

A SURVEY OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ETHICS AND POLITICS
WITH AN ARISTOTELIAN APPRAISAL

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ABSTRACT

A SURVEY OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ETHICS AND POLITICS WITH AN ARISTOTELIAN APPRAISAL

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In the history of philosophy, ethics and politics have either been considered as two unrelated, irreducible realms or as identical to each other. In the thesis the historical transformation of the problematic relation between ethics and politics is critically evaluated. It is argued that from the emergence of the conflict in Ancient Greece following the “Socratic ideal” to the modern attempt for its resolution by the “Machiavellian revolution,” the prominent theories developed for dealing with the problem have defined politics as an amoral practice, as a science, a technique or an art. An alternative Aristotelian approach is tried to be developed so as to elucidate the nature of the distinction between ethics and politics. According to this view, ethics and politics can neither be strictly separated from each other nor be reduced into one another. The Aristotelian conception of *politike* as “philosophy of human affairs” has ethical, practical and technical dimensions. The thesis tries to clarify at which point ethics and politics should be conceived as two different practices and at which point they cannot be treated as independent from each other. Hence, the present study aims to determine the peculiarities and the strong sides of Aristotelian practical philosophy in order to offer an alternative to resolve the problem under consideration.

Keywords: Aristotle, Aristotelianism, ethics, morality, politics, *politike*, Socratic ideal, Machiavellian revolution.

ÖZ

ETİK VE SİYASET AYRIMINA İLİŞKİN BİR ARAŞTIRMA: ARİSTOTLESÇİ BİR DEĞERLENDİRME

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Felsefe tarihinde etik ve siyaset ya birbiriyle ilişkisiz, birbirine indirgenemez ya da birbirine özdeş iki alan olarak ele alınmıştır. Bu tezde etik ve siyaset arasındaki sorunlu ilişkinin tarihsel dönüşümleri eleştirel bir biçimde değerlendirilmektedir. Eski Yunan'da etik ve siyaset arasındaki çatışmanın “Sokrates ideali”nin izlenmesiyle ortaya çıkmasından “Machiavellici devrim”le çağdaş bir biçimde çözüme çabasına kadar söz konusu sorunla uğraşmak için geliştirilen belli başlı kuramların siyaseti ahlak dışı bir pratik, bilim, teknik, ya da bir sanat olarak tanımladıkları iddia edilmiştir. Öte yandan, etik ve siyaset arasındaki ayrımın doğasını aydınlatmak için alternatif bir Aristotelesçi yaklaşım geliştirilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu bakış açısına göre, etik ve siyaset ne keskin bir biçimde birbirinden ayrılabilir ne de birbirine indirgenebilir. “İnsanlar arasındaki olayların felsefesi” olarak Aristotelesçi *politike* anlayışının hem etik, pratik hem de teknik boyutları vardır. Bu tez, Aristotelesçi bir bakış açısından etik ve siyasetin hangi noktada ayrı pratikler olarak ele alınması gerektiğini, hangi noktada birbirinden bağımsız olarak değerlendirilemeyeceklerini açıklığa kavuşturmaya çalışmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışma söz konusu sorunun çözümüne ilişkin bir bakış açısı önermek amacıyla, Aristotelesçi pratik felsefenin özgüllüklerini ve güçlü yönlerini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Aristoteles, Aristotelesçilik, etik, ahlak, siyaset, *politike*, Sokratesçi ideal, Machiavellici devrim.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Aristotle	
<i>An. Pr.</i>	<i>Analytica Priora</i>
<i>EE</i>	<i>Eudemian Ethics</i>
<i>NE</i>	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
<i>Metaph.</i>	<i>Metaphysics</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politics</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Rhetoric</i>
<i>Top.</i>	<i>Topics</i>
Cicero	
<i>Nat.D.</i>	<i>De nature Deorum</i>
<i>Tusc.</i>	<i>Tusculan Disputations</i>
D.L.	Diogenes Laertius
Epicurus	
<i>KD</i>	<i>Kuriai Doxai (Key Doctrines)</i>
<i>Sent.Vat.</i>	<i>Vatican Sentences</i>
Platon	
<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apology</i>
<i>Cr.</i>	<i>Crito</i>
<i>Grg.</i>	<i>Gorgias</i>
<i>Plt.</i>	<i>Politicus (Statesman)</i>
<i>Prot.</i>	<i>Protogoras</i>
<i>Rep.</i>	<i>Republic</i>
Xenophon	
<i>Mem.</i>	<i>Memorabilia</i>

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

What is or ought to be the relation between ethics and politics? Do ethics and politics have absolutely nothing in common, as it has occasionally been maintained? Or can every political action be a matter of ethical inquiry in the same manner? Is or should ethics basically be identical to politics?

These are the main questions I will try to find their answers in the present dissertation. From one perspective, clarification of the concepts “morality,” “ethics” and “politics,” could be considered as adequate the right way to answer the questions above. The present dissertation calls attention to the practical side of the problem from an Aristotelian viewpoint, instead of offering an analytical clarification of philosophical texts in which these notions have diverse connotations. This seems to me much more pertinent to the nature of ethics and politics. “Practical philosophy” should be practical as far as possible.

One of the basic presumptions of the present study is the following: the relation between ethics and politics is not an abstract relation to be conceptually analyzed. It rather appears to be a kind of practical relation that people encounter in their everyday life. Concepts often employed like “ethics,” “morality” and “politics” first and foremost refer to our daily experiences. They are not mere concepts; they rather originate from experiences and are in fact expressions of them.

In today’s world, one can discern a widespread tendency to correlate “morality” with private life or with personal choices. Morality in this frame is said to rest on a set of beliefs. In other words, it seems that people are inclined to identify morality or ethical values with their “personal choices” or “private life.” This could be the reason why people become immediately upset when their supposedly legitimate “personal” moral values or “choices” are challenged. In

the era of contemporary liberalism, the vast majority of people living in a system of Western or Western-like democracies appear to have a respect for plurality of values. However, to what extent pluralism remains an ideal or to what extent it is or can sincerely be put into practice is in fact a matter of dispute.

Whatever the position one might hold in this controversy, it appears to be evident that the majority of the people adhere to a certain conception of morality and politics, and that they conceive them as two different, irreducible, unrelated realms. For this reason, the majority seems to be inclined to affirm the politician's illicit actions as irrelevant to common morals.

Let us here note that whoever speaks of terms like ethics or politics immediately finds himself at the core of the inquiry. Questions like "who actually am I?" or "what kind of person should I be?" lurk behind every ethical and/or political inquiry. This appears to indicate that a variety of ethical or political issues should be regarded as instances of much more basic questions like "what are most basic laws inherent in the essence of the human being?" This question has been the main concern of modern political philosophy, especially from the times of Thomas Hobbes and Immanuel Kant.

It seems that we have neither totally given up believing in some higher, universal, divine principles like "dignity of humanity," nor have we been able to accomplish them. Unlike the times of Aristotle, in this epoch, almost no one would approve of slavery. Likewise, although almost everyone would allow the "thou shall not kill," is a universal command, we have not yet given up waging war for political reasons. From the times of Aristotle we have not changed in one sense: we can neither still understand *logos* as we must (as Kant demands from us) nor can we live as self-preserving beasts having enacted a "social contract" for the sake of our own security (as Hobbes depicts).

The present study mainly concentrates on the Aristotelian ethics and political philosophy to shed a light on the relation between ethics and politics. The aim of this study is not to discover Aristotle's true philosophy. I will be mentioning interpretations and novel Aristotelian challenges as long as they are relevant to my main argument. The present thesis neither concentrates on Aristotle nor views on contemporary Aristotelianism(s). The aim of this text is rather to revisit, re-emphasize or basically remind the vital importance of the problematic relation between ethics and politics. The second, but more difficult objective of the thesis is to suggest an Aristotelian approach. This point of view will be presented especially in the fourth chapter, where I argue that Aristotelianism is a useful instrument for understanding the relation between ethics and politics.

At this point, one can ask: why Aristotle? What are the reasons behind the preferring of an Aristotelian inquiry, instead of a Kantian or a Hobbesian one, for instance? But, why should we return to Aristotle again enlighten the relation between ethics and politics? What does "Neo-Aristotelian" or "Aristotelian" really mean, first of all?

I will compare and contrast conception of the relation between ethics and politics with some different views. The Aristotelian view seems to occupy the middle between in between the "extremes." This is rather a limited survey of the history of philosophy, the foremost purpose of which is just to identify the peculiarities of the Aristotelian methodology.

In the second and third chapters, I will try to show that from the times of Greek city-states to the Roman Empire and then to our modern world, conceptions of ethics and politics have assumed a variety of meanings and denoted divergent practices. However, this does not mean that nothing in this historical transformation remains the same. We are human beings as we were and our moral or political problems are not infinitely many in kind and number. It appears that we have been deliberating on more or less the same moral and political puzzles while employing dissimilar conceptual schemes or linguistic frameworks. This

perspective, I think, may help us to reduce the diverse moral or political problems into most fundamental elements. I will try to like to accentuate one of essential aspects of the common sense view, which seems to have unchanging in the history of philosophy: there is a general tendency among ordinary people and also among philosophers to conceive morality or ethics and politics as two distinct, irreducible and unrelated realms.

Socio-historical circumstances seem to have a central role in the reception of this “common sense view.” Nevertheless, if the aims and the scope of this study are considered, the real historical reason behind the alteration in the common sense conception of the relation between ethics and politics seems to be a secondary question. Rather, what seems to be striking is the following: it is not because of the effects of “Socratic ideal” and “Machiavellian revolution” (which will be examined in the second and the third chapters respectively), but due to the altering practice of politics and its reception by the great mass of people that common sense view would be inclined to disassociate the realm of morality from that of politics. Common sense understanding should not solely be restricted to people’s general predisposition towards disassociating ethics from politics. This view was echoed in the history of philosophy from Cynics to Niccolo Machiavelli, from Stoics to Immanuel Levinas, from Epicurus to Hobbes.

The second chapter concentrates on instances of withdrawal from political life in the name of realizing, or more properly living in accordance with putative higher moral codes. Although there had been apparent disagreements about what these principles are, except from Aristotle’s school, all ancient school philosophy seemed to be follow of “Socratic ideal.” The “Socratic ideal” is discussed in the second chapter. The common denominator behind the Socratic schools, namely Cynic, Stoic, Platonic and Epicurian doctrines seems to be the following: virtue is or ought to be something above and beyond politics in its ordinary sense. The wise man (*sophos*) is or should be free from all bondages of the daily political affairs. The philosopher, the wise man must be careful about politics, but must not take part in it. Politics is rather time-consuming activity, a hindrance for those

who seek the ideal, namely being *sophos*. Ethics in the aforementioned doctrines, then, appears to be the knowledge of how to live within a society, among *idiotes* (people or the ignorant majority). The arena of politics as the domain of the relations between *idiotes* is immorality for almost all Socratic schools. However, this does not mean that the wise man should not affirm any kind of political ideal, as we will examine in the fourth chapter. The principal question in the history of ethics and political philosophy concerns “how to live and die” and it seems that Aristotle’s practical philosophy can show the way out of contradictions in the immoral politics of the modern society.

CHAPTER II

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ARISTOTELIAN *POLITIKE*

2.1. What does being an “Aristotelian” Really Mean?

It would be no exaggeration to say that in the contemporary literature of moral and political philosophy, one’s mind can easily be confused when he comes to realize the abundance of ways available for conducting a research on the current problems of ethics and/or politics. There are so many currents, which could be divided into their rival sub-currents that it seems almost impossible to draw the entire genealogical tree illustrating all of the divisions in a detailed and an indisputable manner. While the literature especially as regards the normative claims about the nature of and the relations between human beings has propagated more and more, intensive efforts have been shown to differentiate all these diverse approaches from each other. These attempts have eventually created their own literature of meta-ethics.

One of the ways often taken in distinguishing scholars and their views regarding ethics and/or political philosophy from each other is to highlight the name of a philosopher who is pursued by them in principle. That is why existing viewpoints in political philosophy are usually denominated as “Aristotelian,” “Spinozist,” “Kantian,” “Humean,” “Hobbesian,” “Hegelian,” etc. Moreover, most of the scholars typically add prefixes like “neo” or “post” in front of these terms and employs notions like “Neo-Aristotelianism,” “Neo-Kantianism,” “Neo-Humeanism,” and so on. This leads to a widespread usage of dichotomies in the literature of meta-ethics, such as “Kantian/Aristotelian,” Kantian/Hegelian,” “Kantian/Humean,” etc. Though their meaning and the validity of their utilization have become a subject of an ongoing debate, all these distinctions have notoriously been employed for categorizing various sorts of inquiries on current

problems of ethics and political philosophy. Among them, the most commonly used one is the “Aristotelian/Kantian” distinction, which roughly divides the present literature of moral and political philosophy into two predominant camps. As the prominent figures of the Kantian camp one could give the following short list: John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas, Otrified Höffe, Karl Otto Apel, Robert Nozick, Thomas Nagel, Allen Wood, Barbara Herman, Christine Korsgaard, Onara O’Neil, Rom Harre, David Cummiskey, Henry Allison and Marcia Baron. The names generally placed into the Aristotelian camp are the following: Hannah Arendt, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Michael Walzer, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, Martha Carven Nussbaum, Terece Irvin, Richard Kraut, Sarah Broadie, Philippa Foot, David Wiggins, Peter Simpson, Fred D. Miller, David Keyt and Stephen Salkever.

Although it is still a subject of a relatively wide-spread and ongoing debate that to what extent and in which sense these diverse philosophical views attributed to the above listed scholars can be called as “Kantian” or “Aristotelian,” one might say that the list more or less reflects the general view in the literature. Let us note that terms such as “Aristotelianism” and “Kantianism” have closely been associated with political philosophy rather than metaphysics or epistemology.¹ For instance, Richard H. King holds that there are left and right wings in both Aristotelian and Kantian circles. In his classification, King places Rawls to the left wing and Nozick to the right among Kantians; he sees Richard Bernstein closer to left Aristotelians and counts Richard Rorty as one of the liberal Kantians. He also makes use of the terms like “democrats” for Walzer and Sandel.² In employing left/right dichotomy, Bernard Yack takes a similar path. His notion of “left Kantians” has veritably an entirely different meaning.³ It must be noted that

¹ See Seyla Benhabib, “Judgment and the Moral Foundations of Politics in Arendt’s Thought,” *Political Theory*, 16:1 (February 1988), 38.

² Richard H. King, “Old Problems/New Departures: American Political Thought since 1960,” 24:1 (November 1990), 104.

³ Bernard Yack, *The Longing for Total Revolution: Philosophic Sources of Social Discontent from Rousseau to Marx and Nietzsche* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986).

political appraisal of Kant's works engendered to radical interpretations of his practical philosophy according to which there are in fact close affinities between Kant and Marxism.⁴

Likewise, if we look to the Aristotelian camp, we can see that Aristotle is either regarded as a passionate defender of participatory democracy or as a detrimental enemy to it.⁵ Nussbaum at this point seems right in holding that the works of Aristotle actually gave inspiration for supporting a variety of modern political thoughts like Catholic social democratic views (e.g. Jaques Maritain), conservatism (e.g. Finnis), Catholic communitarianism (e.g. MacIntyre), humanist Marxism (e.g. David A. Crocker) and British liberal social-democratic tradition (e.g. Ernest Barker).⁶ In parallel with Nussbaum's remark, John R. Wallach argues that "Aristotle may, depending on which neo-Aristotelian you read, augment or condemn Rawlsian liberalism, revive or undercut Straussian naturalism, rehabilitate or discredit the tradition of Thomism, support or oppose humanistic Marxism."⁷ There is a dispute widely known as the liberalism versus communitarianism debate, in which both Aristotle's and Kant's works have been appropriated by various rival political projects and have even played a significant role in developing them.⁸

⁴ See Herry van der Linden, *Kantian Ethics and Socialism* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988) and Kojin Karatani, *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx*. trans. Sabu Kohso (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

⁵ For an interpretation presenting Aristotle as a defender of democracy, see for instance, Clifford Angell Bates, Jr., *Aristotle's "Best Regime:" Kingship, Democracy, and the Rule of the Law* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003) and Jill Frank, *Democracy of Distinction: Aristotle and the Work of Politics* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005). For an argument typically depicts Aristotle as against the democracy, see Ellen Meiksins Wood and Neil Wood, *Class Ideology and Ancient Political Theory: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in their Social Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

⁶ Martha C. Nussbaum, "Preface to the Revised Edition," in *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xix.

⁷ John R. Wallach, "Contemporary Aristotelianism," *Political Theory*, 20:1 (November 1992), 615.

⁸ For general lines of this debate, see Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

What can be inferred from such a complicated picture at first glance is that there are various competitive political projects generated within both the “Aristotelian” and the “Kantian” circles. These political interpretations indicate the existence of sundry competing perspectives, which have been in principle inspired or even derived from Aristotle’s and Kant’s studies on practical philosophy, in order to support or oppose certain political stances. It could however be contended that this trend is actually something closely related with politics in its ordinary sense, not with methodologically adhering to Kant’s or Aristotle’s original works. Understood this way, adopting these political terms as canonical criteria for distinguishing a number of Aristotelian and Kantian currents hardly provides us a proper key to grasp what makes an inquiry an “Aristotelian” one rather than a “Kantian.” Let us note that the meaning of political notions like right/left distinction is in itself contentious. Although these distinctions always refer to a certain political affiliation, they are still vague terms. Secondly, the political philosophies of Aristotle and Kant were originally neither liberal nor Socialist. Being an Aristotelian or a Kantian should not be, first of all, treated as a matter of supporting a certain political view. It seems that attributing our modern political terminology to their political philosophies would rather be perplexing due to its derivation from misused retrospective evaluation. The tendency towards appealing to the categories briefly reviewed above may of course be convenient in sociological mapping of the current tendencies in the literature under consideration, though this would not possibly be explanatory in explicating the methodological peculiarities of aforementioned ways of research conducted in the fields of ethics and political philosophy.

Alternatively, grappling with the question of “what does (‘neo-) Aristotelian’ philosophically mean?” one may at the very beginning prefer to embark on an inquiry into the methodological characteristics of Aristotle’s practical philosophy. In the relevant literature, contrasting Aristotle with Kant has nevertheless become a conventional option to deal with this question. On the other hand, there has also been an inclination towards introducing a disjunction for meta-ethically categorizing the salient contentions. Some of these are: teleological ethics versus

deontological ethics, eudaimonist versus deontological ethics, practical ethics versus procedural ethics, virtue ethics versus duty ethics and so on. Then, the well-known Aristotelian/Kantian division is not a singular enterprise. Within the frame broadly drawn above, the present Aristotelianism in political philosophy literature is in no doubt generally associated with being teleological, eudaimonist, substantial and practical. In other words, contrary to Kantian ethics, it has been advocated that the Aristotelian point of view privileges the concepts of human good, happiness and virtue over the concepts like right, duty and obligation. In this sense, virtue ethics is often thought to be a kind of ethics which “[p]uts primary emphasis on aretaic or virtue-centered concepts rather than deontic or obligation-centered concepts.”⁹ Defining Aristotelianism as virtue ethics, thus, has turned out to be another consensus, characteristically exemplified in R. Anna Putnam’s words: “[v]irtue ethics is what Aristotle did.”¹⁰ Likewise, when Phillip Mantague identifies two foremost currents in the contemporary literature under consideration as virtue ethics and duty ethics, his perspective represents this common view.¹¹

At first glance, it seems reasonable to accept the virtue/duty ethics distinction and to interpret Aristotle as the canonical example of virtue ethics. Again, such taxonomical endeavors have for the most part appeared to be more and more confusing rather than being explanatory as the debate progress. Some scholars, notably Nussbaum, have drawn our attention to the point that “virtue ethics” conceived as one of the premier approaches in contemporary debates does not solely belong to Aristotelianism. Likewise, Nussbaum does not hesitate to direct her enthusiastic criticisms against the propensity for opposing virtue ethics to Kantianism and Utilitarianism.¹² Her critique fundamentally rests on the

⁹ Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (ed.), *Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3.

¹⁰ Ruth Anna Putnam, “Reciprocity and the Virtues,” *Ethics* 98 (1988), 379.

¹¹ See Phillip Mantague, “Virtue Ethics: A Qualified Success Story,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 29:1 (January 1992).

