Republic*, and through this means to criticize the current state-of-affairs in early democratic Athens and other cities. A similar approach was used in Plato's book *The Statesman*, but it was only in his later work, *The Laws*, that he recognized that political life, practically, could only be controlled by a rigid adherence to a strict set of laws (see further Ferguson 2023).

Aristotle took a very different approach to these issues. First, he and his students were concerned to study data about existing city-states and the way their constitutions operated. Some 158 constitutions in all were collected from around the Greek world, including that of Athens (outlined in Aristotle *The Athenian Constitution*, though this text may have been compiled by a student), Sparta, Cretan cities, and probably including information on the north African city of Carthage, many of whose regulations Aristotle approved (Aristotle *Politics*, 1272a-1273b). He had a stronger observational and descriptive basis for his researches and conclusions than Plato, though may have been rather selective in the way he used historical examples (Lintott 1992).

Second, he argued that the preferable constitution had be achievable by ordinary people within historical time: in other words, for Aristotle politics was a practical rather than a theoretical discipline (Brumbaugh 1981). For this reason, Aristotle's work has had a profound influence on the history of political science. Aristotle influenced seminal thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), and Machiavelli, gave modern politics many of its terms for analyzing political and constitutional structures, and was the forerunner of comparative political studies as well as comparative constitutional law (Rosenthal 1953). Aristotle also criticized the type of ideas put forward in Plato's *Republic*. For Aristotle such a society would be rigid and dead: in any case, no one within it would be really happy (*Politics*, 1264b). The Guardian class, in particular, would eventually become corrupt and turn the society in a tyranny run for their own narrow interests. Aristotle denied the *organic metaphor* that Plato used to argue that a society was like an individual, in which the mind should rule the passions and appetites. Rather, Aristotle thought that a city or a nation was a collection of different groups trying to achieve benefits for themselves: rather than being a single organism, it was a *pluralistic* system.

## 2. Biographical Details

Aristotle was born at Stagira in Macedonia in 384 BCE, and lived until 322 BCE, dying at the age of 62 years. He thus lived through a turbulent period of Greek history, when various Leagues of cities rose and fell, with Macedonian power becoming dominant from 338 BCE onwards. Aristotle's father, Nicomachus, had been a physician at the court of Philip II of Macedon, which partly accounts for his traditional friendship and association

with influential people in Macedonia, and in part for his interest in natural science. Aristotle also became Alexander the Great's pupil for a time, though it is unclear how much influence he really would have had on the young prince.

In 367 BCE, at the age of 17 years, Aristotle came to study at Plato's Academy in Athens (Shields 2023). Aristotle remained in the Academy for some twenty years, though his ideas may have diverged more and more from those of Plato. Aristotle acquired the nickname of 'the Foal', i.e. one who will kick his mother, that is, his teacher, when he has had enough milk (Guthrie 1990). In 347 BCE, when Plato died, Aristotle left the Academy and joined the small Platonic circle at Assos, in the Troad, where he enjoyed close relations with Hermeias, the ruler of the neighbouring city of Atarneus. Here he may have glimpsed more the practical side of political science and foreign affairs, (Warrington, p. xi). Thereafter he lived in Lesbos for two years, and married Pythias, the niece of Hermeias (Shields 2023).



Aristotle was viewed as one of the most prolific thinkers and researchers of the Greek world  
(Image courtesy of Pixabay and Storyboardthat.com)

In 343/2 BCE Philip II of Macedon invited Aristotle to tutor the young Alexander the Great. He was one of many prominent individuals who had been drawn to the Macedonian court: figures such as Pindar, Bacchylides, the painter Zeuxis received patronage there (Herodotus V.22; Thucydides II.99. & IV.124; Pausanias VII.25; Pindar Fragments 120-121), as did the poets Choerilus (Athenaeus 8.345) and Timotheus (Plutarch *Moralia* 177b), and the dramatists Agathon and Euripides. The exact level of influence Aristotle would have had on Alexander's ideas and ambitions is still a matter of scholarly debate and subject to limited sources, mainly relying on the later accounts of Plutarch and Arrian. Indeed, it is possible that Aristotle would have criticized the increasing autocracy and arbitrariness of Alexander's rule and his willingness to incorporate Persian and eastern elements into his kingship, leading to the story that Aristotle created the poison that some claimed to have killed Alexander in Babylon (a view reported but rejected in Arrian VII.27-28).