¹² See Martha Nussbaum, “Virtue Ethics: A Misleading Category?,” *Journal of Ethics* 3:3 (1999), 163-201.

assumption that both Kant and Utilitarians actually developed a considerable account of virtue. This is the rationale behind her preference to consider Kantian and Utilitarian views as mere exemplars of virtue ethics. In the accompanying literature of ethics, she further enunciates that there seems to be at least two distinct trends, which can be classified under the category of virtue ethics. The first viewpoint, according to her argument, basically undertakes as a duty to reconcile Aristotelian and Kantian perspectives. Scholars who are assumed to belong to the first group, in this sense, “are best understood as motivated by a dissatisfaction with Utilitarianism ... These ‘virtue theorists’ are likely to turn to Aristotle, or a certain reading of Aristotle, to elaborate their picture of a deliberative political life. They are not hostile to Kant, and they may even desire a synthesis of Aristotle and Kant.”¹³ Along with herself, she posits scholars like John McDowell, Iris Murdoch, Nancy Sherman, David Wiggins into this camp. The second group, on the other hand, would be identified with anti-Kantianism. For Nussbaum, anti-Kantians like Annette Baier, Simon Blackburn, Philippa Foot, Alasdair MacIntyre and Bernard Williams “are hostile to universal theorizing in ethics, and they are likely to have some sympathy with cultural relativism, although they do not all endorse it.”¹⁴

After her detailed discussion of these trends, Nussbaum’s argument proceeds in the following way: along with Aristotelians, if both Kantians and Utilitarians appeal to a certain understanding of “virtue” in their ethical inquiries, then, there seems no need to employ a conceptual instrument like “virtue ethics” so as to differentiate these schools from each other. In the frame drawn by Nussbaum, that is to say, while “virtue ethics” turns out to be a misleading category, the old notions like “Neo-Humean,” “Neo-Aristotelian,” “anti-Utilitarian,” “anti-Kantian” would thus be sufficient to depict the significant common ground shared by and the dissimilarities between rival theories in ethics.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid., 168.

¹⁴ Ibid., 169.

¹⁵ Ibid., 201.

Nonetheless, Nussbaum's account of virtue ethics as a misconception appears to be excessively inclusive as Sean Mcaleer convincingly argues in his recent article "An Aristotelian Account of Virtue Ethics: An Essay in Moral Taxonomy."¹⁶ One of the objections in Mcaleer's study is plainly directed against Nussbaum's categorical rejection of virtue ethics. Nussbaum's proposal introduced in her article entitled "Virtue Ethics: A Misleading Category?" is, for him, absolutely derived from a false postulation that every ethical system that somehow mentions virtue, could plausibly be called as "virtue ethics." In other words, Nussbaum puts totally irrelevant attitudes into the same basket without explicitly defining what "virtue ethics" is or should be. Kant and Mill, no doubt, declared their ideas about the concept of virtue and even considerably grappled with it in their ethical writings, but this does not simply mean that they can safely be regarded as virtue theorists. In order to settle on the point that whether a theory of ethics can be subsumed under the category of virtue ethics or not, one should first answer the following question: within a theory's conceptual economy, "are the virtue concepts foundational or derivative, primary or secondary, *explicantia* or *explicanda*?"¹⁷ Without appealing to this or a similar set of criteria, one would certainly face a great difficulty in determining the crucial distinctive feature which makes a theory virtue ethics. But, for Nussbaum, employing a conception of "virtue" in this or that way seems to be the necessary and sufficient condition for a theory to be labeled as virtue ethics. That is why her understanding of virtue ethics may be seen as too inclusive as effectively argued in detail by Mcaleer.

Further, for Mcaleer, there exists another tendency in the relevant literature, which is engaged with defining virtue ethics in a deficiently inclusive way. For instance, in terms of Gary Watson's account of virtue ethics, even Aristotle cannot be counted as a virtue theorist.¹⁸ The confusion regarding the meaning of virtue

¹⁶ Sean Mcaleer, "An Aristotelian Account of Virtue Ethics: An Essay in Moral Taxonomy," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 88 (2007), 208-225.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, 210-215.

ethics, therefore, brings about an emergent need for further elaborations, rather than a clear meta-ethical taxonomy of the current theories of ethics. For instance, from a significantly disparate angle, Stephen Buckle in his recent article “Aristotle’s *Republic* or, Why Aristotle’s Ethics is Not Virtue Ethics,” persuasively supports the assertion that Aristotle’s practical philosophy cannot be appraised as a virtue theory in the modern sense. Buckle draws our attention to the point that if the relation between Aristotle’s *Ethics* and his *Politics* is carefully inspected, one cannot equate Aristotelian ethics with the modern virtue ethics; for, Aristotle had always insisted on dealing with the question of virtue as part of much more broader project like Plato’s *Republic*.¹⁹ The contemporary virtue ethicists in sharply separating moral and political spheres from each other very much like the Kantians do, actually fail to realize the peculiarities of an Aristotelian way of inquiry. A similar view is suggested by Peter Simpson:

Viewed in the light of the *Politics*, Aristotle’s ethical theory is inseparable not only from the opinions of gentlemen, but also from the politics of gentlemen. Virtue exists fully in aristocratic regimes, and elsewhere only in isolation. Since contemporary virtue ethicists have no intention whatsoever of trying their theory to gentlemanly opinions, let alone gentlemanly politics, their theory is not, and could never be, Aristotelian. The ‘neo’ in their title destroys the ‘Aristotelian’ to which it is attached.²⁰

The views examined so far are sufficient to show that the meanings of notions like “Aristotelian,” “Kantian,” “virtue ethics” are in dispute. From one point of view, Kant might be a virtue ethicist, but seen from another, he is not. This is also the case for Aristotle. His practical philosophy could on the one side be interpreted as the well-known exemplar of virtue ethics without hesitation; but on the other side, it is likely to be in contrast to our modern conception of virtue ethics. That is to say, contemporary interpretations of Aristotle and Kant are so interwoven that the notions of “Aristotelian” and “Kantian” could even be

¹⁹ Stephen Buckle, “Aristotle’s *Republic* or, Why Aristotle’s Ethics is Not Virtue Ethics,” *Philosophy* 77 (2002), 565-595.

²⁰ Peter Simpson, “Contemporary Virtue Ethics and Aristotle,” *Review of Metaphysics*, 45 (March 1992), 523-524.

regarded as misleading. This seems to be a natural result of the general tendency to undermine the validity of Aristotelian/Kantian distinction by accentuating the putative close affinities between their practical philosophies.²¹ Among all others, Otfried Höffe's argument exhibits one of the most passionate defenses of this position.²² In his article entitled as "Outlook: Aristotle or Kant-Against a Trivial Alternative," he argues that four types of re-aristotalisation of ethics in the current literature can be distinguished. Opposing Aristotle to Enlightenment thought and liberalism by means of highlighting the elements against universal conception of morality in Aristotle's political philosophy is, according to Höffe, the first kind of re-aristotalisation, generally known as "communitarianism." Drawing attention to the importance of Aristotelian "substantial morality," and at the same time contrasting it to the formality of Kantian ethics is the second version of re-aristotelisation. The third version is called by Höffe as "virtue ethics," the central concern of which is essentially the development of one's character excellences and human flourishing. The fourth one is founded upon the assumption that Kantian ethics is deontological and this is the reason why it gives a crucial importance to the concept of "duty." Aristotle's ethics, however, would rather concentrate on the concepts like happiness and practice instead of notions like *categorical imperative* and "duty."

All these versions of re-aristotelisation in the literature of ethics and political philosophy, for Höffe, primarily stem from reductive and misleading interpretations "which are carried out partly on Aristotle, partly on Kant and frequently even on both thinkers, permit rhetorically brilliant polemic and also

²¹ Some of well-known examples of the aforementioned tendency are: Rosalind Hursthouse's *On Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Christine Korsgaard "From Duty and for the Sake of the Noble," in *Aristotle, Kant and the Stoics: Rethinking Happiness and Duty*, eds. Stephen Engstrom and Jennifer Whiting (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 203-36; Nancy Sherman, *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Onara O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Barbara Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

²² See Otfried Höffe, "Outlook: Aristotle or Kant-Against a Trivial Alternative" in *How Natural is the Ethical Law?* eds. Paul Cobben and Ludwig Heyde (Tilburg: Tilburg University Press, 1997), 1-19.

prophetical exhortations to moral and moral philosophical *metanoia*.”²³ Against “re-aristotelisation,” Höffe hence endorses the following claims:

(1) In the intention of ethics as a practical philosophy Kant is an Aristotelian. (2) In the basic elements of his ethics Aristotle is a universalist. (3) Where Aristotle allegedly surpasses Kant, namely respecting judgment, he presents an analysis which Kant not only essentially acknowledges, but also continues moral philosophically. (4) With regard to the theory of acting some of the Aristotelian analyses have implications beyond their own theoretical point of departure, i.e. the principle of mere pursuit. And (5) with the theory of happiness Aristotle develops a concept, on which Kant’s thesis of the conceptual indefiniteness expresses a skeptical opinion, but which is actually an objective, amazingly broad and also well-defined concept.²⁴

Höffe’s argument briefly reconstructed above, like many others, no doubt borders upon blurring the defining characteristic features of Aristotelian and Kantian ways of inquiry. Nevertheless, in reading Kant, one could hardly fail to see that his practical philosophy is essentially a strong challenge against Aristotelian political philosophy. This is simply why contrasting Aristotelian ethics and political philosophy to that of Kant seems to me a much more reasonable than laying stress on the common denominator shared by these competing perspectives. But this does not necessarily mean that there cannot in any case be some good reasons to compromise their practical philosophies. For instance, Nussbaum states that her “Aristotelianism has increasingly been influenced by the idea of John Rawls and of Kant.”²⁵ Let us note here that there exists an evident disparity between Höffe’s argument and Nussbaum’s statement above. Whereas Höffe endeavors to weaken the validity of Aristotelian/Kantian distinction categorically, Nussbaum, by referring the following facts for clarifying the motives behind her change of mind regarding the relation between Aristotelian and Kantian ways of thinking, states that the supreme ideal of dignity of humanity is absent in Aristotle’s practical philosophy. Aristotelian approach

²³ Ibid., 19.

²⁴ Ibid., 18.

²⁵ Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, xx.

originally is also blind to the problem of gender, that is, subordination of women to men. Indeed, Aristotle justified slavery without hesitation. Second, Aristotle was always not ethically and politically interested in the people who lived outside his own city-state. Moreover, he did not recognize men as *kosmopolitai* (all human beings in the world). And lastly, in Nussbaum's words: "Aristotle lacks an essential element of a good modern political approach: a robust conception of protected areas of liberty, of activities with which it is wrong for the state to interfere."²⁶

I agree in principle with Nussbaum. The Aristotelian standpoint must be revised in accordance with the novelties that we have been confronted. In our modern conception, it is plain to the eye that justification of slavery or of inequality between men and women are often regrettably condemned as backward ideas. This is the key lesson that we should learn from the Cynics or the Stoics. This means that one is not justified in harmonizing practical philosophies of Aristotle and Kant by presuming their methodological proximity. As exemplified in Höffe's argument, focusing on finding a common ground shared by these two distinct political philosophies could easily result in the ignorance of their radical differences that cannot be reconciled in principle. Further, methodological reconciliation of the two attitudes at first requires to be supported with a detailed meta-ethical assessment. But if one prefers to combine the strong sides of Aristotle and Kant without giving a detailed meta-ethical account, this picture easily turns out to be a patchwork. On the other hand, to be called an "Aristotelian" does not mean repeating and accepting every single word of Aristotle. Rather, if a survey is conducted by following Aristotelian methodology, this must mean that the uniqueness of Aristotle's methodology is to be pursued. That is to say, the research should start from the very peculiarities that make a research Aristotelian rather than Kantian or Hegelian. The most important point, to note again, is that the denotations of the terms like "(neo-) Aristotelian" or

²⁶ Ibid., xxi.

“Aristotelianism” have become extremely disputatious and ambiguous in the present literature of ethics and political philosophy.²⁷

Therefore, it is clear that some scholars call themselves Aristotelians or are denominated by others as Aristotelians. But, who is actually Aristotelian, or neo-Aristotelian, to what extent and for what reasons? What does (neo-) Aristotelian really mean? What is the methodology that will be espoused throughout this study? Let us try to understand the essential methodological characteristics of Aristotelian exploration.

2.2. Aristotelian Quest for Prudence in Political Philosophy

In the eighteenth century, inquiries conducted mostly under the umbrella of philosophy faculties, were frequently labeled as “science of man,” “moral science,” “moral physics,” or “*sciences morales et politiques*.” Mathematics and natural sciences in this epoch constituted crucial reference point for the research regarding politics and social sciences. Concerted efforts were made to unfold natural principles and laws of human nature in place of supernatural agencies’ putative properties. This resulted in the development of elaborate systems of moral duty and political obligation. For example, natural law theories like that of Thomas Hobbes and Samuel Pufendorf were founded upon the postulation that social reality can only be explained in terms of permanent features of human

²⁷ As Thomas W. Smith puts it in his *Revaluting Ethics: Aristotle’s Dialectical Pedagogy* (New York: SUNY, 2001), 3: “Scholars of various stripes have returned to Aristotelian ethical and political thought for a similar reason: Aristotle helps us reflect on various contemporary problems. However, the result of this revival of Aristotelianism is bewildering variety of Aristotle, with an enormous range of possible teachings. The revival of Aristotelianism has reached a series of dead ends, for Aristotelians have set up various camps devoted to this or that account of Aristotle’s conclusions. So, for example, Aristotle has emerged today as a defender and as a critic of liberal democracy; a systematic thinker who holds incompatible conceptions of moral and intellectual virtue, and thus of the best life for man; an immoralist ready to sacrifice ethical character on the altar of philosophy; a virtue theorist who can effectively demolish deontological rule-bound ethics; a sane alternative to the dangers of nihilistic skepticism and dogmatic foundationalism; a misogynist; a defender of women against the Ancient Greek cult of masculinity; a racist authoritarian who uses his philosophic brilliance to justify slavery; and a critic of slavery. With far less frequency has he emerged as a man more interested in inquiring into problems and provoking thought than in articulating conclusions? Yet if Aristotle gives priority to questions over answers, then the current form of the renaissance of interest in Aristotle may be one of the obstacles to the recovery of his thought.”

nature, such as the concern for self-preservation. In order to explain how society is formed and functions, what nature of society or politics is, most of the moral and political treatises of that time usually employed mechanical metaphors, organic analogies and an image of the world as a well-ordered machine. For instance, Hobbes opens his well-known treatise, *Leviathan* with the following sentences:

NATURE (the Art whereby God hath made and governes the World) is by the *Art of man*, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an Artificial Animal. For seeing life is but a motion of Limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principall part within; why may we not say, that all *Automata* (engines that move themselves by springs and wheeles as doth a watch) have an artificiall lifer? For what is the *Heart*, but a *Spring*; and the *Nerves*, but so many *Strings*; and the *Joynts*, but so many *Wheeles*, giving motion to the whole Body, such as was intended by the *Artificier*?²⁸

This paragraph exemplifies the leading trend, the aim of which “was to apply natural science methods and its mode of conceptualization consistently to the genre of social sciences.”²⁹ From about 1770 to 1830, especially in France, treatises on moral and political issues were denominated as “social mathematics,” “social mechanics,” “social physics,” and “social physiology.”³⁰ Within this intellectual climate, philosophical inquires regarding the socio-historical realm in a sense intimated the methodologies of the natural sciences and mathematics. As Bernand le Bovier puts it, “the geometrical spirit is not so attached to geometry that it cannot be taken and applied to other knowledge. A work of morals, politics, and criticism, perhaps even of rhetoric, would be improved, other things being equal, if written by a geometer.”³¹

²⁸ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, “The Introduction,” in *Leviathan* ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 9.

²⁹ Theodore M. Porter, “Genres and Objects of Social Inquiry, from the Enlightenment to 1890,” in *The Cambridge History of Science*, Vol. VII: *The Modern Social Sciences*, eds. Theodore M. Porter and Dorothy Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 42.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

³¹ Originally in Bernand le Bovier de Fontenelle, *Euveres de Monsieur de Fontenelle...nouvelle*, 10 vols, (Paris, 1762), v. 12. Cited in Stephen Gaukroger, *The Emergence of a Scientific Culture: Science and the Shaping of Modernity, 1210-1685* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 12.

This is an intellectual current that has been a subject of long-lasting dispute, in respect of which one might pose the following questions: is there a single methodology that encapsulates all facets of reality? Is it really plausible to presuppose that methodology of natural sciences or of mathematics can directly be applied for attaining the purpose of investigating moral and political issues?

On the one side of the debate, one can argue that the application of the categories that belong to mathematics and natural sciences into the social sciences or researches dealing with ethical and political issues would at least yield some misleading conclusions. As Alasdair MacIntyre holds, “[t]he eighteenth-century moral philosophers engaged in what was inevitably an *unsuccessful project*; for they did indeed attempt to find a rational basis for their moral beliefs in a particular understanding of human nature, while inheriting a set of moral injunctions on the one hand and a conception of human nature on the other”³² (italics mine). This is surely a charge that requires a rigorous justification. One still assert that a certain conception of “laws” or “principles” peculiar to an unchanging human nature has more and more been adopted as an ultimate premise in the relevant philosophical texts. This is in effect consciously or unconsciously, implicitly or explicitly, usually coupled with the inquiries regarding ethics and politics. It seems that this trend has turned out to be a prevailing stream in the literature of moral and political philosophy after the 18th century.

One of the motivations behind the variety of the doctrines generally termed “contemporary (neo) Aristotelianism” becomes clear especially when this intellectual current is carefully taken into consideration. As a matter of fact, Aristotle himself would have raised the following questions with regard to aforementioned frantic efforts: do we have a guarantee that the laws of human nature can be defined exactly? Are they essentially similar to that of physics or of mathematics? Is morality just consisting of a series of laws that should be obeyed

³² Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd edition (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 53.

in any given case? Is it really plausible to subordinate the relation between ethics and politics to the putative existence of these ultimate laws? More importantly, how do we know that we can find out these laws without explaining or describing the relation between ethics and politics at first? That is to say, following the strategy of “finding out the ultimate laws first and deriving the solutions of specific ethical and/or political problems” would yield no solution to the problem under consideration, and this might even be a vain hope.

At this point, suppose that the response to the question “what is the relation between ethics and politics?” ultimately depends on the illumination of much more basic questions like “who actually are we?” Similar questions can be labeled as perennial problems of philosophy. It appears that we will always be confronted with such puzzles when we try to disentangle any specific riddle regarding ethical and political affairs in our life. It appears that there always remains unclear whether the explanations should be given in terms of biology or of pure rationality. Our real nature (if there is one) is the most ticklish question to tackle. Regardless of this entanglement, one can still observe oneself, define human nature and disclose its most basic laws. In other words, the relation between ethics and politics, whether they refer to the same sort of activities or are remarkably distinct from each other in many aspects, can also be a tiny detail of a much more enormous problem concerning the definition of human nature.

Once followed, this route converges Kant with Hobbes. It is by all means evident that there always remains a considerable distance between their practical philosophies. To say the least, their various presumptions about the human nature and about the foundations of moral and political philosophy stem from dissimilar points of view. Needless to say, the differences between Kantian and Hobbesian ways of inquiry are not solely limited to conflicting presumptions; they also have discrete methods of inquiry for ethics and/or politics. Moreover, regarding their practical philosophy, Kant and Hobbes have often been depicted as well-known enemies in most text books of philosophy and there seems at least a half-truth in this general view. For instance, a Kantian might insist on the point that our

actions and decisions in the actual world should conform to the moral principles derived from the “pure practical reason” (or reason in general). Against this view, a Hobbesian would argue that we cannot and should not pay any respect to these divine laws allegedly derived from reason itself. Their imposition to the actual world, to the crude realm of political affairs, the guidance of the *categorical imperative* in our decisions and actions, would seem to Hobbesians as unrealistic.

My aim here is neither to compare and contrast the standpoints of Kant and Hobbes nor to engage in the disputes regarding the distinction between “is” and “ought.” What I would rather like to underline here is some salient implications of the following common denominator behind their proposals: the necessary and sufficient precondition of attaining knowledge about the relation between ethics and politics is either to comprehend the laws of human nature or the laws of reason itself. This common ground has not been shared by merely Kant and Hobbes. Its roots can be traced back to Spinoza’s *Ethics* or to Plato’s *Republic*.

The first step in both philosophers’ methods of inquiry is to lay down the laws first, although their content is obviously disparate. The second step is to derive the principles, which are or should be the guide to our actions. According to these philosophers, therefore, we have to first unearth and second espousing either the laws of reason or the “civilized” laws of our nature for the sake of preserving our own security.

Let us consider further that Hobbes tried to explain our bare nature by revealing these laws, the essence of which he assumed to resemble elementary propositions of geometry. The central aim of Hobbes’ investigation is to deduce, by means of logic and reason, the laws of human interactions, according to which society should be governed. His governing principle was to reach axioms of science of politics and society. Within his mechanistic world-view, he primarily strived to examine the underlying laws behind the bodily motions and social interactions of

human beings.³³ Galileo is the one whose pursuit was to uncover the laws governing the motions of inanimate beings. Similarly, Hobbes perceived himself as the Galileo of politics whose aspiration was to detect the most principal source of natural forces directing human behavior. That is to say, Hobbes was actually seeking irreducible characteristics of human interactions by presuming human beings as machines driven by natural forces which operate in the social world. For him, sensations and emotions are just motions in their essence, like the physical motions in the universe.

As a matter of fact, the motivation behind Hobbes' standpoint was already shared by most of the seventeenth century scientists and philosophers. Natural right theorists of the seventeenth century like Hugo Grotius, John Locke or Utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill also attempted to extend the principles of Galilean science to the study of morality and politics, though their basic presumptions about human nature and their method of inquiry were radically different from each other in many respects.³⁴ Kant was an admirer of this trend in the Newtonian universe. As Seyla Benhabib points out, "[u]nder the spell of the exaggerated promises of Newtonian science, Kant disregards all distinction between natural, human and the social sciences, and simply takes it for granted that a natural, Newtonian science of human action is possible."³⁵ Thus, what characterizes the primary stream of modern political philosophy is discovering the ultimate laws that govern or should govern all kinds of human actions and decisions in the social realm. Broadly speaking, Kant's and Hobbes' treatises on the nature of morality and politics appear to be variant efforts aimed at realizing the same dream: the physics of society or mathematics of morality can, in this or that way, be formulated.

³³ For a clear argument on how and why Hobbes is a methodological mechanist, see David P. Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan: The Moral and Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), especially 1-26.

³⁴ A detailed discussion concerning this claim, see Shirley Robin Letwin *The Pursuit of Certainty: David Hume, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Beatrice Webb* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

³⁵ Seyla Benhabib, "Judgment on the Moral Foundations of Politics in Arendt's Thought," 38.

Here we encounter the same serious epistemological puzzle: is it really possible to identify ourselves and reveal the permanent laws inherent to our nature? If this is possible, is there a guarantee that we can resolve every single problem regarding ethics and politics by directly appealing to these laws? These challenges are quite vexing and always deserve a rigorous philosophical interrogation. But there seems to be a practical way out of this alleged dilemma. This is the Aristotelian solution: in order to investigate the relations between human beings as they are and would possibly be, we are not obliged to take anchor from the putative existence of the unconditional principles similar to mathematical or the physical laws. It could be losing time to try to derive the ultimate principles regarding ethics and/or politics in a deductive manner either from the laws of human nature like Hobbes or from the “pure practical reason” like Kant. In short, what differentiates Kantian or a Hobbesian inquiry from the Aristotelian is their common presumption that there is a certain human nature, which they derive by observing an “abstract individual.”

2.2.1. Aristotle’s Challenge: From Abstract Metaphysical to the Concrete Social Individual

Evaluating a human being as an “abstract individual” means that there are some ontological properties, certain characteristics of human beings, which do not change over time and in altered circumstances. This conception, in other words, implicitly or explicitly refers to the putative existence of basic set of intrinsic characteristics of human behavior or of morality which do not change in time and place. It finds its root on the view that human beings are always governed by a set of objective laws. J. S. Mill typically exemplifies this viewpoint when he states that “all phenomena of society are phenomena of human nature, generated by the action outward circumstances upon masses of human beings; and if therefore, *the phenomena of human thought, feeling and action, are subject to fixed laws*, the phenomena of society cannot but conform to fixed laws”³⁶ (emphasis mine).

³⁶ John S. Mill, *A System of Logic* in *Collected Works, Vol. VIII* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1974), 835.

The assumed inevitability of war is one of the typical examples used to demonstrate an unchanging property of human beings, such as being selfish, and has usually been treated as the fundamental excuse behind the justification of a war. For instance, to explain inevitability of wars, Waltz proposes that “the focus of important causes of war is to be found in the nature and behavior of man. Wars result from selfishness, from misdirected aggressive impulses, from stupidity.”³⁷ In one sense, this assertion entails that war is and will always be imperious due to the biological necessity. Against this position, on the other hand, it is possible to argue that “the concept of human nature, which assumes so much uniformity of human behavior in time and place, is hopelessly inadequate in explaining why some people are so peaceful and others so war prone to it or why the same people are peaceful and violent at particular times under unlike situations.”³⁸ That is to say, justification of war must rest on the assumption that human beings are identical. An individual has its own permanent significative features and society is born when these identical individuals come together. For instance, in the Hobbesian perspective, man always avoids death; he ontologically seeks only his own interests, but not those of others. He is always liable to preserve his own security, etc.

One can, however, raise the objection that this or that set of the properties ontologically attributed to a certain conception of individual are not as empirically obvious as claimed. Simple observation would not be sufficient to perceive, for example, man’s natural tendency to engage in a war against every man as Hobbes depicts. If so, it would then be unnecessary even to talk about moral ideals, which would be beyond what is actually going on in social reality. On the other hand, as in Kant’s challenge, it seems possible to hold that investigating only the content of “pure practical reason” enlightens the *a priori* ground of the human nature, which provides the real morality for all of us. Thus,

³⁷ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 16.

³⁸ Richard A. Falk and Samuel S. Kim (eds), *The War System: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), 78.

there would be no need for looking at the empirical world, to our everyday life to know what we ought to do. Both approaches, notwithstanding, still hinge on an abstract description of what the human being is.

The “state of nature” can basically be apprehended as a period in history, an epoch in the human development when all people had lived without obeying any law or without having any government. Locke argues that “we must consider what State all Men are naturally in, and that is, a *State of perfect Freedom* to order their Actions, and dispose of their Possessions, and Persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the Law of Nature, without asking leave, or depending upon the Will of any other man.”³⁹ Furthermore, “state of nature” is also state of equality “wherein all the Power and Jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another; ... unless the Lord and Master of them all, should by any manifest Declaration of his Will set one above another, ...”⁴⁰ Unlike Locke, it is apparent that when Hobbes defined the condition of man in the state of nature as a condition of “Warre of every one against every one” [*status hominum est bellum omnium in omnes*] instead of the peaceful coexistence of human beings in which “we find three principall causes of quarrell. First Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory;”⁴¹ he refers to the same hypothetical state, which he had already supposed to be “natural.” This description of the state of nature, as can be easily seen from the quotations above, attributes a set of ontological properties to human beings. Within this context, if we consider Rousseau’s romantic description of “state of nature” as a peaceful state of human existence, which had been corrupted by the emergence and development of civilization, we can conclude that the conception of “state of nature” has the appearance of somehow being related to “ought” rather than “is.” There seems to be a normative account while it pretends to be a descriptive one. First of all, epistemologically speaking, we have no opportunity to directly observe human beings living in the

³⁹ John Locke, “The Second Treatise of Government,” in *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 269.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 88, 91 and 96.

state of nature; it is rather an inference from our assumptions about the past and about the present state of the human society. This conception rests on a hypothesis, a model utilized for explaining the present state of social relations in general. What Hobbes, for instance, talks about “is not the *material* bodies of individuals, but the mental states of them, e.g. interests, thoughts, preferences, etc. –the materiality of these concepts are still arguable, but in another way; they are explicable in terms of materiality, but this does not mean that they are empirical materials.”⁴²

These mental states ontologically attributed to one individual cannot merely be conceived as material and substantial properties which are plain to the eye. Further, they cannot be regarded as independent from the existence of other individuals, or more precisely, from history and society. This is the common ontological failure Hobbes and Kant share. Both philosophers (and other social contract theorists) ontologically separated the individual from the society, attributed this or that set of properties to a single individual, and made him or her live in a society. This is the abstract conception of individual, in Roger Scruton’s words:

When people come together in society a new entity is born out of their mutual agreements. And this entity changes the nature of the individuals who compose it. People outside society are different kind of thing from people who have associated. So how can we say that society is composed of non-social individuals? We have a new, organic whole which cannot be reduced to cells that compose it, since their nature depends upon their participation in this whole.⁴³

Seen from Aristotle’s perspective, there are no essentially self-seeking, ontologically distinct (or isolated) individuals who come together by social contracts to give birth to a community as Locke or Hobbes argued. It is impossible to observe an autonomous individual exempt from all social relations

⁴² Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979), 34-35.

⁴³ Roger Scruton, *Modern Philosophy: A Survey* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995), 27.

who could also be endowed with “pure practical reason.” What was discussed up to here is just a brief outline of the major ontological presumption of “methodological individualism.”⁴⁴ An Aristotelian way of inquiry radically deviates from the aforementioned apprehensions. In the Aristotelian approach, there is no *ontologically autarchic* individual. Instead, we always find ourselves as conditioned by and dissolved in the ensemble of social relations. That is the very reason why MacIntyre suggests that an Aristotelian exploration ought to grapple with questions like “of what story or stories do I find myself a part?” instead of the question “who really am I?” In his own words:

I am someone’s son or daughter, someone else’s cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or possession; I belong to this or that clan, that tribe, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be the good one who inhabits these roles. As such I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and obligations.⁴⁵

Thus, Aristotle did not take for granted an abstract conception of individual in its modern sense: “unlike moderns, [Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau] Aristotle ... does not use nature to establish the pre-condition and necessary conditions of politics. He treats human nature, instead, as both a measure of polity and as itself a question for politics.”⁴⁶ The individual as such in Aristotle’s conception is not, then, a given entity having a definite nature. He rather “seeks a richer vision of human experience by taking our own commitments seriously and inquiring into what they imply about the human condition.”⁴⁷ The Aristotelian project, therefore, finds its ground on the following starting point: as we gain experience,

⁴⁴ For a detailed support of the argument presented above see: Terece Ball, “Two Concepts of Coercion,” *Theory and Society*, 5 (1978), 97-112 and Lewis P. Hinchman, “The Origins of Human Rights: A Hegelian Perspective,” *Western Political Quarterly*, 34:1 (1984), 7-31.

⁴⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 220.

⁴⁶ Jill Frank, *Democracy of Distinction*, 19. Fred D. Miller also demonstrates how Aristotle’s conception of natural rights differs from those of Hobbes and Locke. See his *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle’s Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), especially 117-123.

⁴⁷ Thomas W. Smith, *Revaluating Ethics: Aristotle’s Dialectical Pedagogy*, (New York: SUNY, 2000), 19.

and attain knowledge about our moral psychology, our history, biological nature and about politician constitutions, we can have further opportunities to think and act in accordance with the knowledge of *politike*.⁴⁸

2.2.2. *Politike* as Inexact Practical Science

Aristotle, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, argues for the supremacy of *politike* over all other theoretical sciences and other practical disciplines (*NE* 1094a26-1094b6). Aristotle's conception of *politike* as the most authoritative science is the one of the most striking indications of how he thinks practically rather than theoretically in his *Ethics* and *Politics*. When Aristotle hierarchically arranges types of knowledge in accordance with hierarchy of goods (1094a1-1094a26), and when he places *politike* at the apex, he appeals neither to epistemological nor to metaphysical criteria in the modern sense. He orders various kinds of knowledge with respect to practical concerns in a *polis*. This is a kind of taxonomy that is based on one single criterion, which is the value of knowledge in our lives.

Aristotle exposes three substantial reasons in defining *politike* as the most authoritative and cardinal science. First, he argues that *politike* rules and should administrate all other sciences, simply because it prescribes which sciences should be learned in a *polis*, by whom and to what extent (1094a29-1094b1). Mathematics, for instance, is the most exact theoretical science, though mathematics cannot decide whether it is better for every citizen to learn geometry or not. Medicine is definitely very beneficial and useful for all, but this does not

⁴⁸*Politike*, for Aristotle, is *he peri ta anthropeia philosophia*, which can be translated as “the philosophy of human affairs.” Its range is much broader than what we understand from the term “political science.” It covers the whole subjects of psychology, anthropology, economics, history, sociology, ethics, law and political science in our modern conception. All these are separate disciplines for us, subject matters of which are remarkably different from each other. But for Aristotle *politike* is the only discipline, an artful and practical science that encompasses all questions related with these modern academic disciplines. In the texts of Aristotle, in particular cases, it might also mean “practical philosophy” or “art of politics.” There is a danger that its meaning in Aristotle's nomenclature can be confused with our contemporary understanding of the terms like “political science.” That is why I prefer not to use English “political science.” Cf. John R. Wallach, “Contemporary Aristotelianism,” 616-618.

mean that every citizen should be trained as a doctor. It is also necessary to have recourse to *politike* when one seeks answer to questions like “how many professional mathematicians, engineers, soldiers and doctors should be accommodated in a *polis*?” It is *politike* that should adjudicate to what extent and why sciences like mathematics and medicine are useful for us, not *vice versa*. There is no further need to emphasize the vital importance of medicine. Mathematics might supply the most exact and structural knowledge that we could ever reach, however, this does not mean that the mathematical method ought to be pursued in order to assess its own usefulness for achieving the goal of living happily in a *polis*. Mathematics cannot mathematically prove its own usefulness. Exactitude belongs to the sphere of theoretical sciences, which aspire to ascertain the unconditional truth for its own sake. But, the significance of truth, the ways of its appropriation and its essential function in our life are all the subject matters of *politike*. If the life in a *polis* is fundamentally organized through politics and if we are “political animals,” then *politike* must be the master of all practical concerns, unlike mathematics, logic or physics.

Secondly, seen from Aristotelian point of view, reversing the hierarchical order of *politike* and other theoretical or practical disciplines means that knowledge partial in its scope is blindly put over a much more comprehensive one. That is why all practical disciplines like medicine or the art of commandship ought to be subordinated to *politike* (1094b2-3). In other words, the scope of *politike* is already much broader than all other sciences and disciplines. Reversing their positions in the frame that Aristotle has drawn would be both against Aristotle’s teleological orderliness and would also bring about putting an impediment to accomplish the most honorable purpose of life, namely *eudamonia* (1097a25-1097b27). For example, if the subordination of *politike* to a practical discipline such as generalship is accepted by people, then it can immediately lead us to justify the existence of an unjust social system, e.g. dictatorship in which most of the citizens do not have a chance to be happy as could be inferred from the *Politics*. The purpose of *politike* is rather to embrace and to govern all practical disciplines and theoretical sciences in accordance with Aristotle’s teleology.

Third, *politike* makes use of all types of knowledge obtained from all of the other sciences concerned with action and puts them into practice by laying down rules and laws. This again shows us what is right and what is wrong to do (1094b4-5). In today's terminology, the task of *politike* is to collect the relevant data from psychology, anthropology, sociology, history, law, biology, etc. in order to adjust the required regulations properly and execute them within a society. Thus, *politike* is the discipline that appeals to all sorts of knowledge for specific purposes.

Aristotle, on these grounds, affirms that *politike* is and ought to be superior to all other sciences (1094b6). *Politike*, in short, aims to achieve the highest good of human being by employing all sciences. Let us note that when Aristotle speaks of the mastery of the *politike* over all other sciences, he does not appeal to the internal characteristics of knowledge, such as consistency or certainty. Similar to the practices in a society, for Aristotle, sciences are and must be ordered in accordance with the existing hierarchy of goods, and here *politike* occupies the highest place. This is also fulfillment of the human function (*ergon*) (1097b25), being happy and doing good, not to define what the virtue, happiness or the good in itself is (1097b11, 1095a4-6, 1103b26-30, 1179b1-4).

It is generally accepted that the level of exactness should be regarded as the most basic criterion employed for such a hierarchical taxonomy of knowledge types. This is the reason why, from an epistemological point of view, mathematics and logic have characteristically been placed at the top in the modern versions of hierarchical ranking of sciences. As the natural sciences and mathematics have been more and more prosperous, their methods have come to be taken as a model for all other sorts of inquiries. The practical successes of natural sciences and mathematics had been so impressive that Aristotle's conception of *politike* as an inexact practical science was substituted by the "*Political Arithmetick*" or "*Positive Philosophy*." One of the outstanding currents in modern political theories, as exemplified in both Hobbes and Kant's approaches, can be identified

with the conscious or unconscious inclination towards imitating the method of natural sciences or of mathematics in practical philosophy. This tendency also brought about a proclivity towards equating the ultimate goals of the theoretical sciences with practical ones. Let us note that whatever their differences, Kantian or Hobbesian points of view still aim at enacting the following premise: practical philosophy can and should be as certain as mathematics, logic or physics in principle. Thus, an inquiry on the nature of morality should satisfy standards similar to those of mathematics and logic. This is, one might say, one of the most crucial differences that distinguish Aristotelian *politike* from the modern engagement to the quest for certainty in “political science” or “ethics.” Hence *politike* is placed at the bottom in the modern hierarchical ranking of sciences. Then, there could hardly be a chance for *politike* to be elevated to the rank at commander of sciences under the domination of the new scientific world view. Salkever says the following:

[a] misleading approach to Aristotle is to read him as if he were attempting to establish some sort of Archimedean point, an absolute perspective from which the accuracy of ethical and political choices could be guaranteed by reference to some rule or system of rules. This kind of reading gets its plausibility from the way it reflects modern expectations about philosophy. We assume Aristotle is a ‘philosopher,’ and we expect philosophers to be in the business of replacing practical doubt with theoretical certainty - an expectation that seems adequately met by, say, Hobbes, Kant and J.S. Mill.⁴⁹

We should here note again that when Aristotle sorts various kinds of sciences and practical disciplines, he does not try to extend his method developed in the *Metaphysics* into *politike*. Theoretical sciences have their own aim and principles:

But in each science the principles which are peculiar are most numerous. Consequently it is the business of experience to give principles which belong to each subject. I mean for example that astronomical experience supplies the principles of astronomical

⁴⁹ Stephen Salkever, *Finding the Mean: Theory and Practice in Aristotle's Political Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 4.

science: for once the phenomena were adequately apprehended; the demonstrations of astronomy were discovered (*Post. An.* 46a17-19).⁵⁰

Yet, practical sciences have practical purposes. It is worth underlining the point that Aristotle's distinction between theory and practice does not resemble our modern understanding. In Aristotle's terminology, the distinction between theory and practice "is not a distinction between the general and the particular but between knowing what is right and wrong on the one hand, and actually doing the right and avoiding the wrong on the other. The modern distinction passes over Aristotle's distinction and ignores his practical concern."⁵¹ In one sense, practical sciences are essentially action-oriented and depend on the improvement of experience. Principles by themselves have no meaning in *politike*. The real difficulty is always to find out how to substantiate them. Arriving at the right judgment without executing is meaningless. The definitive purpose of *politike*, for this reason, is the act itself, not contemplation. This contention rests on the assumption that knowing the general principles about right acts is something different from committing the act in a particular context. In Aristotle's view, abstracted from the agent who commits an action in a particular context, an act itself has no meaning. For Aristotle, the essential problem is not to ascertain a procedure that secures arriving at the right moral judgment; rather it concerns constitution of the character in a certain manner and the context within which this character behaves. Aristotle does not see moral principles as universal recipes that can be applied in every situation; rather he prefers to seek a way to be, for instance, trying to be a generous person who acts generously in a spontaneous manner instead of performing the right act by obeying some higher principles. This confirms that *politike* is essentially inexact and necessitates prudence (*phronesis*). As Simpson states, Aristotle's theory of virtue or his *Ethics* and *Politics* in general

⁵⁰ Translation of "Prior Analytic" and other works of Aristotle not related with his practical philosophy are from *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*. ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 Vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁵¹ Peter Simpson, "Contemporary Virtue Ethics and Aristotle," 505.

[d]oes not seem to be a moral theory at all, at least in the sense of moral theory that we standardly recognize. What we want from a moral theory is some over-all account of moral goodness and badness which we can then use to show why this or that particular act is right or wrong. So the Kantian explains the right and wrong in terms of agreement with the categorical imperative, and the utilitarian in terms of promotion of the general welfare. Aristotle indeed has a general account of virtue, that it is a mean between two extremes, and so on. This general account, however, cannot be used to show that something is an act of virtue or something else an act of vice. The truth about such particulars is not shown by theory; it is perceived by prudence.⁵²

Hence, from the Aristotelian perspective, trying to approximate the level of certainty in mathematical knowledge in *politike* would be imprudence. Then, the first and the last task we should undertake in Aristotle's doctrine are to become skilled at how to think and act prudently.