Aristotle left Athens in 322 BCE, shortly after the death of Alexander, due to the opprobrium felt towards him because of his connections with the Macedonian ruling house. Now that Alexander had died and the democratic faction was on the upswing, Aristotle said that he did want the Athenians to 'commit a second crime against

humanity' (Barnes 1995, p6), for he too, had been summoned to court to answer the charge of impiety. The first 'crime', of course, had been the Athenian prosecution and execution of Socrates in 399 BCE. Aristotle, instead, chose to leave Athens for Euboea. This, once again, seems to indicate a practical view of political and social life.

### 3. The Breadth of the Aristotelian System

The range of Aristotle's work is amazing: it includes titles such as the *Metaphysics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Eudemian Ethics*, *On Justice*, *On the Poets*, *The Art of Rhetoric*, *On Animals*, *On Planets*, *On Astronomy*, *Deductions*, *Definitions* and so on, a total of some 150-200 different works, though only a minority survive (Shields 2023). Most of these works seem to have been extant lecture notes, which presumably Aristotle used at the private and public lectures in the advanced school he set up in Athens, the Lyceum. This school was actually a sanctuary and gymnasium, and the courses run there probably had no set syllabus, no examinations, and presumably no fees (Barnes 1982, p5). Thinkers aligned with this school came to be known as the *Peripatetics*, probably because of walking areas in the school grounds whereby they could walk, think and talk together (Shields 2023). The breadth of his studies in part is due to the fact that he studied nature, the arts (including theories of poetic action and catharsis), and 'second order reflection on the nature and status' of his own arguments and ideas (Cartledge 2020, p13). Aristotle divides his explorations on the following basis:

He distinguishes theoretical science from more practically oriented studies, some of which concern human conduct and others of which focus on the productive crafts. Thus, the Aristotelian sciences divide into three: (i) theoretical, (ii) practical, and (iii) productive. The principles of division are straightforward: theoretical science seeks knowledge for its own sake; practical science concerns conduct and goodness in action, both individual and societal; and productive science aims at the creation of beautiful or useful objects (Shields 2020)

Aristotle had a different view to Plato on how to secure genuine knowledge. In Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations*, speech as a model of thought is viewed as being prone to error: dialectic is inferior to demonstration, where one begins with principles which are true and primary. Aristotle looked more to mathematics and observation as models for building a secure body of provable knowledge, though Plato did accept that a background in mathematics was needed for advanced studies. Furthermore, Aristotle was not happy with Plato's theory of forms: for Aristotle the concrete objects making up any class precede the quality they share, e.g. individual horses precede the notion of the abstract form of the horse. Therefore, in his view, Forms do not account for all that is truly real (Barnes 1982, p46). For Aristotle any individual object incorporates a fusion of both form and matter, and a sound philosophy had to do justice to both 'the claims of systematic unity and those of independent plurality' (Brumbaugh 1981, p175).

According to Aristotle one should argue from observations and first principles, once these have been accepted, to build up a true, systematic and meaningful account in any area of study (see Barnes 1982, pp23; Seeskin 1987, pp26-30 for critical views of this). Such a system would of involve resolutions of various puzzles in received opinion

(Shields 2023) and a detailed understanding of causes, but in Greek the word for cause, 'aitia', is rather broad - it includes the notion of explanation, of knowing why something is as it is rather than simply the antecedent conditions necessary to its generation. Aristotle, developed four sets of causes which help 'explain' any thing: these included the material, formal, efficient and final causes. The final cause, *telos*, discusses the final purpose for which an object is made or used, and in the cases of natural objects goes beyond a mere functionalism - natural things have the goal of *self-realization* which directs their stages of growth and maturity (Brumbaugh 1981, p184). The final goal of human beings is discussed at length in Aristotle's consideration of ethics, and likewise it involves the fullest self-realization of what is it to be a human being. This in turn leads on to a discussion of the environment which supports the pursuit of a good and well-fashioned life, and for Aristotle this was the political life of the State. For Aristotle, this meant a well-run city-state, preferably a moderate democracy, though there were also legitimate forms of kingship and aristocracy, so long as they focused on the common good (see further below).