2.2.2.1. Prudence as a Remedy for the Inevitable Inexactness of *Politike*

According to Aristotle, one should first of all be aware of the fact that it is impossible to reach the same level of exactness in *politike* as the one attained by mathematical proofs. This is one of the salient motives behind Aristotle's criticisms when concerning the incompatibility of Plato's theory of forms with *politike*. Since there is no single universal idea of the good for all sciences (theoretical and practical), the search for it is futile (*NE* 109615-35). Further, even if one could reach a universal vision that encompasses all practical sciences, this would be irrelevant to action and useless for the purposes of *politike* (1096b30-1097a15).

Thus, seen from the Aristotelian point of view, Plato goes to an extreme when grounding his argument for the ideal state on axioms about the good similar to those of geometry. Plato was wrong, according to Aristotle, in following a mathematical method for the purpose of providing permanent solutions to the political problems of a *polis*, and in assuming the preexistence of some universal

⁵² Ibid., 512.

laws pertaining to all kinds of social practices. The Aristotelian way of inquiry does not ground ethics on such unshakable foundations. Its goal is not to characterize what morality is or is to find out indubitable facts about human nature.

Secondly, it should not be considered a mere coincidence that *Nicomachean Ethics* begins and ends with the theme of happiness (*eudaimonia*). For Aristotle, activities in political life, in general, may properly be defined as the pursuit of happiness, which is the highest good in human life. Since a life with happiness is that which is most complete, self-sufficient and choiceworthy (*hairetos*); happiness is and ought to be the primary life-goal governing all of our other (secondary) goals in life. Hence Aristotle seems to think that the task assigned to *politike* is to strive at attaining a kind of knowledge, which is by definition, or necessarily useful for happiness. Furthermore, Aristotle argues that genuine ethical arguments should “be useful for the conduct of life,” “harmonize with facts of human life ... and so encourage those who comprehend them to live by them” (1172b5-8).⁵³

However, it would then be very difficult for us to uncover one single way for being happy. The search for happiness is a long and a resolute journey; and we should first be trained to be very careful in our steps. At the opening of *NE*, Aristotle emphasizes the importance of prudence in the search for truth in *politike*:

Our discussion will be adequate if its degree of clarity fits the subject-matter; for we should not seek the same degree of exactness in all sorts of arguments alike, any more than in the products of different crafts. Moreover, what is fine and what is just, the topics of inquiry in political science, differ and vary so much that they seem to rest on convention only, not on nature ... Since these are the sorts of things we argue from and about, it will be satisfactory if we can indicate the truth roughly and in outline; since [that is to say] we argue from and

⁵³ All quotations from *Nicomachean Ethics* is from the following translation: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terece Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985).

about what holds good usually [but not universally], it will be satisfactory if we can draw conclusions of the same sort (1094b3-23).

This is evidently not an invitation to the pursuit of certainty. Aristotle here suggests that his objective is to discover “what holds good usually.” A student of *politike*, thus, should not expect to attain exact knowledge at the end of investigation. This is not his only remark; throughout *NE*, Aristotle continually to insists on the essential inexactness of *politike*:

Each of our claims, then, ought to be accepted in the same way [as claiming to hold good usually], since the educated person seeks exactness in each area to the extent that the nature of subject allows; for apparently it is just as mistaken to demand demonstrations from a rhetorician as to accept [merely] persuasive argument from a mathematician, each person judges well what he knows, and is a good judge about that; the judge in a particular area is the person educated in that area, and the unconditionally good judge is the person educated in every area (1094b23-1095a1).

What is indispensable for a student of *politike* is to be aware of the peculiar nature of the subject matter being investigated. While theoretical sciences are concerned with the nature of unchanging beings, *politike* deals with the sources and the products of human activity. Then, the nature of questioning life itself or illuminating questions like “how can we be happy?” should not be confused with the aim and subject-matter of scientific investigations:

What science is evident from the following, if we must speak exactly and not be guided by [mere] similarities. For we all suppose that what we know scientifically does not even admit of being otherwise; and whenever what admits of being otherwise escapes observation, we do not notice whether it is or it is not, [and hence we do not know about it]. Hence what is known scientifically is by necessity. Hence it is eternal; for the things that are by unconditional necessity are all eternal, and eternal things are ingenerable and indestructible (1139b19-24).

In contrast to theoretical sciences, then, *politike* is concerned with what is up to us, that is, what can be otherwise, not with necessities and essentially

unchangeables. It is *de facto* associated with the deliberation which “[c]oncerns what is usually [one way rather than another], where the outcome is unclear and the right way to act is undefined. And we enlist partners in deliberation on large issues when we distrust our own ability to discern [the right answer]” (1112a8-11). In this sense, the subject matter of *politike* is always open to debate and further deliberation, for it is concerned with particular and contingent cases, namely human actions and interactions, which belong to the field of what is up to us, not necessity.

Studying *politike* is therefore not merely a matter of attaining the most accurate knowledge that we can ever reach. The relations between numbers or physical objects cannot be treated in the same way with the relations between human beings:

[W]e must also remember our previous remarks, so that we do not look for the same degree of exactness in all areas, but the degree that fits the subject-matter in each area and is proper to investigation. For the carpenter’s and the geometer’s inquiries about the right angle are different also; the carpenter is confined to the right angle’s usefulness for his work, whereas the geometer’s concern what, or what sort of thing, the right angle is, since he studies the truth. We must do the same, then, in other areas too, [seeking the proper degree of exactness], so that digressions do not overwhelm our main task (*NE* 1098a27-35).

Elsewhere, Aristotle underlines the same point again:

But let us take it as agreed in advance that every account of the actions we must do has to be stated in outline, not exactly. As we also said at the start, the type of accounts we demand should reflect the subject-matter; and questions about actions and expediency, like questions about health, have no fixed [invariable answers]. And when our general account is so inexact, the account of particular cases is all the more inexact. For these fall under no craft or profession, and the agents themselves must consider in each case what the opportune action is, as doctors and navigators do (1103b34-1104a9).

What can reliably be inferred from these passages is that applying the method of mathematical investigation in *politike* (like Plato) would most probably yield

results incompatible with its ultimate aim. An investigation regarding life has also an essential practical side and is in fact genuinely practical. On that account, all pursuits to attain accurate knowledge about what happiness is without ultimately striving at being happy seem to Aristotle to be nonsensical. For Aristotle, assuming the existence of a higher separate reality (like the world of *Ideas*), which governs or should control our actions, is not only a theoretically implausible assumption, but also practically futile. If one investigates life itself as it is and as it ought to be, then the subject matter of this study must both be the improvement of a single character, its acts, behaviors, and interactions among people living a *polis*, all of which are in the terrain of what is up to us, things that can be otherwise. Instead of these actions and interactions themselves, it would seem implausible for Aristotle to begin the investigation by suggesting the putative existence of some universal laws underlying every action of human beings. The *methodos*, the way of inquiry that ought to be followed in these incommensurable realms like mathematics and politics, should conform to their peculiar natures and characteristic aims. Sources of human actions and their results, the conventions and beliefs about them cannot be analyzed as if they were physical objects in front of us. From the very beginning, as students of *politike*, we find ourselves within a wide span of contradictory views about what is better for us, how we can achieve happiness and act in a right way in a particular context. It is not a coincidence that the starting point of Aristotle's inquiry concerns conventional beliefs on happiness. The first and the last lesson that should be derived from Aristotle is to learn not to stick to an idea without questioning it. Aristotle warned against thinking imprudently, and advised prudence in the research concerning *politike*. One of the most striking peculiarities of Aristotle's methodology regarding *politike*, one essential aspect of his argument for the elimination of false beliefs and unhealthy desires from our souls, is the medical dialectic.

2.2.3. *Politike* as Medical Dialectic

To repeat, the ultimate purpose of *NE* is at least in one sense to present the general knowledge of what virtue and vice are in the realm of what is “up to us.” Aristotle does not dictate us some general rules like “you should do X in the context of Y.” To do so would contradict the nature of *politike*. It is very difficult to recognize, in particular contexts, the best way to act. For instance, people might get angry at their close friends when they think that they are treated by them unjustly. Anger in certain situations can be a mere expression of excessive love, as exemplified in the sayings “cruel is the strife of brethren” and “they who love in excess also hate in excess” (*Pol.* 1328a10-17).⁵⁴ An action, then, might be provoked by anger, but the problem is not to assess what the anger is as such. A Kantian is prone to reject anger categorically for the reason that a right action should not originate from an emotion. From this perspective, motivation behind an ethical judgment ought to be a rational decision making procedure. In contrast, Aristotle does not assign a particular meaning to anger. He neither categorically confirms nor rejects it as such. Rather, he analyzes the context within which anger emerges. Anger is a feeling that might also stem from incontinence. In this case, anger seems to be associated with the immaturity of a character. But in another case, anger could emerge as a response to an apparent form of injustice. Moreover, becoming angry in particular instances can be inevitable and even an expression of justice (*NE* 1135b25-30). In some other situations, to settle on “the way we should be angry, with whom, about what, for how long” would not be easy (1109b 14-18).

The problem is, thus, to find out the right means, the most proper way to behave in certain circumstances. This is, for Aristotle, a puzzle that cannot be solved in a purely theoretical way. Aristotle deals with this problem by assigning himself the task of finding out the right means for the virtue of prudence. This virtue can be

⁵⁴ All citations regarding Aristotle’s *Politics* are taken from the following translations: *Politics: Books I and II*, trans. Trevor J. Saunders (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); *Politics: Books III and IV*, trans. Richard Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); *Politics: Books V and VI*, trans. David Keyt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); *Politics: Books VII and VIII*, trans. Richard Kraut (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

defined as a kind of eye that “operates in the here and now, for it decides what is the virtuous thing to do here and now; and judging the here and now is the work of perception ... In other words, prudence does not *reason* about virtue, it directly *intuits* it.”⁵⁵ This is why only students who have an inclination to be prudent can learn *politike*; it is by means that he improves his capability of being prudent and acting prudently. Openness to develop one’s own character in the manner of prudence is thus both a precondition and an ultimate aim for the student who wants to be trained in *politike*, and only he can benefit from this knowledge.⁵⁶ This is associated with experience. But, learning to reason in mathematics, and learning how to respond to the peculiarities of the contexts in which we act are remarkably different from each other. Cleverness would be sufficient for learning theoretical sciences, in which young people can easily be successful:

[To understand the difficulty and importance of experience] we might consider why a boy can become accomplished in mathematics, but not in wisdom or natural science. Surely it is because mathematical objects are reached through abstraction, whereas the origins in these other cases are reached from experience. Young people, then, [lacking experience], have no real conviction in these other sciences, but only say the words, whereas the nature of mathematical objects is clear to them (1142a 16-21).

Here, for Aristotle, we should note that being experienced or mature does not solely depend on the age, but mainly refers to maturity of character (1095a6-7). Nonetheless, young people, who are generally inclined to give up anything that is not pleasant easily (*Pol.* 1340b15-16) are prone to be driven by their sensuous pursuits, not benefiting from *politike* (*NE* 1095a8-11).

Aristotle repeatedly emphasizes how important it is to eliminate false beliefs, prejudicial inclinations and dispositions from the constitution of a character. The variety of ways of life, what people generally do and why, are the chief problems

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 510.

⁵⁶ For a detailed analysis of Aristotle conception of virtue, see Richard Bodéüs, *The Political Dimensions of Aristotle’s Ethics*, trans. Jan Edward Garrett (New York: SUNY, 1993), especially 27-38.

that wait be resolved by finding out what could be better for us to do and to be. At this stage, one must not start with principles taken for granted in political inquiry. A mathematician can base his inquiry on self-evident axioms. A student of *politike*, in contrast, should always be ready to face puzzles and obscurities throughout his investigation. There is no a ready solution to a problem regarding what is better for us. Therefore, the outstanding task of a student of *politike* is (i) first, “to set out the appearances” [i.e., setting out what appears to people as right]; (ii) second, “to go through the puzzles [i.e., exposing the appearances to the test of reason for consistency and compatibility with the circumstances and requirements of human life]; (iii) to leave behind prejudices and take the rationally tested beliefs as basis for further investigation in political inquiry (1145b3-9).

That is to say, Aristotle’s method of inquiry aims discovering the origins (*archai*) of human affairs by observing the very practice (*praxis*) embedded in a certain web of social relations and by critically evaluating the common-beliefs (*endoxa*) adopted by the majority of people. The paramount task of the Aristotelian inquiry is to assess significant philosophical views so as to teach live in a certain way than another. This inquiry, to repeat, should make use of the dialectical method by which one would perhaps arrive at general principles.⁵⁷ At the end of the research, we can have an opportunity to formulate these principles that are correct usually, but not unconditionally. Furthermore, what is more important than formulating these principles is to be trained in how to be an excellent person:

who judges each sort of thing correctly and each case what is true appears to him. For each state [of character] has its own special [view of] what is fine and pleasant, and presumably the excellent person is far superior because he sees what is true in each case, being a sort of standard and measure of what is fine and pleasant” (1113a30-35).⁵⁸

⁵⁷ For a detailed exposition of this argument, see Susan K. Allard-Nelson, *An Aristotelian Approach to Ethical Theory: The Norms of Virtue* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2004).

⁵⁸ Cf. *NE* 1176a16-20.

This is a very important point that requires to be emphasized: modern readers who become accustomed to a Hobbesian or a Kantian methodology in searching for unconditional laws of morality or of politics should not expect to give a definite demonstration (*apodeixis*) of the Aristotelian dialectical inquiry.⁵⁹ It is not a mere analogy that while Aristotle contrasts ethical inquiry with mathematics, he often resembles it to medicine. Along with scholars who conceive this “medical analogy”⁶⁰ as a key to comprehend Aristotle’s methodology, I think that this analogy really explicates the spirit of the Aristotelian way of inquiry in a lucid manner. If *politike* is a practical and an inexact science and if its primary goal is improvement of character in the manner of prudence, the medical analogy makes it clear that Aristotle’s conception of *politike* is both context-sensitive and non-relativistic.

Let us note that there is no requirement for a mathematician to encounter a concrete case. For a physician, however, facing a tangible case, such as a disease, is inevitable. The task of the physician is both to grasp the general principles of medical science and to improve his medical experience. In this sense, a doctor’s responsibility is not only to acquire theoretical knowledge of medicine, but also to be involved in the improvement of practicing it. Unlike mathematics, both medical and ethical knowledge have a practical goal, which is curing diseases. While medical treatment is the remedy for the illness of the body, *logos* (understood as speech and/or argument) is the treatment for illnesses of the soul. The function of *logos* is, in other words, to cure the soul, namely the diseases stemming from our false thoughts and unhealthy desires. So as to become happy, one should enhance his practical wisdom by eliminating his false beliefs and by constantly curing diseases stemming from his unhealthy desires. This process

⁵⁹ Cf. *Top.* 100a27-30. For recent and lucid treatments about the dialectical nature of Aristotelian political inquiry, see also Thomas W. Smith, *Revaluating Ethics: Aristotle’s Dialectical Pedagogy* (New York: SUNY, 2000) and Jonathan Jacobs, *Aristotle’s Virtue: Nature, Knowledge and Human Good* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004), especially 26-34.

⁶⁰ For detailed analysis of this analogy, see Werner Jäger, “Aristotle’s Use of Medicine as Model of Method in his Ethics,” *Journal of Hellenistic Studies* 77 (1957), 54-61 and G.E.R. Lloyd, “The Role of Medical and Biological Analogies in Aristotle’s Ethics,” *Phronesis*, no.1 (1968), 68-83.

resembles how a physician gains his occupational experience. In short, both *politike* and medical science have theoretical (knowledge of general principles) and practical (experience of complex particular unique cases, having a practical goal, responsiveness to context, gaining experience, comparing several competing views to resolve a particular problem) dimensions.

Suppose that as a doctor, I prescribe a wrong medicine to a patient. There may be two reasons behind such an error: (i) the current knowledge of medical science might not have developed yet to cure this disease. The best way I can choose in this case is to trust my intuitions and experience. I may naturally do something wrong, and as in the case under consideration, there could be no other alternatives. (ii) I may not be experienced and/or educated enough to decide which medicine would be useful for curing this particular disease. Similarly, as someone who is confronted with a complicated situation, which requires giving an ethical judgment, if I deviate from the way of virtue and misjudge, this may stem from similar reasons: (i) current theoretical knowledge of ethics may not be sophisticated enough to cope with such a complexity. (2) I may not be experienced and/or educated enough to arrive at a proper ethical judgment when I am faced with such circumstances. Thus, very much like the medical science, improvement of ethical theory and experience are open-ended processes. By cultivating ethical theory alongside with gaining experience we can train ourselves in such a way as to immediately find the most virtuous way, even when we are encountered with complex situations.

The following seem to follow from the medical analogy: first of all, just like the medical science defines what health is and searches for the means for being healthy, ethical science or *politike* aims at attaining a clarified and articulated view of proper ethical life. Secondly, Nussbaum seems to be right when she argues that Aristotle was the first philosopher who has shown an explicit awareness to the fact that “while medical treatment is a form of *bia*, of external causal intervention, *argument* [on which ethical treatment based] is something

apparently gentler, more self-governed, more mutual.”⁶¹ Since the success of an ethical treatment depends on the adoption of the ethical ideal by the pupil, the “intellectual asymmetry” and the “authoritative and one-sided quality of *logoi*” on which medical treatment is based cannot be extended to ethical inquiry. Ethics is and should be “less one-sided, more ‘democratic’ than medicine: the benefits of its *logoi* require each person’s active intellectual engagement [on the sides of both the teacher and the pupil].”⁶² Thirdly, it is one of the basic tenets of Aristotelian ethics that ethical treatment should conform to ethical and political experiences (or “appearances”). If the diversification of these experiences across different places and times is taken into account, the Aristotelian ethical treatment should consider relativity of values in the realm of human affairs. Yet, this does not mean that the Aristotelian view rests on a relativistic ground; rather, it has a non-relativistic conception of “good/ethical human life,” which relies on an account of good human functioning.⁶³

Nussbaum suggests that Aristotelian “ethical treatment, like the medical treatment of the body, should give its patient a life she can swallow.”⁶⁴ That is, if the good human functioning is practicable and attainable for a patient, it should somehow be compatible with what appears good to him. Furthermore, one should always keep in mind that, for Aristotle, the truth in *politike* can be attained only through a careful examination and rational testing of human experiences. Indeed, similar to medicine, the practical commitment of ethics is to have a “fully adequate perception of the particular cases” and treating them “one by one in a flexible and attentive way.”⁶⁵ In line with this, general ethical principles must not be considered as clear-cut recipes directly applicable to all actual situations, but as

⁶¹ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 69.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 70.

⁶³ For the development of this argument, see Martha C. Nussbaum, “Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach” in *The Quality of Life*, eds. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amartya Sen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

⁶⁴ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*, 63.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

guidelines for recognizing what is actually there in order to determine what is the right thing to do in any particular context.

On the other hand, Aristotelian inquiry rather takes anchor from the following question: what makes a human being human, and not a god or a beast? This question is not merely anthropological. Following Nussbaum's interpretation, we may note that the principal subject matter of the Aristotelian ethical inquiry is commonly shared human experiences, namely "grounding experiences." Albeit they are remarkably various and deeply infused by cultural interpretation, grounding experiences common to all human beings are the basic references of the term virtue and cannot simply be reduced further into more basic sorts of experiences. There are plural meanings and various ways of dealing with grounding experiences, all of which are mediated by language, culture and society. Feeling pain, bodily appetite, having a sense of humor and play, etc. are as grounding experiences, irreducible. Accepting the following points is, however, not sufficient to support a kind of relativism in ethics: (i) there is no "innocent eye" receiving an uninterpreted given; even the sense-perception is definitely mediated by language and depends on social, historical, contextual features. (ii) All virtues are nominally defined and some of them are culture-bound and historically constructed. By focusing on the profound ties between the structure of grounding experiences and structure of discourses about them, the Aristotelian approach to ethics and politics does not try to discover an uninterpreted reality. This interpretation does not contradict Aristotelian non-relativism, on the contrary, it is fully compatible with the Aristotelian context-sensitive understanding of virtue. As a good navigational judgment should be sensitive to external conditions and is correct only in a local or relational sense, virtuous judgement and behavior should also be context-sensitive.