#### **4. The Practical Sciences: Politics and Ethics**

For Aristotle man was not simply another object in the world which could be studied using material and formal views of causation and explanation. Man was more than a mere object because he had potentiality, power and creativity in his own right: in other words, a level of freedom which meant that not all his actions are caused by external factors. Furthermore, human nature and behaviour are subject to 'errors, accidents and responsibilities for choice that make them significantly different from the rest of reality. . . . Freedom results from man's peculiar metaphysical location. It means that nature does not dictate the development of intelligence and excellence.' (Brumbaugh 1981, p197) Man creates forms of virtue and intelligence, e.g. in terms of character, institutions and societies, and is in turn affected by these creations. Humans are in a sense partly self-causing, and societies carry these causes forward onto future generations.

Ethics and politics, therefore, cannot be as systematic as logic or biology, and had to be aware of the variations and potentials of human choice and development. In ethics and politics, he argued, completely true laws can only rarely be proven, rather, we can assess statements such as 'in general, something is the case', or 'everything being equal, x is the case'. Yet these kinds of insights are still very useful in understanding human behaviour and human societies. Aristotle regarded the practical sciences as those that help humans live properly. The two central works on this topic were his *Nicomachean Ethics* (apparently named after Aristotle's son, Nicomachus), and his *Politics*. A brief summary of the basic orientation of these practical enquiries has been provided by Robert Brumbaugh: -

PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE means the result of studying the world from the standpoint of human existence, human nature and human value. It has as its subject matter (a) habits and decisions that form the individual character (ETHICS), (b) the conventions and institutions that societies set up as means to attaining a common good, and (c) the complex interaction of nature and convention that gives men in society a 'second nature'

more or less adequate to their ideals of self-realization (POLITICS). (Brumbaugh 1981, p188, capitalization is the author's.)

Aristotle's studies on ethics aimed at improving a person's character: the Greek word '*ethika*' means 'concerning the character', and in particular, how this character can achieve *eudaemonia*, not just a state of happiness, but a successful and excellent life (Aristotle *Eudemian Ethics*, 1215a). In other words, the central question is not just how to be happy, but 'what it is to be a successful human being' (Barnes 1982, p78). This idea was very influential in the classical world, but was also taken up as the ideal of the man with a wide range of balanced virtues in 19th and 20th century British-American education. 'Nothing in excess' and everything according to an appropriate measure were some of the common-places which were derived from Aristotle. Such views have also influenced modern psychological and educational ideas concerning human self-realization and the complete actualization of human potential in experiencing the world (developed by modern thinkers such as J.S. Mill, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers).

The citizen-based city-state (*polis*) was held by Aristotle to provide the environment for the achievement of individual development through public means, and the proper management of the state for this purpose should be the goal of political behaviour. Many of our current political and constitutional concerns and terminology are discussed in Aristotle's book, the *Politics*, e.g. notions of citizenship, civic virtue, sovereignty, democracy, polity, plurality, the role of wealth in the state, representation of the interests of differing groups, causes of revolution, and methods for stabilizing various constitutions, criteria for office-holding, questions of population, and land distribution.

The central aim of state, thus, was the achievement of *eudaemonia*, in particular, to provide the opportunities for their citizens to find a life of excellence and full human achievement. A State is a sharing 'by households and families in a good life, for the purpose of a complete and self-sufficient life' (in Barnes 1982, p81). Furthermore, all states share certain characteristics:

Experience teaches us that every state is an association, and that every association is formed with some good end in view, for an apparent good is the spring of all human activity. Consequently, the state or political association, which is supreme and all-embracing, must aim at the sovereign good. (Aristotle *Politics*, 1252a)

The organization called the state must reach a certain size for purposes of relative self-sufficiency: -

When several villages unite so as to form a single association large enough to be almost if not wholly self-sufficient, that association has reached the level of a state. Though it owed its origin to the bare necessities of life, it continues to exist for the sake of the *good* life. Hence, if the earlier forms of society are natural, so too is the state, which is their end. . . . I have now made it clear that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. (Aristotle *Politics*, 1252b-1253a)

States then, are natural societies conforming to a final cause, a *teleology* for the benefit of the individual. States and human society are not purely the creation of human convention,

as some of the more extreme sophists implied, nor just a social construction or imagined community, as suggested by modern constructivists. A State, furthermore, is ‘an association of citizens within the framework of a constitution’ (Aristotle *Politics*, 1276a). In other words, the state is not just a region, nation, or collection of people, it is a group of people where political and social life is organized in a particular way. The constitution, of course, may be written or unwritten. Generally, we can see that Aristotle has been deeply influenced by the formation of, and the way of life implicit in, the Greek *polis*, a particularly inclusive type of city-state at least for full citizens.

The definition of citizenship, likewise, is connected to its function, rights, and political ends: -

The picture of a citizen now begins to emerge more clearly: (a) he who has the right to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of a particular state is said to be a citizen of that state; (b) a group of such persons large enough to be self-sufficient constitutes, broadly speaking, a state. (Aristotle *Politics*, 1275b).

Citizens are those who take their turn ‘in ruling and being ruled’ (Aristotle *Politics*, 1283b), knowing how to act in both roles. The implications of these views are important: in so far as one is a member of a state, the full opportunity for developing human excellence and potentially is available. To be without citizenship, however, limits this opportunity, while to be entirely stateless, e.g. an outcast or a slave, is to be limited in one’s ability to be fully human. This is why slaves, for Aristotle, are indeed less fully human in that they are not fully ‘political beings’, even though they may be necessary to provide the leisure time for the political activities of their owners. For Aristotle, man is indeed a political animal (Aristotle *Politics*, 1253a).

Furthermore, although there are beneficial forms of the rule of one, the few, and the many (kingship, aristocracy and a polity or moderate democracy), there are also corrupt forms of all three as well: tyranny, oligarchy and radical democracy (which is equivalent to the tyranny of the many). A polity is a constitutional state where the fighting men of the state have full citizenship, and where those ‘who possess arms are the citizens’ (Aristotle *Politics*, 1279a). The central notion here is that those both able to meet the requirements of self-defence for the state, and those who have some means of livelihood, make the best citizen body. This idea might seem strange to modern thinkers, but we should remember that many modern states still insist that it is the duty of all citizens to take an active part in the defense of the state via military or emergency-services training, e.g. Switzerland, Israel, Singapore, South Korea, or to have the right to self-defense with their own weapons, an idea originally developed in the USA in the context state-level militia being able to resist federal oppression.

The corrupt forms of rule differ from beneficial constitutions in the following way: -

Those forms of government which have regard to the common good are right constitutions, judged by the norm of absolute justice. But those which take account only of the rulers’ interests are all perversions, all deviation forms; they are despotic, whereas the state is a society of freemen. (Aristotle *Politics*, 1279a)

We can tabulate Aristotle's view on these forms of government (see *Politics* 1295a onwards and 1301a onwards)

*Aristotle's Analysis of Types of Government: -*

TYPE	LEGITIMATE (rule for society)	ILLEGITIMATE (rule for ruling group)
Rule by one	Kingship	Tyranny
Rule by few	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Rule by many	Polity (= Moderate Democracy)	Radical Democracy (= Mob rule)

For Aristotle, oligarchies were ruled with the interests of the well-to-do paramount, while in radical democracies the interests of the have-nots are paramount (Aristotle *Politics*, 1279b). Neither, therefore, are completely legitimate systems, and lead to problems in equity and justice. Furthermore, the different distributions between poverty and wealth may also increase the tensions between these two social orders, leading to instability and revolution or counter-revolutions.

Aristotle had a generally positive view of the rule of the many when it was moderated by an appropriate constitution and rule of Law, arguing that a well-structured democracy could reach a higher level of virtue than the individual virtue of the members making up the state (Barnes 1982, p81). He specifically rejects the rule by an elite group such as the guardians of Plato's *Republic*, arguing that such a static ruling group would cause enmity among the other groups of society, and argues that no one in such a state will be really happy (Aristotle *Politics*, 1264b).

Aristotle's ideal state is not the type of utopia proposed by Plato's *Republic*. In his analysis of the best constitution Aristotle argues that: -

In doing so we shall not assume a standard of excellence beyond the reach of an ordinary man, or a standard of education calling for exceptional gifts of nature or fortune, or, yet again an ideal form of government. No, we shall confine ourselves to the sort of life which most men are able to share, and a constitution to which most states can attain. (Aristotle *Politics*, 1295a).