CHAPTER III

FOLLOWING THE SOCRATIC IDEAL: THE EMERGENCE OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ETHICS AND POLITICS

As the “father of philosophy” (*Nat. D.* I 34, 93)⁶⁶, Socrates has been a historically puzzling, and an extremely enigmatical figure for whose real doctrine it is almost impossible to make a reconstruction, even if there is one. Although most scholars assure us that he actually lived, there seems no concrete evidence of his existence. Among the *testimonia* regarding the life of Socrates, there is an abundance of conflicting sayings, anecdotes and stories. As a character in Plato’s dialogues, for instance, Socrates defends contradictory positions. This is in fact a part of the well-known “Socratic problem” in interpreting the philosophy of Plato: this is the question concerning whether the “historical Socrates” or Plato, in the name of Socrates speaks in the dialogues. One might evaluate these dialogues as reliable historical resources about the philosophy of Socrates, if, however, another testimony is taken into account, namely that of Diogenes Laertius’ *The Lives and the Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, one could have also a right to realistically propose that Plato exaggerated and even invented Socrates’ discourses: “[o]n hearing heard Plato read the *Lysis*, Socrates exclaimed, ‘O Heracles, what a number of lies this young man telling about me.’ For he has included in the dialogue much that Socrates never said (D.L. III. 35).⁶⁷ One of Aristotle’s testimonies casts a similar doubt on Plato’s Socrates: “[a]s Aristippus [replied] to Plato, when the latter said something rather dogmatic, as he thought: ‘but our companion,’ he said, ‘would have said nothing of the sort,’

⁶⁶ See Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Tusculian Disputations: On the Nature of the Gods, and on the Commonwealth*, trans. C. D. Yonge (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2005), 243. The other citations from Cicero are also taken from this translation.

⁶⁷ All citations from Diogenes Laertius are taken from *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers: Volume I*, trans. R. D. Hicks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972) and *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers: Volume II*, trans. R. D. Hicks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925).

meaning Socrates” (*Rhet.* 1398b).⁶⁸ The enigma about Socrates then brings us to the question: whom we should trust about Socrates, Plato, Aristophanes, Aristotle, Diogenes Laertius or Xenophon?⁶⁹

Similar problems about this issue can be multiplied and are hard to resolve. There seems here no need for grappling with details of the debates on the historical Socrates. What is rather important is how the mystical figure of Socrates, which is hereafter referred to as the “Socratic ideal,” became the main inspiration for Ancient schools of philosophy, most often entitled as “post-Socratic schools.” The Cynics, for instance, were influenced by the “Socratic ideal” through Antisthenes who was supposedly a pupil of Socrates (D.L. vi. 2). The Skeptics, through Euclides of Megara, the founder of Megaric school (D.L. ii.106-112) also followed the traces left by Socrates. The Stoics, through Cynics Antisthenes and then Diogenes who in advance heavily influenced the founder of Stoicism, Zeno, drew inspiration from the Socratic ideal. No doubt, Socrates in the eyes of Platonists was a guide for how to be a wise man, a *sophos*. Aristotelians have also been classified in the history of philosophy books as a Socratic school due to the master-pupil relation between Plato and Aristotle. Yet, this could not be considered as enough evidence to incorporate Aristotle to the followers of the Socratic ideal. Especially when the relationship between ethics and politics is considered, Aristotle’s ethical and political thought would rather be regarded as a radical deviation from the “Socratic ideal” in the era of post-Socratic schools. If his political philosophy is compared with other contemporary approaches, this would become plain to eye. The warrants behind this assertion will be seen as the argument proceeds, but now try to understand what the Socratic ideal is.

⁶⁸ The citations of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* are taken from the following translation: On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁶⁹ For an excellent review showing the major differences between Plato’s and Xenophon’s Socrates, see Louis André

Dorion, “Xenophon’s Socrates,” trans. Stephen Menn in *A Companion to Socrates*, ed. Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 93-109.

3.1. The Socratic Ideal in between Ethics and Politics

Diogenes Laertius narrates that Socrates started to philosophize about moral issues in the *agora* and to anyone who asked Socrates about which topics he philosophizes, he replied: “whatso’er is good or evil in a house” (D.L. 11. 21). Though couched in a criticism, Aristotle also reports that Socrates was a philosopher who had been solely interested in finding out the universals in moral issues, virtues of character, and not issues regarding nature (*Metaph.* 987b1-15, 1078b15-20). Cicero mentions Socrates as the first philosopher who invoked philosophy to summon it from heavens to earth, to cities, to houses. Before Socrates, the subject matter of philosophy was numbers, motions on the earth and in the heavens. Socrates is the first person who shifted the problems of philosophy to life itself and questioned what is good and bad for us (*Tusc.* V 4, 10).

Socrates, as a figure depicted in almost all “eyewitness” reports about him, was not only portrayed as a philosopher whose research interest is ethics or morality, but also as the first philosopher who wedded morality to philosophy; Pierre Hadot writes:

The real problem [for Socrates] is therefore not the problem of knowing this or that, but *being* in this or that way. 'I have no concern at all for what most people are concerned about: financial affairs, administration of property, appointments to generalship, and oratorical triumphs in public, magistrates, coalitions, political factions. I did not take this path ... but rather the one where I could do the most good to each one of you in particular, by persuading you to be less concerned with what you *have* than with what you *are*; so that you may make yourself as excellent and as rational as possible.' Socrates practiced this call to being not only by means of his interrogations and his irony, but above all by means of his way of being, by his way of life, and by his very being.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 29.

No doubt, Socrates as the embodiment of morality was a very influential figure during his lifetime. His dictum “the unexamined life is not worth living for men” (*Ap.* 38a)⁷¹ seemed to have repercussions in Athenian streets. On the one hand, Socrates was treated with great violence and beaten, pulled about, and laughed at and ridiculed by the multitude as he was arguing and discussing philosophy on the streets (*D.L.* 11. 21). In the eyes of Aristotle, he is a sarcastic character: “self-depreciators underestimate themselves in what they say, and appear to have more cultivated characters. For they seem to be avoiding bombast, not looking for profit, in what they say; and the qualities that win reputation are the ones that these people disavow, as Socrates also used to” (*NE* 1127b21-25). On the other hand, an Athenian band of youth followed Socrates and even desired to imitate him according to Aristophanes’ *The Clouds*. He even invented a word to call these young people: *esokraton*.⁷² His well-known trial and the testimonies given there seem to be sufficient to derive the conclusion that Athenians were divided into two main groups: the lovers and followers of Socrates on the one hand, and the people who dislike him to such an extent that they are his enemies, on the other. No matter, in the portrait of Socrates that emerges through a variety of sources, Socrates is not only a philosopher, but also an attractive moral ideal in the eyes of his pupils. Especially for the Cynics and Plato, the ideas and life of Socrates was a paradigm, an ideal that should be realized by anyone inspiring to be a wise man. He is rather a teacher of ethics and not of politics in the broad sense.

Nevertheless, there are conflicting testimonies regarding Socrates’ relation to politics. Socrates trains his pupils in politics (*Mem.* 4.3.1). He conceives of governing the state as a craft like medicine that can be learned from a teacher (4.2.2-7). These testimonies imply that Socrates engages in politics even if he

⁷¹ The citations from the *Apology* and the related dialogues are from the following source: Plato, *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*, trans. G. M. A. Grube, 2nd edition (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002).

⁷² In the play, Socrates is called as “man with no shoes” and makes his pupils to behave so. See Aristophanes, *Clouds*, trans. Alan H. Sommerstein (Oxford: Aris & Phillips Classical Texts, 2007), 719, 858-9.

radically criticizes politicians and the Athenian democracy. If so, how is it possible for Socrates, to take no part in political life but to give advices to young citizens about participation in politics? This question reminds one of Antiphon's question in *Memorabilia*: "Atiphon asked him [Socrates] how it was that he expected to make others politicians when he himself did not take part in politics, if indeed he was capable of doing so" (I. 6. 15).⁷³

Although Socrates' relation to politics is controversial, there seems to be no doubt that he is the first philosopher in Ancient Greece who radically problematized the moral realm as separated from ordinary political practices. Socrates is, in one sense, the inventor of morals as Hegel argues.⁷⁴ Moral norms or principles in his conception are beyond the current political sphere. This is why for Socrates there is a tenuous relation, a gap between ethics and politics. From one perspective, one might state that the Socratic questioning of morality brought about a new kind of politics:

Socrates' political practice amounts to a new kind of politics. Every individual has a rational soul, and so every individual can be awakened to become morally autonomous and to rule himself. Socrates devotes his life to a sustained attempt to waken his fellow citizens to his conception of the virtues of the soul, to a life devoted to reason and moral autonomy.⁷⁵

From another perspective, Socrates would be regarded as an influential figure who suggests the superiority of a wise way of living over the current political life:

Socrates reminds us that politics is not the unintelligent allegiance to parties, political agendas, flags, slogans, or anthems, through which shrewd manipulators enslave, deceive, and exploit the unthinking masses, who find their satisfaction and joy in following blindly those

⁷³ See Xenophon, *Conversations of Socrates*, trans. Hugh Tredennick and Robin Waterfield (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 98.

⁷⁴ See Paul R. Harrison, *The Disenchantment of Reason: The Problem of Socrates in Modernity* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 21-65.

⁷⁵ George Klosko, *The Development of Plato's Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 54.

who control society. For him, politics, if it is to have any value, must be animated by a rational concern for the welfare of humanity, not of this or that country, not of this or that race, not of this or that group, but of the whole human world. He insists that true ethics is not the study of ethical utterances and usages in which analytical experts, like ancient sophists, excel, but a way of life committed to moral convictions that make sense in the light of reason.⁷⁶

At first glance these interpretations might seem to be rival alternatives that preclude one another; however, they are more likely to be mutually reinforcing viewpoints. A radical critique of politics *qua* politics from a new moral standpoint might result in an alteration in the previous trajectory of politics. In this sense, this challenge is not beyond politics: it is rather a significant political phenomenon. At the same time, the Socratic ideal as a constant attempt to arrive at higher moral principles in one's own soul and actions might initiate a political protest against the commonly adapted way of life. Nevertheless, if the current political practices are perceived as ordinary affairs irrelevant to the purpose of pursuing this ideal, it is not surprising that the followers of the Socratic ideal are naturally prone to establish a gap between moral life and politics. Socrates would pronounce that being successful in the political life of the Athenian democracy and being a wise man are two unrelated objectives that should not be confused with each other. It could then be argued that there remains an inconsistency between being a passionate friend of truth and being a part of political activities in its general sense, as far as political life in the current order of the city demands of people to commit unjust acts or at least to pay lip service to injustice. If this is the case, the only way for a wise man to pursue would seem to be to take refuge in moral ideals and retreat from politics. This is the emergence of the split between morality and politics: wherever political activities are not arranged in accordance with higher moral principles, morality becomes the inner citadel of the *philosophos*. Ethical life ought not to be subordinated to the amoral habits of political practice. This is one of basic tenets of the Socratic ideal which had repercussions in Ancient schools of philosophy.

⁷⁶ Luis E. Navia, *Socrates: A Life Examined* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2007), 263-264.

3.2. Cynical Withdrawal from Politics

Cynicism today might be evaluated as a tiny detail in the history of philosophy if it is compared with the famous Ancient schools like those of Plato and Aristotle. Yet, it seems to be one of the most prominent philosophical schools of its time. One of indications showing its importance is that Diogenes Laertius himself devotes one whole book (VI) to Cynics in his *The Lives and the Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Laertius narrates many ironic encounters between Plato and Diogenes of Sinope (D.L. vi.24, 25, 26, 40, 41, 53, 54, 58, 67). In these verbal skirmishes between Diogenes and Plato, the two are always depicted as derogative characters who criticize and sometimes gibe at each other. While Diogenes is “A Socrates gone mad” (D.L. vi.54) who cannot grasp the *idea* of an ordinary object or the world of *ideas* in the eyes of Plato (D.L.vi.53), Diogenes directs his criticisms in the form of black humor against Plato’s doctrine and his character. Plato has, in the eyes of Diogenes, an itch for praise (D.L. vi.41), is also a greedy (D.L. vi.25), pompous and a chatty person (D.L. vi.26), whose lectures are wastes of time (D.L. vi.24). In book VI again, Diogenes is portrayed four times as a character who is superior in virtue to Alexander the Great (D.L. vi.32, 38, 44, 68). For instance, Laertius records a rumor: “Alexander is reported to have said, ‘Had I not been Alexander, I should have liked to be Diogenes’” (D.L. vi.32). Furthermore, Diogenes had not become a famous character of that time only because of his encounters with Plato and Alexander the Great; we are informed that there were polemics between Cynics and Epicurians.⁷⁷ There are also numerous direct and indirect references to Cynicism, such as that of Theophrastus’ in D.L.VI. 22 and that of Aristotle’s in *Pol.* 1253a26-9, respectively. Cynicism also had an unquestionable influence on Stoic ethics. To say the least, the founder of Stoicism, Zeno, was the pupil of Cynic Crates. Nevertheless, to what extent Stoicism was influenced by Cynicism has been a subject of controversy.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ For instance, in D.L x. 119, Epicurus’ injunction says that “the wise man should not cynicize.” Stoic Apollodorus, on the other hand, supported Cynicism by arguing that it is “a short cut to virtue” (D.L.vii.121).

⁷⁸ For a general account of the range of this dispute, see John Moles, “The Cynics” in *Greek and*

All these examples seem sufficient evidence to hold that Cynicism deserves to be attended to as one of the most prominent Socratic philosophical schools of its times. As an ancient historian of philosophy, Diogenes Laertius, after summarizing the ideas and lives of Cynics, also boldly underlines the point that Cynicism is not merely a state of life (*entasis*), as claimed by some other commentators of his times, but can more properly be appraised as a genuine

Roman Political Thought, ed. Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For a detailed exposition of the relation between Stoicism and early Cynics, see John M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 54-80. Compared to other schools, the Stoics' understanding of the relation between ethics and politics appears to be much more abstruse. I would like here to focus merely upon the close relation between Stoics' attitude towards being indifferent to politics and Cynical withdrawal. This mainly stems from the fact that there are remarkable philosophical dissimilarities between early, middle and later Stoics. For instance, although Stoics like Diogenes of Babylon, Panataetius, Cicero and Marcus Aurelius appear to be philosophers who were somehow related with and interested in politics in this or that way, the founder of Stoicism, Zeno (335-263 BC) and his disciple, Chrysippus (280-207 BC), seem to be more inclined to follow the Socratic ideal through the Cynics (D. L. vi. 103-4). Let us note that Stoic Apollodorus, as reported in D.L. vi.104, conceives of Cynicism as a shortcut to virtue. Likewise, Epictetus is likely to be the most representative exemplar of Stoicism. Adolf Bonhöffer holds that Epictetus' teaching is much closer to early Stoic doctrine and free from the eclecticism of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius. See his *The Ethics of the Stoic Epictetus*, trans. William O. Stephens. (New York: Peter Lang, 1996). On the one hand, we should note Epictetus as a prominent paradigm of Stoicism repeatedly mentions the heritage of Diogenes of Sinope in his *Discourses*. In his eyes, Cynic Diogenes is *sophos* like Socrates. [For Epictetus' allusions to Cynicism, see Malcolm Schofield, "Epictetus on Cynicism," in *The Philosophy of Epictetus*, eds. Theodore Scaltsas and Andrew S. Mason, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 71-86]. There are thus striking affinities between Stoics' and Cynics' political thought. On the other hand, unlike the Cynics' radical critique of taking part in politics, Stoics are likely to be indifferent to politics *qua* politics. To put it differently, engaging into or withdrawal from political affairs is not conceived as a moral problem in a Stoics' life. It seems to me that when the Stoic distinctions between wise men (*sophoi* or *spoudaioi*) and foolish or bad men (*phauloia*) or between *idiotes* (ignorant persons) and *prokopton* (the one on the road to be Stoic *sophos*) are taken into account, politics for a Stoic *prokopton* is nothing different from accepting the burden of involvement in everyday circumstances. Further, if another well-known Stoic distinction between the things that are in our power (*eph' hemin*) and not in our power (*ouk eph' hemin*) is concerned, politics belongs to the domain of "external things" (*ta ektos*) which we cannot determine. One may be a slave or an emperor, a politician or a shoemaker, no matter one's relationship between indifferent things (*ta adiaphora*) is. If politics is regarded as a part of indifferent things in the Stoic doctrine, it depends on the context that the Stoic sage can decide to take a part in politics or not. Under certain circumstances, the Stoic sage may hence participate in political life without hesitation. But there seems to be no compelling rule to do it: "Chrysippus, again, by writing in his *On rhetoric* that the wise man will make public speeches and engage in politics as if he regarded wealth, reputation and health as good, aggress that the Stoics' theories are not for public consumption and of no social relevance" Originally in Plutarch, *On Stoic self-contradictions* 1034b, but cited from A. A. Long & D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 423. Neither withdrawal nor participation in politics is a moral problem for Stoics. Long and Sedley argue as follows: "Adaptability to political realities was, in any case, an almost inevitable outcome for Stoicism. It was encouraged by the diffusion of Hellenistic culture, and theoretically justified by the divine providence of all that happens, the indifference of all non-moral values, and the emphasis on man's political nature." See *ibid.*, 436.

philosophical school (D.L. vi.103). In other words, although Cynicism was not a formal, pre-institutional philosophical school like *Akademia* or *Lykaion*, it cannot simply be labeled as a mere life-style. One can surely say that Cynicism, as an ancient school, had preferred merely to teach ethics as Ariston of Chios (D. L. vi. 103, cf. D.L. vi.160),⁷⁹ and had only developed ideas about how one should live, instead of studying mathematics, physics, logic, music, geometry and astronomy (D.L. vi.73, 103, 104). Since these theoretical disciplines are absolutely needless and useless for a Cynic, whose main goal is to train himself as a wise person by living in accordance with primitive nature, these subjects can and in fact ought to be ignored (D.L. vi. 73). For Cynics, studying these disciplines is time consuming activity and do not contribute the being a virtuous person. We could at this point maintain that Cynics as followers of Socrates⁸⁰ passionately chose to specialize solely on morality by arguing that “ethics is the first philosophy” and further that it should be the only one.

Although there is a controversy among scholars about whether Antisthenes or Diogenes was the founder of Cynicism, there would be no serious problem, I think, in presenting Antisthenes as a proto-Cynic who seems at least partially to reflect the spirit of Cynicism.⁸¹ Needless to say, in the history of philosophy, Diogenes of Sinope (c.412/403c.-c.324/321 BC) is the philosopher who has been known as the *kanon* of Cynicism. Crates (together with his wife, Hipparkhia) might in this frame be conceived as the most representative figure of Cynicism

⁷⁹ Ariston of Chios also refuses to study disciplines like physics and logic. The former simply overwhelms us and latter is irrelevant to our life. The only inquiry relevant to us is then ethics (D. L. vii.160).

⁸⁰ For a detailed examination of the relationship between philosophy of Socrates and Cynics, see Luis E. Navia, *Diogenes the Cynic: The War against the World* (New York: Humanity Books, 2005).

⁸¹ For general lines of the controversy, see Ragner Höistad, *Cynic Hero and Cynic King: Studies in the Cynic Conception of Man* (London: Methue, 1937) versus Farrand Sayre, *The Greek Cynics* (Baltimore, MD: JH Furst, 1948). See also John L. Moles, “The Cynics” in *Greek and Roman Political Thought*, ed. Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 417. We should at this point note the following diagnosis: “Antisthenes and Aristippus are shadowy figures, but important for their formative influence on Cynicism and Cyrenaicism respectively.” See. A. A. Long, “The Socratic Legacy,” in *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. Keimpe Algra, *et. al.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 621.

after Diogenes. Yet what has been contentious is what extent other Cynics like Onesicritus, Bion, and Cercidas reflected the spirit of Cynicism.⁸² For this reason, the argument presented here is mostly anchored in the legend of Diogenes, whose main work *Politeia* was lost, but there are variety of sayings, anecdotes and fragments about his life and doctrine in a number of different sources, the most important of which is no doubt the Book VI of Laertius' *The Lives*.

The paradigm of Cynicism, thus, basically relies on the legend of Diogenes, who was notorious for his shabby appearance, the carpetbag that he carried for food, sleeping and even for conversing (D.L. vi.22). He wore a coarse cloak folded over twice for protection from cold (D.L. vi.22, 76, 77). He had no shoes, walked on snow with bare feet and even showed a challenge to eat raw meat (D.L. vi.34). He slept in rough conditions and he used to live in a wine-jar (D.L. vi.23, 43). He tried to improve his endurance against every kind of difficulty, and while his ritual was to roll himself in the warm on sand, in winter he embraced statues all covered with snow (D.L. vi.23). He was disposed to masturbating in the *agora* (D.L. vi.46, 69). He justified his behavior by saying, "he wished it were as easy to relieve hunger by rubbing an empty stomach" (D.L. vi.46). This might be the reason why Diogenes' nickname given by the Athenians is "dog" (*kuon*), a name which manifests his famous shamelessness (*anaideia*). Further, he coined counterfeit money before (and this is the reason why) he was exiled to Athens from Sinope (D.L. vi.21, 56, 71). He is, depicted in (D.L. vi. 38,) in short, as citiless [*apolis*], homeless exile, a beggar, a wanderer, living for the day.