Aristotle, then, is describing states which he thinks could be set up if reasonable steps are put in motion by citizens who agree on the common good. Aristotle recognizes that a plurality of types of person should make up the state, and that 'civic and moral virtue cannot be identical' (*Politics*, 1276a). He nonetheless does argue by analogy that just as the virtuous individual is guided by the mean between extremes, so the best state will

have a large and politically powerful middle class. For it is this middle class which, unlike the poor and rich who have too much to gain and lose respectively by social revolution, are able to provide the proper guidance for an impartial running of the state (Aristotle *Politics*, 1295b). Furthermore, for Aristotle it is this group that has most civic virtue and should therefore have greater access to offices and deliberative power in the state.

Unfortunately for Aristotle, due to the absence of any large-scale industrial or factory base, it was exactly this 'middle class' which tended to remain fairly small in most Greek city-states. Usually, wealth was based on land (though Athens and Corinth were also active trade centres), while the poor sometimes spiraled down into a debt and were trapped in poverty. It was perhaps at Athens more than most other *poleis* that there was some chance for this middle class to develop: the reforms of Solon, combined with a stronger emphasis on trade and maritime affairs would have supported a larger group in the lower hoplite class, though *metics*, free non-citizen foreigners, often handled areas of trade and craft production. Aristotle explicitly states that democracies tend to be safer and more permanent than oligarchies because such democracies give the middle group a large role in government (Aristotle *Politics*, 1296a). Ironically, the growing emphasis on a large war fleet increasingly made Athens dependent on the poorer citizens who were the rowers of this fleet. This was one of the forces that pushed the Athenian polity in the direction of a more radical democracy.

The State then, must support the freedom of the citizen, though Aristotle does not argue for the liberty of slaves or women. Nonetheless, the State should regulate all things shared in common, that is to say, all public life, and in doing so it strongly interferes in social life, customs and especially education, which should be directed towards inculcating the dominate ideas of the constitution under which the citizens live (Aristotle *Politics*, 1310a). Here Aristotle assigns a positive function to the State, and this may lead to a conflict with the liberty of the individual. As noted by Jonathan Barnes: -

He confidently assigns a positive function to the State, supposing that its goal is the promotion of the good life. Given that, it is easy to imagine that the State, eager to ameliorate the human condition, may properly intervene in any aspect of human life and may compel its subjects to do whatever will make them happy. Those who see the State as a promotor of Good often end up as advocates of repression. Lovers of liberty will prefer to assign a negative function to the State and to regard it rather as a defence and protection against Evil. (Barnes 1982, pp82-3)

This is a major criticism of Aristotle's position: in legislating for the 'good' one may also be over-regulating the conduct of social life. The cry for 'freedom' (*eleutheria*) had sometimes led to phases of destructive and repressive government in the classical Greek world, and we should not be surprised that Aristotle was only willing to give the citizens freedom to act in proportion to their civic and moral virtue. This remained a major problem for modern European states which achieved democracies through revolutions, as in France, where the revolution led to a reign of terror against aristocrats and supposed enemies of the new order, and in the USA, where the balance of power between state and federal powers always remained controversial.

### 5. Happiness and Practical Wisdom

As we have seen, Aristotle argued that making progress as an excellent human being was the only path to genuine happiness and contentment. This involved the development of the higher human faculties, including logic and contemplation. But Aristotle also gave some very practical advice about what was required to get to this excellence (*arete*). First, a number of virtues should be developed and encouraged. These qualities included courage, temperance, justice, liberality, and kindness.

However, Aristotle added an important qualification to this. He thought all virtues should be followed in moderation. Any good quality taken to an extreme can become harmful. Put another way, ‘it frequently occurs that good things have harmful consequences’ (Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.3) Take courage for example. Too much courage means that a person is foolhardy and willing to take excessive risks. Too little courage means that people can be ruled by fear and timid or cowardly.

*Aristotle On the Mean in Good Qualities* (adapted from *Ethics*, Penguin Edition, p104): -

<i>EXCESS</i>	<i>MEAN</i>	<i>DEFICIENT</i>
Rashness	COURAGE	Cowardice
Licentiousness	TEMPERANCE	Insensibility
Prodigality	LIBERALITY	Meanness
Irritability	PATIENCE	Lack of Spirit

Aristotle also argued that we need to combine a sense of ethics, that is, a knowledge of the good goals we should pursue, with two other things. First of all, we need to have the practical wisdom to be able to figure out how to achieve a goal (Fortenbaugh 1969). This will help us choose the appropriate means to the chosen end. Second, Aristotle argued that our character should be shaped to respond automatically in a virtuous and sensible way, i.e. we should have a disposition to take effective and good action, even in an emergency situation (Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.8). For Aristotle this was a kind of emotional disposition which included a cognitive assessment of the cause of the emotion (see Fortenbaugh 1969, p167). This meant that we would always tend to be courageous, just, kind, and so on. In other words, even if you do not have the time to think things through logically, you will tend to act in conformity with the moderate virtues, and tend to take a pragmatic path towards this goal.

These ideas have been applied by modern thinkers to help take a sensible approach to a wide range of modern social problems. For example, one of the great issues of the modern period, surprisingly, is the problem of leisure (‘free’ time, see Morgan 1997).

Too little leisure, with excessive work due to poverty or a workaholic environment, means that there is no time to develop the self fully, to be involved in political or social life, or to get a rounded education. People often cite certain sectors of modern corporate culture, Japanese business life (until recently), and China work environments as suffering from this work-syndrome. On the other hand, in modern Western societies, some people simply have too much leisure that is not productively used. They lack the ability to find worthwhile tasks, and find that entertainment media only fills part of the gap. Because people have intelligent, forward planning minds with aspirations and imaginations, they can also suffer from boredom, anxiety and alienation (see Kenny 1966). This problem is particularly acute for youth, the unemployed, the house-bound, and the forcefully retired. In fact, one of the great challenges for the future is to find enough productive jobs or tasks for all human adults. This is led to a major paradox: people need to be educated to make effective use of their leisure and recreational time. Here Aristotle's notion of the mean seems to apply: too little or too much leisure can be destructive. Furthermore, there is a very constructive role for leisure in providing opportunities for people to round out their lives and become more complete human beings. This has enormous implications for the health industry, for education (both in and past school), for information technology and the entertainment industry. This has also been taken in a different direction: humans not only need time for work and education, but also time for creative 'play', both for children and adults (see Huizinga 1998).

## 6. Conclusion: A Vast Legacy

At this stage we can briefly compare Aristotle's views to that of Plato.

*Contrasts between Aristotle and Plato: -*

<i>ARISTOTLE</i>	<i>PLATO</i>
Knowledge by Observation + Logic	Dialogue and Forms
<i>Eudaemonia</i> and the Mean	Know good, do good
Society pluralistic	Organic metaphor (head leads)
Moderate democracy can work	Elite rule by Guardians or Law
Practical, imperfect systems	Ideal, perfect systems.

Ironically, the Hellenic world of Greek cities which had helped form the context for most of Aristotle's political and social ideals was about to have the rug pulled from under it by the very people with whom he had associated in Macedonia, Philip II and Alexander the Great. Hegel noted this when he observed: 'The shades of night are falling before the Owl of Athena takes flight' (in Brumbaugh 1981, p205). But such things can be known only in hindsight, and in 322 BCE, even with the political autonomy of the Greek *polis* eclipsed, the vistas for Hellenistic culture seemed wide and bright. Greek culture, through

its Macedonian patrons, was about to be exported throughout the Middle East, and in time would be one of the main cultural influences on the Roman Empire and then on into Byzantine culture. In the Islamic world, the thought of Aristotle would be central to major Arabic thinkers such as Avicenna and Averroes. Aristotle, too, was a major influence on thinkers of the later Middle Ages such as Thomas Aquinas, and one of the threads underlying the renewed humanism of the Renaissance. Aristotle's thought was to directly influence the tradition of political analysis from Machiavelli to John Locke, and is still important today.

Aristotle's political vocabulary is still influential today, and his ideas on the 'mean', happiness, contemplation and leisure have been used areas as diverse of self-development theory (see for example Hall 2018), the need for virtue ethics today (MacIntyre 2007), professional ethics, and in notions of distributive justice. Aristotle's work remains a major foundation for world philosophy and political studies.

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