Diogenes, at first glance, could appear as an unpleasantly amoral character or as a popular quasi-sage of ancient times, a half-mad person who followed the Socratic ideal in an extravagant way. Just as today, as in 300 BC's Athens, a man who

⁸² Following John L. Moles' argument, these philosophers seem to me to be the followers of "soft-Cynic" option. For the distinction between "hard-Cynicism" and "soft-Cynicism," see John L. Moles, "The Cynics and Politics" in *Justice and Generosity: Studies in Hellenistic Social and Political Philosophy, Proceedings of the Sixth Symposium Hellenisticum*, ed. Andre Laks and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 129-158. What is understood from Cynicism in the present study is then "hard-Cynicism" in Moles' terms.

lives in a wine-jar, who defecates, urinates, and masturbates in public space, strives to consume raw meat, embraces statues covered with snow and who with a lantern in daytime searches “man” in the streets (D.L. vi.41), is expectedly assessed to be either a strange, a miserable, a homeless or a mad man. Thus, what makes Diogenes a philosopher instead of a madman or a layabout homeless? In the history of philosophy, the lives of philosophers have at most been taken as footnotes to their theories. It is perhaps a useful measure to ensure that students of philosophy do not confuse texts with stories about their writers. This would be an *ad hominem* judgment. Theories and their authors are in one sense unrelated. But in the case of Cynicism, considered as a Socratic school, the reverse is definitely correct. Cynicism can only be understood when the following questions are addressed: why did Cynics prefer to live like dogs in the “civilized” Athens? How can they equate the meanings of “being wise” and “being doggish”?

Cynics did not only live like dogs, but they also justified their own way of life philosophically. There is obviously a great difference between the following claims: “I am a dog” and “it is better to be dog instead of being a citizen of Athens, not just for me but for everyone.” That is to say, Cynicism is both a philosophical attitude and a political phenomenon that requires to be examined carefully. Further, Cynicism cannot be regarded as an ordinary instance of withdrawal from politics. The categorical rejection of politics *qua* politics does not entail that one is really exempt from politics and from being political. Let us seek out the reason behind this contention by considering the relation between the Cynics’ utopia and their way of life.

3.2.1. Cynical Realization of the Utopia

The Cynics persistently leveled ironic criticisms against wealth, to money itself or more properly everything which can be measured by money (D.L.vi. 24, 28, 32, 57). “Defacing currency” is the Cynic slogan (D.L. vi.20-1, 71) and there is evidence that Diogenes had suggested the use of knucklebones as coins in his lost

Politeia.⁸³ He persuaded Crates to give up his entire estate and money (D.L. vi. 87-8). Diogenes, for instance, “once he saw officials of a temple (*hieromnemes*) leading away someone who had stolen a bowl belonging to the treasures, and said, ‘the great thieves are leading away the little thief’” (D.L. vi.45). Likewise, it is reported that Diogenes said “how then, is the master of the house to get in?” when he saw a profligate had written on his house, “let nothing evil enter” (D.L. vi.39). Another story of Diogenes’ black humor with regard to the possessions is the following: “seeing a notice on the house of a profligate, ‘to be sold,’ he said, I knew well that after such surfeiting you would throw up the owner’” (D.L. vi.47).

Diogenes is often portrayed as a character who feels a special pleasure in ridiculing every kind of ownership and slavery, in many occasions narrated in the *Lives*. Taken together with the Cynics’ disapproval of Athenian democracy (D.L. vi.8, 24, 34, 41) and Diogenes’ appreciation of Sparta (D.L. vi. 27, 59), these rumors can be interpreted as an activist propaganda for the constitution of a communist society like that of Sparta. Though, the Cynics’ aim is to utter much more than catchphrases like “all property is theft” or “greed begets need.” The problem cannot, from the Cynics’ point of view, be restricted to the distribution of wealth. Although, for Cynics, all possessions ought to be held in common, even children (D.L. vi.72), labeling Cynicism as a “philosophy of proletariat” would seem to be a misnomer.⁸⁴ While being against currency, advocating equal sharing of all possessions, even children (D.L. vi.72), and promoting free sex between consenting partners, which is exemplified in the marriage of Crates and Hipparchia (D.L. vi.96-7), Cynics nevertheless present their way of life as the most virtuous life. They say that they live searching for wisdom, like Socrates did, and that this is the most honorable option to pursue in life. As Hegel

⁸³ See Malcolm Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 13.

⁸⁴ See John L. Moles, “The Cynics and Politics” in *Justice and Generosity: Studies in Hellenistic Social and Political Philosophy, Proceedings of the Sixth Symposium Hellenisticum*, ed. Andre Laks and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 145.

emphasizes, “simplicity of dress is part of the Cynic philosophy.”⁸⁵ This is, in one sense, a radical refutation of the classical distinction between theory and practice (simply because virtue pertains to actions and does not require adopting copious theories or lessons (D.L. vi.11)). As in the saying (D.L. vi. 64), when someone jibed Diogenes, “you philosophize without being possessed of any knowledge,” he replied, “adoption of wisdom is also philosophy.” In Moles’ words, “[t]he essence of the Cynic message is that the good life is easy to understand and to practice: everything else, including elaborate education and philosophizing, is not only irrelevant but inimical to this central message.”⁸⁶

Conversely, when the motives behind the actions of the Cynics are concerned, one would pronounce that transforming or converting the existing political constitution is not their purpose. The Cynics, first of all, rather prefer to reject engaging in politics, which, by its nature, they considered to be a kind of widespread insincerity adopted by most people. This is, in the Cynic’s view, an impediment for the search for wisdom, just as almost all of the people living in a *polis* (practically all those who are not Cynics, more properly) are ignorant about the most basic task of human being, namely being virtuous:

[A]nd as people clustered about him, he reproached them with coming in all seriousness to hear nonsense, but slowly and contemptuously when the theme was serious. He would say that men strive in digging and kicking to outdo one another, but no one strives to become a good man and true. And he would wonder that the grammarians should investigate the ills of Odysseus, while they are ignorant of their own. Or that the musicians should tune the strings of the lyre, while leaving the dispositions of their own souls discordant; the mathematicians should gaze at the sun and the moon, but overlook matters close at hands; that orators should make a fuss about justice in their speeches, but never practice it; or that the avaricious should cry against money, while inordinately fond of it. He used to condemn those who praised honest men for being superior to money, while themselves envying the very rich (D.L. vi.27-28).

⁸⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825-6, Volume II: Greek Philosophy*, trans. Robert F. Brown, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 172.

⁸⁶ John L. Moles, “The Cynics and Politics,” 157.

This is why Diogenes as a citizen of the world (*kosmopolites*) (D.L. vi.63, 72) could not find even a single true man within the *polis* or in the “incorrect” *politeiai* (D.L. vi.41, 60). By equating the correct state (*politeia*) with the universe itself (*kosmos*) (D.L. vi. 72), doggish Diogenes declares that he does not actually belong to the city: “[t]he Cynic *politeia*, the cynic ‘state,’ is nothing other than the ‘state’ of being a Cynic, which is at once a material or social and a moral state.”⁸⁷ It would then be contradictory for a Cynic to take part in politics. Instead, a Cynic would prefer to train his soul and body. His constant missionary endeavor is *askesis*. This is also considered as a manifestation of self-sufficiency and self-mastery. The Cynics conceive of a return to bare nature from the civilized city, a total liberation from the all kinds of civilized rules, which are “unnatural” conventions or enslaving norms. From the perspective of the Cynics, the real function of city walls is to isolate us from *kosmos*, and not security. Walls are signs of isolation, and the boundary between incorrect and correct *politeia*, which is *kosmos*, namely the common home of everyone. As civilization proceeds, according to the Cynics’ point of view, we gradually become slaves of conventions. Here “convention” refers to all kind of norms accepted in a city. For Cynics, “there was no impiety in tasting even human flesh” (D.L. vi.73).

If this is so, then, the wise man ought to be the one who regulates his own conduct in accordance with virtue, not with the established laws of city (D.L. vi.11). If the true law that should be obeyed is the law of the *kosmos*, then living in line with nature like a “dog,” instead of being a seemingly normal citizen who is interested in political issues and practices, would seem to Cynics, a deviation from virtue. In other words, like the study of logic and physics, commitment to politics does not contribute to the attainment of our most urgent task, which is the ultimate moral principle of Cynicism: live in accordance with virtue. And there is only one virtuous life in Cynicism: that of their own.

⁸⁷ Ibid.,138.

Consequently, for Cynics, politics in a *polis* ought to be condemned, since people participate in politics for the sake of wealth, fame or honour. Accumulation of wealth stems from greed of fame or political power, all of which have no value in nature. Likewise, there is no honor or shame in bare nature. Since the masses are foolish in the eyes of Cynics, it is better to be a dog than an ordinary fool who takes part in an essentially false political life. The Cynics opposition is against all kinds of social conventions adopted in a city. Their endeavor is rather to eradicate conventions through their own way of life, those involving the generally accepted distinctions between public and private life, male and female, master and slave, citizen and foreigner. A minimum of material possessions is sufficient for happiness in a Cynics' life; for, happiness is nothing other than the Socratic happiness (D.L. VI. 11). An ideal Cynic would therefore be a man unattached to any interest in wealth, honor, fame, career or power struggle.

Although the Cynical ideal of withdrawal from politics does not entail a total rejection of politics, a typical Cynic retreats into the inner citadel of wisdom and places himself above the actual political realm. While teaching a set of radical utopian ideals, detachment from political affairs and a constant criticism of all conventional values is thus the characteristic feature of the Cynics' relation to politics.

3.3. The Academy as a Citadel of Morality

Plato did not write on morality except in his major political works. Could one then assume that moral issues were secondary for him? At first glance, it appears that his *Republic* mainly focuses on political regimes, their interrelations, the qualities of ideal rulers, issues related with education and religion, the place of art in an ideal society, etc. One may infer from this that Plato was merely interested in politics in its narrow sense and not on moral issues. The *Republic*, for instance, is no doubt, a study concerning the question "what is justice?" (*Rep.* 331c). The question of justice, unlike our modern understanding, is not construed by reference to the concept of law. Rather, the concept of justice as analyzed in the *Republic* is not defined as the rectitude of certain decisions, proper distribution of

goods within a given society or a quality attributed to prescribed acts. Rather, here, justice is regarded as a feature of an individual, a merit that is peculiar to a virtuous person. To put it differently, according to Plato, one should investigate their character qualities of just persons and consider their improvement:

It [justice] was not concerned with the external performance of a man's own function, but with the internal performance of it, with his true self and his own true function, forbidding each of the elements within him to perform tasks other than its own, and not allowing the classes of things within his soul to interfere with one another. He has, quite literally, to put his own house in order, being himself his own ruler, mentor and friend, and tuning the three elements just like three fixed points in a musical scale-top, bottom and intermediate. And if there turn out to be any intervening elements, he must combine them all, and emerge as a perfect unity of diverse elements, self-disciplined and in harmony with himself. Only then does he act, whether it is a question of making money, or taking care of his body, or some political action, or contractual agreements with private individuals. In all these situations he believes and declares that a just and good action is one which preserves or brings about this state of mind, and that wisdom is the knowledge which directs the action. That an unjust action, in its turn, is any action which tends to destroy this state of mind and that ignorance is the opinion which directs the unjust action (443c-444a).⁸⁸

Plato's ideal state constitutes a model for a just person. Let us remember the just soul in Plato's conception is the mirror of an ideal state and *vice versa*. The harmony between the parts of soul and the ideal state is, for Plato, one and the same. An ideal soul has the same structure with the tripartite state: reason both in a just soul and in the ideal state is assisted by courage and governs the desires (432b-44a). The ideal state can thus only be realized when it is exemplified in the virtuous citizens' souls. Since a person is a part of a city and reflects the whole, justice for a single individual and for the entire city is identical. It appears that Plato's focus on the organization city-state has a pedagogical meaning: it is easier to recognize the bigger whole (the city) than it is one of the details (i.e., the single individual). That is to say, Plato's ideal state is a mere extension of the perfect

⁸⁸ Citations from the Platon's *Republic* are from the following translation: *Republic* trans. Tom Griffith, ed. Giovanni R. F. Ferrari (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

soul.⁸⁹ Only a few persons (the minority) can achieve the ideal state within their souls; but if the majority becomes aware of this model, in other words, if everyone knows his place in the ideal state and does his own business without interfering with the other's, then the ideal state would be actualized. The core problem in this schema turns out to be the moral education of souls in accordance with the divine principles.

Thus, pursuing the Socratic ideal, one might safely argue that Plato's *Republic* aims nothing other than to promote the moral progress of each citizen, which is only possible by the improvement of the character traits of every citizen in line with the norms of the ideal state. But if there seems to be no opportunity to accomplish this divine purpose by taking part in the current *Realpolitik*, what should one do? It seems that Plato's answer to this question lies in his own practice. His Academy, for instance, was founded at the periphery of Athens. This might be counted as among the indications of withdrawal from "the centre" at which ordinary political affairs were always on the agenda. But, Plato's attempt could indeed be considered as an attempt to realize the ideal state within the territory of the Academy by rejecting to partake in the gratuitous political affairs taking place in city. Employing one of his pupils' terminology, namely Aristotle's, Plato could say that people who are interested in the life of pleasure (*bios apolaustikos*), the life of money-making (*bios chrematistes*) or the life of politics (*bios politikos*) cannot enter the Academy. Only those who are ready to devote themselves to life of theory (*bios theoretikos*) can partake in the Academy. This is supposed to be a privilege and the genuinely moral way of life of the Academy, the organization of which, in one sense, resembles the ideal state. In the Academy, Plato did not demand tuition fees from his pupils and applied the principle of geometric equality to share common things with respect to each

⁸⁹ For elaboration of this point, see Julia Annas, *Platonic Ethics, Old and New* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 80. For the development argument, see in the same book, the section entitled "The Inner City: Ethics without Politics in the Republic," *Ibid.*, 72-95. Plato as an anti-political philosopher, see Wayne A. R. Leys, "Was Plato non-Political?" in *Plato: A Collection Critical Essays* ed. Gregory Vlastos (New York: Garden City, 1971), 166-173. For the point why the ideal state exists in one's imagination, see R. C. Cross and A. D. Woozley, *Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary* (London: Macmillan, 1964), 199.

person's merits and needs (cf. *Laws*, 756e-758a). For instance, "when Aristotle's disciple Dicearchus came to describe life in Plato's Academy, he emphasized the fact that its members lived as a community of free, equal people, insofar as their aspiration towards virtue equaled their desire to pursue shared research."⁹⁰

Although Plato tried to play a prominent political role in Syracuse like many students of the Academy in various cities, by moving his school away from the centre, Plato himself might have tried to keep himself away from the current political actualities, at least when he became an old man⁹¹ and always reminded

⁹⁰ Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 59

⁹¹ In his famous *Seventh Letter* (whose authenticity is controversial) Plato as an old man explains why he distances himself from the domain of politics. Especially see 324b8-326b4. In his famous *Seventh Letter*, even though its authenticity is controversial, Plato as an old man is likely to explain why he distances himself from the domain of politics: "As a young man, I felt the same as many others. I thought that once I came of age, I would immediately take part in the public affairs of my polis. And owing to certain fortunate political events, such an opportunity arose. For the existing [democratic] *politeia* was reviled by many and a revolution occur...in which thirty men were set up as rulers with autocratic power over all things. Some of these men happened to be relatives and acquaintance of mine, and they at once called on me to join in these affairs as my proper duty. And I, not surprisingly for one of such youth, believed that they would lead the polis form injustice to the way of justice, and govern it accordingly. I thus gave them very close attention, to see what they would do. As it turned out, I saw in a short time that the preceding *politeia* was a golden one compared to that installed by these men. Among their other crimes, they sent an elderly man, my friend Socrates, whom I would not be ashamed to say was the most just man of his time...to arrest by force one of citizens and bring him for execution. Their purpose was to implicate Socrates in their own activities whether he wished it or not. But he did not obey them, for he was willing to hazard any suffering sooner than become a partner in their unholy deeds. When I observed all this and other acts no less heinous, I became indignant and withdrew myself from the evils of that time. Not long afterwards came the fall of the thirty and their entire constitution. Once again, though more slowly this time, I was drawn back by my desire to take part in public life and politics. To be sure, there were many things occurring in those unsettled times which could cause discontent, and it is not surprising that during revolutions some men take excessive revenge on their enemies. Yet for all that the resorted exiles [the democrats] acted with great fairness. By same chance, however, certain men in power brought my *hetairos* Socrates to court on a most sacrilegious charge, one of which he of all men was least deserving to bear. For they put him on trial for impiety, and he was condemned and put to death- the very man who had earlier refused to take part in the unholy arrest of one of their friends at a time when they themselves were in unfortunate exile! Now I reflected on these matters as well as on the men who were conducting political affairs, and on the laws and customs, the more I examined them and matured in age, the more difficult did it appear to me to administer political affairs correctly. For such a thing could not be done without friends and loyal companions, and these, even when they existed, were not easy to find...and so I was compelled to say, praising the true philosophy, that from it alone can we perceive in all cases what is just and right, both in public and in private affairs. And that consequently, there can be no cessation of evil for the races of mankind until either those who properly and truly follow philosophy to attain political authority, or those who wield power in poleis become by some divine fate true lovers of wisdom" (324b8-326b4). The

that “[t]here is no present-day political regime which lives up to the philosopher's nature” (*Rep.* 497b). Plato advises his pupils to keep themselves apart from politics: “a man who really fights for justice must lead a private, not a public, life if he is to survive for even a short time” (*Ap.* 32a). It is always better to be a lonely person and to have conversations with friends privately, than to give a public speech about politics (29d-30c, 31b-32a). Living wisely is the most honorable purpose that the *philosophos* has to achieve. In *Gorgias* again, while Socrates differentiates the life of orator-politician from that of the philosopher, he declares against Polus’ misunderstanding of his argument that “I’m not one of your politicians” (*Grg.* 473e).⁹² In this dialogue, Socrates does not want to be treated as a mere politician and prefers to stay away from ordinary political practices. Orator-politicians in his conception are precisely those who had somehow gained a power administrate others in a city (452d), simply because they knew the technique of persuasion: they have “the ability to speak and persuade large groups of people” (452e). The technique of persuasion, however, becomes dangerous in the hands of unjust men whose aim is to convince the majority about anything, avoiding any genuine effort to be acquainted with and to edify the truth. Therefore, orators or politicians do not often make use of their ability of persuasion to profess to citizens what justice or truth is. If persuading ignorant people is the art of orators, (because there is no need for a wise person to be persuaded), it does then not matter whether they teach what justice or injustice is (454b); persuasion itself seems to be the major objective of oratory, and in this sense it is the essential part of *Realpolitik* (463d-e). Rhetoric, for instance, at the hands of a tyrannical soul might become a tool utilized for systematic execution and justification of injustice. Since a tyrannical soul cannot have a taste of freedom and genuine friendship (*Rep.* 576a) and can do whatever he desires without any appeal to moral principles (*Laws* 661a-b), he will never

translation is taken from *Moral Codes and Social Structure in Ancient Greece: Sociology of Greek Ethics from Homer to the Epicureans and Stoics* (New York: SUNY, 1996), 264-265.

⁹² The citations from *Gorgias* and the related dialogues are taken from Plato, *Gorgias, Menexenus, Protagoras*, ed. Malcolm Schofield and trans. Tom Griffith, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

exercise a just power in a city. Power and justice, in this case, can hardly be expected to coincide.

Plato hence repeatedly recommends his pupils to retreat from politics. Nevertheless, let us note that this might not be a categorical rejection of politics *qua* politics. It is Plato's recommendation that the wise man should leave politics in the Athenian democracy. This does not entail that the wise man should stay from politics in all cases. For example, in the ideal state, the city and each of its individuals ought to be an organic unity (*Rep.* 462c-e) and it is the necessary precondition for a wise person to "practice politics." This, then, is not an actual, but a hypothetical city, and in fact the only city where wise men would engage in politics. Even if the norms of an ideal city cannot easily be realized on earth, they always ought to shed a light on the question of how to govern ourselves (592b). Furthermore, Plato makes Socrates say the following:

I think in company with a few Athenians- I don't want to say I'm the only one- I am attempting the true science of politics, and I think I am the only one practicing politics among people today. And because I say the things I say on any occasion not out of any desire to please, but with a view to what is best rather than what is pleasant, refusing to go in for 'those subtleties' you recommend, I won't have anything to say in court (*Grg.* 521d).

If Socrates is one of the true politicians who is acquainted with the true political art, there seems at least two senses of politics in Plato's mind. No doubt, Plato directs harsh criticisms against the entire political life in the "corrupted" Athenian democracy, which he conceives of as basically founded upon ordinary power struggles between the citizens. That is to say, one who is willing to play the game of politics in terms of the currently acknowledged norms and practices naturally deviates from the ideal, that is, from the divine moral principles. Plato's argues that it is better to not to engage in ordinary political affairs, within which most people justify hiding the truth from the public or even from themselves. For example, one might keep his silence when he is confronted with unjust acts. In this political order, insincerity is always licit and can easily be seen as the cost of

gaining power in the current political life. Gaining power, and more and more in the form of money, authority or fame is the sole motive behind the actions of the present politicians. For this reason, they never seek the truth and govern the society in accordance to it. Striving to take the throne within the web of power relations of a city is the fundamental rule of actual politics.

Against Plato's critique of the Athenian democracy, Sophist Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, in the *Republic*, approving the equation of the power relations with politics, reduces the question of justice to inquiry of the how the current ruler(s) execute power. For him, one who takes political power thinks that he has a natural right to define what the justice is. There is no non-empirical reality in which one can seek the idea of justice isolated from all social relations and political conditions. In other words, politics as a totality of amoral relations and practices, whether in the regime of democracy or tyranny, is nothing different from a game in which the most powerful one should have a right to be triumphant. And if this is so, there seems no absurdity in the following: whoever takes the power in this game, that is to say, makes laws with respect to his understanding of justice:

Every ruling power makes laws for its own good. A democracy makes democratic laws, tyranny tyrannical laws, and so on. In making these laws, they make it clear that what is good for them, the rulers, is what is just for their subjects. If anyone disobeys, they punish him for breaking the law and acting unjustly. That's why I mean, "my friend," when I say that in all cities the same thing is just, namely what is good for the ruling authority. This, I take it, is where the power lies, and the result is, for anyone who looks at it in the right way, that the same thing is just everywhere-what is good for the stronger (*Rep.*338e-339a, 343c-d).

Thus, in the realm of politics, there is no room for any moral norms or a respect for putative divine principles. Further, Thrasymachus argues nearly two millennia before Machiavelli that whoever takes no notice of the ideas of truth or justice becomes much more powerful and successful in political life (344a-c, 348d). Sophist Callicles in the *Gorgias* argues in line with Thrasymachus' conception of

politics as mere power relations, but from a significantly different point of view. By appealing to the dichotomy between *physis* and *nomos* (*Grg.* 482d-e), Callicles, unlike Thrasymachus, argues that the weaks constitute the state and make laws against the strong persons. The laws of a city are the merely the expression of the tyranny of majority (the weaks) over a few naturally strong men:

If you ask me, the people who put law-conventions- in place are the weak, the many. It is with an eye to themselves and their own advantage that they put they put the laws in place, praise the things they praise, and blame the things they blame. They intimidate the more forceful among mankind, the ones capable of getting the better of others, and to stop them getting better of *them*, they say that getting the better of others is disgraceful and unjust, and this is what injustice is-trying to get the better of everyone else. For themselves, I imagine they are well pleased if they can have an equal share, given their inferiority. This is why, by convention, this is said to be unjust and disgraceful-trying to get better of the many-and they call it acting unjustly. In my view, however, nature itself shows clearly what is just-for the better man to have more than the worse, the more powerful more than the less powerful (483c-d).

Physis, for Callicles, gives power to strong men, however, *nomoi*, laws or the rules of majority (the weak) prevent them from taking political power and governing the weak majority. To put it differently, as long as the laws among men in a city are not written with reference to the laws of nature, the strongest men would not be capable of protecting their own natural rights (483b-d). From Callicles' point of view, then, the constitution of the whole political realm is in itself amoral. It is essentially founded on a deviation from "natural law" according to which the weak should not suppress the strong in the name of justice or so-called "equality." By observing nature, one must without hesitations confirm that animals are not equal in power and so human beings among themselves should not be so, too. Conferring upon the most powerful the right to preside over the state, Callicles would further utter that this ensures that real justice be realized.

Politics is and ought to be *Realpolitik* in a city and can thus be defined as the power relations and struggles between citizens, seen either from Callicles' or Thrasymachus' perspective. This is not what Plato criticizes. What would rather be surprising for Plato is the people's irrational inclination towards playing such a nonsensical and unjust game. From Plato's point of view, this might be the natural result of the people's ignorance. They are the ignorant majority which always tends to trail the easiest way, like beasts, instead of taking a resolute journey towards being wise men. And since they are always the majority, as Plato repeatedly states, in the tension between philosophy and politics, the destiny of a philosopher in his pursuit of Truth would just be adopting a privileged solitude by estranging himself from the madness of *idiots* usually on display in ordinary political affairs; Socrates speaks:

Those who have become members of this small group [philosophers] have tasted how sweet and a blessed possession is philosophy. They can also, by contrast, see quite clearly the madness of many. They can see that virtually nothing anyone in politics does is in any way healthy, and that they have no ally with whom they could go to the rescue of justice and live to tell the tale. The philosopher would like a man falling into a den of wild animals, refusing to join in their vicious activities, but too weak to resist their combined ferocity single-handed. He wouldn't get a chance to help his city or his friends. He would be killed before he could be any use of either to himself or to anyone else. Taking all this into account, he will keep quiet, and mind his own business, like someone taking shelter behind a wall when he is caught by a storm of driving dust and rain. He sees everyone else brimful of lawlessness, and counts himself lucky if he himself can somehow live his life here pure, free from injustice and unholy actions, and depart with high hopes, in a spirit of kindness and goodwill, on his release from it (*Rep.* 496c-e).

Politics in the general sense looks like an arena in which people in one way or another are exposed to commit injustice. Since partaking in injustice is much more shameful and vicious than suffering from iniquity, (*Grg.* 474d3-475c9), "the most important thing is not life, but the good life ... and that the good life, beautiful life, and the just life are the same" (*Cr.* 48b, cf. *Apol.* 28b). The lesson Plato seems to derive from Socrates' trial is that the wise man can always favor

even death with impenitence instead of an unjust life. Then, what could Plato's remedy for such a tragic scene be, if taking shelter in his inner citadel is philosopher's destiny?

From Plato's viewpoint, in the political life as encountered of the Athenian democracy, there remains something nonsensical, unjustifiable (*Cr.* 44d, *Prot.* 319b-d). The citizens who were the members of the Assembly gave certain decisions about the common goods necessary for the sustainability of city life, such as construction of a granary or shipbuilding for the army. Taking such decisions requires taking into account various views of a variety of specialists, who were known to be experts of the issue under consideration. If a work necessitates a kind of technical skill or craft, one must give an ear to those known as experts of the issue. Then, what are the qualities of a good citizen or a just statesman and who can identify them and by which means? How do we render the best decision about who is ruled by whom? ⁹³

In the dialogue, *Protagoras*, Plato vindicates the view that regardless of status, every adult male citizen in Athens equally has a right to give decisions about the future and government of the city. Plato, who equates knowledge with virtue, strictly opposes this democratic ideal. Only a few might comprehend the form of justice and so capable of a just person. Especially in the *Gorgias*, by directing his criticisms against the practice of oratory, Plato's intention is likely to undermine the very grounds of Athenian democracy. Democracy is a political system which rests on a power struggle, the rules of which are the following: the power is at the centre (*en mesoi*); nobody has a natural right to take the power to rule over the

⁹³ Cf. *The Statesman*, 296e-297b: "A ship's captain is constantly trying to ensure the best interests of his ship and crew; the way he keeps everybody on board safe is not by giving them written rules to follow, but making his expertise available to them- his expertise is their law. It is exactly the same, no different at all, in a state. It is those who are capable of governing in an equivalent way who are the authors of sound system of government; they make their expertise available and their expertise is more effective than a legal code. As long as these wise rulers have the single overriding concern of always using their intelligence and expertise to maximize the justice they dispense to the state's inhabitants, there is no defect in what they do, is there? After all, they are not only capable of keeping their subjects safe, but they are also doing all they can to make them better people than they were before." Translation is from Plato, *The Statesman*, ed. Julia Annas and trans. Robin Waterfield, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

whole society by patrimony or by executing physical violence over others; whoever persuades the majority is the winner in this game. So far, so good. There seems to be no quandary in this ideal situation. However, if the differences between people are at stake, that is to say, if the society is not a homogeneous entity, the “persuasion game” played by citizens easily end in the victory of those who have no interest in the idea of justice, or attaining the truth. This is a mere power game for Plato, an attempt to introduce any genuine moral norm would therefore be a dream. As far as this dream cannot be realized, there is no way to pass over the gap between ethics and politics. If this is the case, Plato would just retain himself with depicting the general lines of his utopia:

There is no end to suffering, Galucon, for our cities, and none, I suspect, for the human race, unless either philosophers become kings in our cities, or the people who are now called kings and rulers become real, true philosophers-unless there is this amalgamation of political power and philosophy ... Otherwise there is not the remotest chance of the political arrangements we have described coming about...It is hard for people to see that this is the only possible route to happiness, whether in private or public life (*Rep.* 474d-e).

Human beings by their nature have different capabilities and aptitudes for a variety of professions. For this reason, it would be better to arrange the division of labor in a society with respect to differences between their souls. When everyone takes his own place within an organic unity, the best political regime, a peaceful, solidaristic society emerges. And the one who should administrate this ideal society is the philosopher-king who pursues the life of theory. If this is not the case, Plato prefers to take refuge in his Academy instead of living in the middle of this tense relationship between ethics and politics. Wherever politics is another name for immorality, the place of the ethical life becomes restricted to the Academy.

3.4. Epicurus' Garden: The Defense of Security against Unsecure Politics

Among the Hellenistic schools, the most evident example of the retreat from politics is perhaps the Epicurians' garden life. Epicurus from Samos (341/2-270 BC) came to Athens (306 BC) and opened a school in a garden. The garden seems to represent a search for a secure isolation from the city life and not an accidental choice of place.⁹⁴ In A. J. Raymer's words:

The social implication of Epicurus' teaching is summed up in two words: *late biosas* (live unobtrusively). Renounce the world with its wars and rumours of wars, its injustice and evils, and the world will not hurt you. A small circle of true friends and a realization of the material nature of all things in earth and heaven are sufficient.⁹⁵

Withdrawal into a garden is without a doubt the essential characteristics of Epicurian way of life and in the nomenclature of Epicurians, "friend" usually means "fellow Epicurian."⁹⁶ Laertius mentions Epicurus' four books on ethics, entitled as *On Modes of Life* (D. L. x. 28). In Book I and II, according to Laertius' testimony, Epicurus recommends to his followers that the wise man should neither intervene in the affairs regarding governing the state, nor live like a Cynic (D.L. x. 119). He always keeps himself away from politics (D. L. x. 10). Epicurus says to his followers that they must free themselves from "the prison of everyday affairs and politics" (*Sent. Vat.* 58).⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Regarding this point, Joseph M. Bryant's says the following: "in the light of the foregoing assault on civic-based values, the revolutionary significance of the Garden community of intimates should ... be clear: its primary function was to supplant the crumbling Polis *koinônia* as the existential basis for the good life, by offering its members the security, self-sufficiency, justice, and pleasures that the larger sociopolitical unit had difficulty providing under the new circumstances of patrimonial domination." *Moral Codes and Social Structure in Ancient Greece*, 416.

⁹⁵ A. J. Raymer, "Stoic and Epicurian: A Post-War Commentary," *Greece and Rome*, 8:23 (February 1939), 97.

⁹⁶ For this point, David, O'Connor, "The Invulnerable Pleasures of Epicurian Friendship," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 30 (1989), 165-186.

⁹⁷ All citations regarding Epicurus are taken from *The Epicurus Reader*, eds. and trans. Brad Inwood and D.S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994)

The Epicurian garden thus seems to be a shelter where the wise people keep each other company, find security (*asphaleia*) and attain the ideal of *ataraxia*, namely, unperturbedness or serenity of mind. Realization of these Epicurian ideals are assumed to be possible only in the garden, that is, within a community of friends where all people, whether they are women, slaves, non-Greeks or metics are equal. Security and *ataraxia* in the Epicurian doctrine are indeed guaranteed by a special bond of friendship: “the purest security is that which comes from a quiet life and withdrawal from the many” (*KD* 14). On the other hand, “live unnoticed” (*lathe biotas*) is the dictum of Epicurians, though

some men want to become famous and respected, believing that this is the way to acquire security against [other] men. Thus if the life of such men is secure, they acquire the natural good; but if it is not secure, they do not have that for the sake of which they strove from the beginning according to what is naturally congenial (*KD* 7).

Partaking in politics, therefore, is not a way of securing one’s life; in contrast, anyone who is known as a political figure is destined to live a perilous life due to the possibility of the emergence of unexpected calamities in political affairs. Politics in its essence is therefore an insecure life in the Epicurian terminology. Epicurians believe that as one gains power in politics, he will have more and stronger enemies.

As an alternative to political life, Epicurus emphasizes the value of genuine friendship, without which the destiny of men would be to live in a world beset by turmoil and danger. It is also the precondition safety. This does not simply mean that friends are merely means to attain security: “the constant friend is neither he always searches for utility, nor he who never links friendship to utility. For the former makes gratitude a matter for commercial transaction, while the latter kills off good hope for the future” (*Sent. Vat.* 39).

At this point, it seems to be plausible to maintain that there is an implicit moral psychology behind the Epicurian doctrine. The feelings of fear, anxiety, boredom and anger are the most detrimental enemies of a man who is in search of wisdom. These “negative” feelings arise from weakness and fear (D. L. x.77). Fear, whether it stems from the idea of death (D.L. x. 124-125) or from the lack of confidence in other people (*KD* 56-57), is an obstacle to attain the ideal of *ataraxia*. For Epicurus, while a true knowledge of physics eliminates the fear of death, and friendship develops the feeling of confidence against the fear from other human beings (*KD*, 28). Probably it is for this reason that Epicurus gives the following advice: “let nothing be done in your life which will cause you to fear if it is discovered by your neighbor” (*KD* 70). Further, we may argue that Epicurus’ conception of justice rests on an understanding of security. As Epicurus states that “justice was not a thing in its own right, ... a pact about neither harming one another nor being harmed” (*KD*, 33). Indeed consider the fact that “neither harming nor being harmed” (*KD*, 31) is the key motive behind the Epicurian conception of justice, which is useful for mutual associations (*KD*, 36).

The motive behind taking part in politics, from the Epicurian point of view, is to pursue power, fame or wealth. None of them, however, can show us how to live wisely.⁹⁸ If it is compared with the life in the Garden, politics in the public space of a city is plainly an obstacle for attaining the purpose of living well in a secure manner. Within the territory of a garden, friends, followers of Epicurus, can live with respect to the ethical principles that they adopt. There seems then no virtue in intervening in political practices, since “politics is a dangerous business

⁹⁸ Consider the following fragment from Diogenes of Oinoanda who was an Epicurian lived in Lycia in 2nd Century AD: [Many people] pursue philosophy for the sake of [wealth and glory], thinking they will obtain these things from private individuals or kings who have decided that philosophy is some great and expensive possession. Not in pursuit of those things mentioned above have hastened toward that same study, but rather so that we might find happiness, having achieved the object of life sought by nature. What this object is- and that neither wealth can obtain it, nor political reputation, nor kingship, nor a life of luxury, nor a rich table, nor pleasures of exotic sexual activity, nor anything else, but that [only] philosophy can procure it- this we now shall explain, putting the whole matter before you (*Diogenes of Oenoanda*, fr. 29). The translation of the epigraph is from Martin Ferguson Smith (ed) *Diogenes of Oenoanda: The Epicurian Inscription* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1993).

founded on a false view of how security is to be attained.”⁹⁹ This is essence of the Epicurian resolution of the conflict between ethics and politics.

3.5. From the Ancient Retreat from Politics to the Modern Engagement

We examined up to here in this chapter three main forms of retreat from politics in ancient Greek city states, namely Cynical, Platonic and Epicurian rejections of politics. It seems that the Stoics opt for remaining indifferent to politics, instead of taking refuge in supreme moral ideals. All of these philosophical schools endorsed their own understanding of morality against the current political organization and activities. Living in accordance with the ideal of *Republic*, albeit it has dissimilar interpretations (for instance for Platonists and for the first Stoics), is presented as a final resolution of a problematic relation between ethics and politics. When the relations between human beings in a city are arranged according to supreme moral principles, it would not be necessity to refrain from politics as such. Politics, in a society anchored in the highest moral norms, would be identical to morality. When politics and ethics are identical, one of them becomes unnecessary.

As admirers of the Socratic ideal in one way or another, the aforementioned schools were grappling with more or less the same question: what should a wise person do, if he adheres to an ethical ideal which is very far from the moral preferences of the majority? This is the point where the ideal of ethical life and political activity come to a conflict. It is worth underlining that the common ground of the approaches is their view that the existing political realm rests on a set of amoral affairs and practices. For a Cynic, taking part in politics necessitates respecting the civilized norms, an act which is in contrast to be the principles of Cynicism. A morally honorable objective cannot be justified by employing morally base means. A Stoic, on the other hand, may or may not be interested in politics; it seems that politics is neither a prerequisite for nor an impediment to be

⁹⁹ Malcolm Schofield, “Epicurian and Stoic Political Thought” in *Greek and Roman Political Thought*, eds. Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 441.

a wise person. Nevertheless, whenever politics is a real threat against one's will to preserve his *ataraxia* and forces him to behave contrary to Stoic principles, it is, then, advisable for a *prokopton* who is willing to be a *sophos* to retreat from politics immediately. It is better for a follower of Plato to leave politics if it demands deviation from the moral norms of the *Republic*. An Epicurian would be inclined to live in a secure garden with his friends instead of playing the unwise games of politics. This is for Epicurians exclusively conceived as a wrong choice: one cannot preserve security and live in compliance with the ideals of *ataraxia* and friendship in a political life.

The Socratic ideal in this context was in fact a revolutionary moral response to commonly internalized moral norms and political practices. Socrates criticized his citizens for living the wrong life. How can we live as human beings without seeking our best? How can one live without searching the truth and trying to live in accordance with it as far as possible? This criticism is echoed in the post-Socratic schools. We can say that the birth of morality with the Socratic ideal in the Greek city states brought about its own conflict with the common morality or political life legitimized and lived by the majority. Joseph M. Bryant seems to be right when he states the following:

The retreat from Polis-citizen ideals thus occurred along all philosophical fronts during the Hellenistic period, as Cynics, Creanics, Skeptics, Epicurians, and Stoics, each sought to distance the well-being of the individual from the collapsing Polis framework and to detach *arete*, or "virtue," from its former dependence on communal service through performance in the roles of warrior and self governing citizen ... The Hellenistic schools, having detached their ethical injunctions from substantive politics, attain greater abstraction or universalism thereby, but in consequence are also one-sided., i.e., largely self-referential and without adequate attention to questions of community.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Joseph M. Bryant, *Moral Codes and Social Structure in Ancient Greece*, 461-471.

Suppose that you live in a society in which the generally accepted moral norms are totally wrong in your eyes. Politics, or very social practices in this society, is merely a blind power struggle in which the most powerful wins regardless of his devotion to live an ethical life. It doesn't matter whether in this society the one who governs us is actually wise person or not. This person could have character qualities like pettiness, shamelessness, vanity and hypocrisy. But this is again frequently not conceived as an ethical problem, simply because these qualities are already justified as an indispensable part of the political life. Otherwise, there would be no other way to be a successful or a powerful politician. If one adopts certain moral and if these ideals have no place in the current political practices of the majority, then it would appear reasonable or virtuous to retreat from the political realm into the citadel of morality. One might also prefer to pursue a way of life with reference to an ethical doctrine, which is supposed to be realized in one's own character and actions without paying any respect to gaining power in politics. Following the Socratic ideal in diverse manners, a Stoic, an Epicurian, a Skeptic, a Cynic or a Platonic sage would distance himself from the ordinary of politics for the sake of living wisely, albeit with diverse conceptions of wisdom. Hence, the initiation of the debate on ethics with the emergence of the Socratic ideal practically brought about its own conflict with current understandings and practices of politics. The conflict between morality and politics in this sense is likely to be an expression of the conflict between the supreme moral norms internalized and the current political situation. This conflict seems to change its form when we come to the times of Machiavelli.

CHAPTER IV

THE EMANCIPATION OF POLITICS FROM MORALITY IN THE POST-MACHIAVELLIAN ERA

No philosopher, either of antiquity or of medieval times, so clearly demarcates the realm of morality from that of politics as Machiavelli whose attempt to take morality away from politics has become a paradigm in the history of philosophy. Hobbes in a sense took part in Machiavelli's revolution by categorically disassociating the science of politics from that of study of morals. Mandeville was in line with Machiavelli and Hobbes when he strived for a clear depiction of private vices as the expressions of public benefits. "In the history of early modern political thought," David Runciman argues in his recent book that "three men in particular were thought by their scandalized reading publics to be devils, or as Hobbes might put it, to be playing the devil's part. They were Machiavelli, Hobbes himself, and ... Bernard Mandeville."¹⁰¹ These philosophers were actually not only philosophers appreciated by a limited number of people, but they had been at varying degrees conceived of as legendary figures in much broader intellectual circles; they even became involved in popular culture. For instance, Ernst Cassirer in his *The Myth of the State*, by referring to Eduard Meyer's book *Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama* reports that at least 395 references had been given to Machiavelli in Elizabethan literature.¹⁰² In the plays of Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, William Shakespeare, John Webster, Francis Beaumont and Robert Huntington Fletcher, Machiavelli had been vividly portrayed as a sign of the devil incarnate, even the devil itself, as the sign of hypocrisy and cruelty. This was the popular reception of Machiavelli in 17th century England, though a few philosophers of that time, like Francis Bacon and

¹⁰¹ David Ruciman, *Political Hypocrisy: The Mask of Power, from Hobbes to Orwell and Beyond* (Princeton and Oxford Princeton University Press, 2008), 45.

¹⁰² Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974), 117.

Baruch Spinoza, were likely to rebut it. The portrait of Machiavelli was totally reversed yet again in 19th century, in which “the devilization of Machiavelli was superseded by a sort of deification.”¹⁰³ From those times, two portraits of Machiavelism have hardly changed in one sense: he has been regarded either as a devotee of evil or as the first passionate realist who succeeded in presenting an objective analysis of the political realm apart from the subjective ideals of morality. But neither portrait seems to reflect Machiavellian spirit properly, as will be attested to later.

4.1. The Machiavellian Revolution

On the road to comprehending the idea of the Machiavellian revolution, Ernst Cassirer argues that as a child of his time, “Machiavelli studied and analyzed political movements in the same spirit as Galileo ... Machiavelli studied political actions in the same way as a chemist studies chemical reactions”¹⁰⁴ In other words, “the *Prince* is neither a moral nor an immoral book: it is simply a technical book.”¹⁰⁵

Let us note further that Machiavelli’s masterwork, *Prince*, fundamentally deals with the qualities of political men’s actions, which have to be entirely divorced from ordinary people’s norms of conduct. Then, Machiavelli’s challenge appears to be separating politics, which is conceived as a technique and practice, from the realm of the common morality of his times, although he does not repudiate the existence of moral virtues and ideals at all. It could also be stated that Machiavelli’s endeavor throughout the *Prince* and the *Discourses* is to offer a solution for the endless, contemporary political troubles of his country as a patriotic philosopher. In his eyes, Italy is “more enslaved than the Hebrews, more servile than the Persians, more scattered than the Athenians; without a leader, without organization, beaten, despoiled, ripped apart, overrun, and prey to every

¹⁰³ Ibid.,124.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 136. For more on Machiavelli as a scientist, see L. Olschki, *Machiavelli-The Scientist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945), 22-41.

¹⁰⁵ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*, 153.

sort of catastrophe.”¹⁰⁶ Under these circumstances, the question of “how can Italy be more powerful in future?” appears to be the main concern of Machiavelli. This is, in his view, rather a political problem to be resolved, awaiting a full-blooded prince. Then, what are the properties a prince should have in order to be triumphant for the future and what are the ultimate principles according to which he is supposed to act when governing Italy?

Machiavelli’s rejoinder rests on a radical differentiation of common morality from the craft of governing. Living a moral life with reference to the divine, religious principles is indispensable for a society. Yet, this does not in the least entail that its ruler must also comply with those principles so as to become more and more powerful and accordingly victorious in politics. In contrast, a prince has, first of all, to “learn how not to be good:”

For there is such a gap between how one lives and how one ought to live that anyone who abandons what is done for what ought to be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation: for a man who wishes to make a vocation of being good at all times will come to ruin among so many who wish to maintain his position to learn how not to be good, and to use this knowledge or not to use it according to necessity.¹⁰⁷

Besides, since most men are not really good, “something which appears to be virtue, if pursued, will end in his [prince’s] destruction; while some other thing which seems to be vice, if pursued, will result in his safety and his well-being?”¹⁰⁸ There is, thus, not a single morality that embraces all human beings and their entire sphere of activities. The virtues of a prince would be the vices of ordinary men, most of whom are “ungrateful, fickle, simulators and deceivers, avoiders of danger, greedy for gain.”¹⁰⁹ For this reason, a prince must always

¹⁰⁶ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 162. The quotations from *The Prince* and *The Discourses* are taken from *The Portable Machiavelli*, ed. and tr. Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa (New York: Penguin Books, 1979).

¹⁰⁷ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 127.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 128.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

keep his eyes open. A prince ought to have no suffering regarding pangs of conscience from his vices. So, deviation from common morality seems to be inevitable for a good prince. This has to be taken simply as a brutal fact of the world and does not require any further moral assessment for its justification.

There seems to be no suspicion that for Machiavelli the morality of the one who governs society and the morality that fits the majority's way of life are founded on two unrelated systems of norms. To put it differently, governing a state, that is to say maintaining authority over a territory requires certain political skills to be executed, skills which cannot be derived from or conformed to the supreme moral ideals of Christianity or those of antiquity. It is legitimate for a prince even not to keep his promise when this would pave the way for his disadvantage and when "the reasons which made him promise are removed."¹¹⁰ There is no *a priori* moral norm for a prince to behave in accordance with the contracts that he had once signed. He has a power to interpret the conditions of every kind of agreement with reference to his or his country's interest. Machiavelli's practical guidance for a prince on how to administrate a state is always to find a way to take advantage of every situation to facilitate arriving at successful outcomes, which would sometimes necessitate breaking his own promises.¹¹¹ It is worth emphasizing a point that Machiavelli justifies his advice again by drawing the reader's attention to the badness of people: "if men were all good, this rule [breaking one's promise] would not be good; but since men are a sorry lot and

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 134.

¹¹¹ Regarding this point, I would like to highlight the following diagnosis: "In fact, however, Machiavelli holds that the conduct of the good statesman and the morally good man may diverge. The point may be put in another way. The utilitarian supposes that moral laws such as 'Keep your promises' or 'Do not kill' are really generalizations from actions which have on the whole been found useful. Now it may happen that on certain occasions it is useful to break such a moral law. But such an action would not be immoral; on the contrary, it would be morally wrong in these circumstances to be obeying the law, *i.e.* to act in accordance with a generalization which does not fit the case in question. But Machiavelli, through he holds that the morally good action is often useful, does not seem to hold that it is morally good, *because* it is useful, so that when a moral law such as 'Keep your promises' is broken on the grounds that it is not useful to observe it, the action is genuinely immoral." G. H. R. Parkinson, "Ethics and Politics in Machiavelli," *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 5:18 (1955), 42.

will not keep their promises to you, you likewise need not keep yours to them.”¹¹² The majority is always ingrate, versatile, insincere and self-seeking; and the sovereign is destined to be deceived as long as he believes in them. In a world where most people are dissolute, behaving in a virtuous manner would be a mere anomaly to be removed.

Although the first virtue of a prince to be improved as far as possible is the art of cunning, it would always be advisable for him to appear all merciful, faithful, humane, sincere, and religious; indeed it is useful to be so. Though he ought to be able to conduct himself regardless of such principles as far as the security of the state is concerned. For the sake of the security of the state, hypocrisy and deceit are indispensable.¹¹³ Again in the *Discourses*, Machiavelli plainly states: “for when the entire safety of one’s country is at stake, there should be no consideration of what is just or unjust, merciful or cruel, praiseworthy or disgraceful; on the contrary, putting aside every form of respect, that decision will save her life and preserve her liberty.”¹¹⁴ What is morally right, in this sense, could be politically wrong or *vice versa*. The sovereign is sometimes obliged to perform an action against all humanity as long as he wants to prolong its authority and to prevent himself from being deceived. Insincerity is an unavoidable part of the art of administration, but this is not a dilemma for the sovereign; for, the most of simple-hearted people are inclined to approve of what appears to them instead of being aware of the real intentions behind the prince’s behaviors. Even the trickiest spectators look at appearance and give their judgments by keeping an eye on the very conducts of the sovereign. In this manner, the prince may elevate himself to a privileged position, even though only a few really know him; the majority believes what they observe:

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ See *ibid.*, especially 133-136.

¹¹⁴ Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, 186.

And men in general judge more by their eyes than their hands; for everyone can see but few can feel. Everyone sees what you seem to be, few perceive what you are ... for ordinary people are always deceived by appearances and by the outcome of a thing; and in the world there is nothing but ordinary people; and there is no room for the few; the many have a place to lean on.¹¹⁵

Machiavelli's "Galilean" craft of politics finds its ground on the denial of all kind of theological and moral assumptions. Hypocrisy is, for instance, just a rule of politics, which has its own rules basically irrelevant to any religious understanding of morality modified by the majority in his times. Leo Strauss puts it as follows:

Machiavelli rejects the whole philosophic and theological tradition...One must start from how men do live; one must love one's sights. The immediate corollary is the reinterpretation of virtue: Virtue must not be understood as that for the sake of which the commonwealth exists, but virtue exists exclusively for the sake of commonwealth; political life proper is not subject to morality; morality is not possible outside of political society; it presupposes political society; political society cannot be established and preserved by staying within the limits of morality, for the simple reason that the effect or the conditioned cannot precede the cause or condition. Furthermore, the establishment of political society and even of the most desirable political society does not depend on chance, for chance can be conquered or corrupt matter can be transformed into incorrupt manner.¹¹⁶

Thus, one of the most fundamental tenets of Machiavellian revolution is to legitimate amoral standards for politics. Politics in this frame would rather be considered as a technique to be learned and executed in its very practice. Although ancient schools of philosophy examined in the previous chapter tried to save the supreme ideals of a morality from the vices of the existing political realm, Machiavelli's attempt turned out to be a project of categorically and practically elevating *Realpolitik* above common morality. The Machiavellian

¹¹⁵ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 135-136.

¹¹⁶ Leo Strauss, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 86-87.

revolution, thus, glorifies the “real,” which means that it regards what is proceeding in the political realm. The problem for Machiavelli is not therefore to ponder upon the question of how one ought to live, but rather on how people actually live. Machiavellian revolution in a sense resolves the conflict between ethics and politics by affirming the following assertion: politics is in its essence the amoral craft of governing, and indeed, it should be so. This is the core of Machiavellian revolution pursued by various modern philosophers, one of whom is, no doubt, Thomas Hobbes.

4.2. Hobbes: Politics as a Science

Hobbes is a Machiavellian philosopher in the sense that he categorically demarcates the science of politics from moral philosophy.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, from an opposite perspective, one might have a right to argue that there seems to be an intimate relation between Hobbes’ moral and political philosophy, as exemplified in the following proposal: “for Hobbes, moral and political philosophy are closely related because ... the former has consequences for the latter. Thus, before we can really understand Hobbes’ political philosophy, we must first examine his ideas about morality.”¹¹⁸ Hobbes’ “possessive individualism” could be regarded as his implicit moral standpoint from which his political ideas are derived.¹¹⁹ Or, no doubt, unlike humanists who are willing to praise peace by magnifying its merits, in the time of civil wars to which Hobbes frequently refers, his endeavor was likely to demonstrate why and how peace is the best choice for men. He was aware that the chief target of all natural laws, as presented in his masterwork, *Leviathan*, is surely to establish and preserve the peace in the society. A constitution should be composed of natural laws, which may be summarized as the following: “whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that you do

¹¹⁷ See also Strauss’ diagnosis: “Machiavelli had completely severed the connection between politics and natural law or natural right, i.e., with justice understood as something independent of human arbitrariness. The Machiavellian revolution acquired its full force only when that connection was restored: when justice, as natural right, was reinterpreted in Machiavelli’s spirit. This was the work primarily of Hobbes” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, 88.

¹¹⁸ Stephen J. Finn, *A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum, 2007), 62.

¹¹⁹ See C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

to them” (*quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*).”¹²⁰ Let us consider that even if Hobbes refrains from paying respect to the similar humanistic supreme principles, his realist affirmation of peace has a considerable ethical implication. Although Hobbes himself would not confirm the assertion that his “political science”—or “*Politiques*,” “Civil Philosophy” in his own terms—relies on a set of moral suppositions, one can expose the implicit moral stance of Hobbesian political theory to view.

The purpose of the present study is neither to scrutinize Hobbes’ oeuvre in detail nor to elucidate the moral foundations or ethical implications of his political philosophy. There are plenty of illuminating works devoted to elaboration of this issue in the relevant literature. What rather seems to me more striking here is how and why Hobbes sharply differentiates the realm of morality from that of political science. When the table of sciences to which Hobbes attached the end of chapter XI in *Leviathan* is taken into consideration, at first, one can discern that Hobbes manifestly divides sciences into two primarily dissimilar, irreducible branches: while “natural philosophy” is solely concerned with the consequences of the accidents of natural bodies, “civil philosophy” investigates the consequences from the accidents of *politique* bodies. Again in *De Corpore*, he argues that contrary to the former branches of sciences, the focus of which is the question of how nature works, the latter is plainly concerned with what is constituted by the human will through conventions, namely a compact among men. And this compact is called the state.¹²¹ Hobbes, in other words, conceives “ethics” as a part

¹²⁰ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 92.

¹²¹ Cf. *De corpore*, ch. I.9: “The principal parts of philosophy are two. For two chief kinds of bodies, and very different from one another, offer themselves to such as search after their generation and properties; one whereof being the work of nature, is called a *natural body*, the other is called a *commonwealth*, and is made by the wills, and agreement of men. And from these spring the two parts of philosophy, called *natural* and *civil*. But seeing that, for the knowledge of a commonwealth, it is necessary first to know the dispositions, affections, and manners of men, civil philosophy is again commonly divided into two parts, whereof one, which treats of men dispositions and manners, is called *ethics*; and the other, which takes cognizance of their civil duties, is called *politics*, or simply *civil philosophy*. This paragraph is cited in Richard Truck, “Hobbes’ Moral Philosophy,” in the *Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, ed. Tom Sorell, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 178-179.

of natural philosophy as a science, which explores the consequences of the passions of men. Political bodies in Hobbesian schema have their own characteristic features. Nevertheless, it cannot in principle be construed as moral philosophy. It is rather a separate branch of science having a distinct subject to investigate.¹²²

After his close assessment of Hobbes' oeuvre in detail, regarding this uneven categorical separation of ethics from politics, Richard Tuck rightly concludes that "Hobbes regarded politics as the solution to the conflicts characteristic of *mores*."¹²³ The Hobbesian conception of politics as a science, then, can in one sense be taken as the objective ground where varieties of morals can come to an agreement with the laws of nature. Although Hobbes' insistence on categorical disassociation of morality from politics is evident, it seems to me unclear why Hobbes wrote the following lines in *Leviathan*:

And the Science of [the laws of nature] is the true and onely Moral Philosophy. For Morall Philosophy is nothing else but the Science of what is *Good*, and *Evill*, in the conversation, and the Society of mankind ... Now the science of Vertue and Vice, is Morall Philosophie; and therefore the true Doctirine of the Lawes of Nature, is the true Morall Philosophie.¹²⁴

Whatever Hobbes' reason or intention was, his persistence regarding the exclusion of what has been known as morality from the science of politics is still plain to eye. Inferences from passions of men, namely, morality in Hobbes' conception, are hence something irrelevant to the characteristic qualities of political organizations. In one sense, it would not seem unreasonable to affirm that the Machiavellian technique of politics turned out to be the science of

¹²² Cf. Richard Truck, "Hobbes' Moral Philosophy," 179-180: "This sharp distinction between ethics and politics, expressed in these terms, illustrates the heterodoxy of Hobbes' view of ethics. The contents of moral philosophy according to both the old tradition and our own view of the matter are, after all, precily such things as "justice and all the other virtues," which Hobbes assigned to the domain of *civil* philosophy; whereas ethics, for him, was conversant instead with the passions and manners of men."

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹²⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 110-111.

politics in Hobbes' works; while the natural laws are reduced to a single principle of self-preservation, morality becomes identical with the civil laws. The regulation of conflicting interests of the people, for Hobbes, appears to establish an autonomous and discrete sphere of human activity in scientific terms. Then, there would be no necessity to find a ground for moral obligation in politics; for, natural laws are already supposed to be rational or natural—but not moral in Hobbes' terminology—and are the precepts explicating what is the best way for people to peacefully regulate their social relations. These laws are conceived as the guarantee for establishing and preserving peace among men. This simply brings about security for all, and the talk of any supreme moral ideals is simply a waste of time without ensuring the social security. The parties who are willing to sign a Hobbesian contract, of course, should keep their promises. Let us consider that Hobbes' ambition is not to exalt the moral values of being a man of his world. He might rather prefer to recommend that if you do not keep your promise and violate the contract among us, then this could pave the way for declaring a war against you. In this case, you would most probably be in the most insecure condition regardless of your power and status: "for as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others, that are in the same danger with himselfe."¹²⁵ Wars are, in other words, always unpredictable and unavoidably lead a country to be thrown into complete disorder. Therefore, the most secure option is not to engage in warfare. All the same, Hobbes justifies peace by means of enacting social contracts not for the sake of attaining the most honorable ideals of morality but for the sake of one's own security, which is supposed to be the most reasonable preference. Hobbesian social contract theory has no special moral value in itself. To put it differently, a social contract cannot aim at conforming to an unearthly moral norm. It might be just a "proper manner," as Hobbes would say:

By MANNERS, I mean not here, Decency of behaviour; as how one man should salute another, or how a man wash his mouth, or pick his teeth before company, and such other points of the *Small Moralls*;

¹²⁵ Ibid., 87

But those qualities of man-kind, that concern their living together in Peace, and Unity. To which end we are to consider, that Felicity of this life, consisteth not in the repose of a mind satisfied. For there is no such *Finis ultimus*, (utmost ayme,) nor *Summum Bonum*, (greatest Good) as is spoken in the Books of the old Morall Philosophers.¹²⁶

So, Hobbes' removal of morality from political science may rather have a practical meaning. Within the socio-historical realm, as he states on a number of occasions, peace and unity must always be evaluated as the ideals to be achieved and preserved, though this does not stem from a kind of moral reasoning for Hobbes. As a human being, demanding one's own security, and more properly, establishing the very social and political conditions whose service is to provide his own self-preservation is likely to be so natural inclination that it does not entail appealing to any moral norm. The state of nature in which everything is permitted means that my so-called freedom is limitless in the sense that I can do whatever I want. There is no rule in the state of nature with which I have to comply. Freedom in this sense is being free from all external obstacles. But in this case, if everyone behaves in the same manner as in the state of nature, I cannot assure my own security simply because another person, for this or that reason, could perceive even my bodily existence as an obstacle to satisfy his desires. There would be no difference for anyone between killing a number of people and eating a cone of ice-cream because there is no contract in the state of nature. This is well-known as Hobbes' state of war: everyone stands against everyone. Since one of the essential characteristics of human nature is to be self-seeking, and since the ultimate good or the highest end of human life is nothing different than ensuring the peaceful coexistence of human beings in the eyes of Hobbes, the problem of security is resolved through signing a plausible contract so as to assure mutual benefits for all parties. Living peacefully is rather a rational preference for Hobbes, not a moral ideal to be followed in the name of being a wise or a good man. This may be the very reason why Hobbes maintains that true moral philosophy is the one presented in the *Leviathan*. Otherwise, from a Hobbesian point of view, there seems to be no way other than merely

¹²⁶ Ibid., 69-70.

mentioning the putative existence of the sacred moral norms and awaiting people to deem and act in accordance with them. A priest may condemn war and invite humanity to settle peace. This could be a mere expectation, a good wish, one might also call it, and at the same time, it would most probably remain so without a binding law to be enforced. Understood in this way, the problem for Hobbes is to describe the rational organization of society through the science of politics. Morality in this framework would seem to be a non-scientific attitude. Politics is and ought to be a science, not a moral enterprise. Hobbesian separation of moral philosophy from political science is thus founded upon the following assumption: political science is exempt from all moral assessment. Politics as a science and its practice has nothing common with morality. This is in one sense an equation of morality with politics. If the proper moral philosophy is that which is advocated in the *Leviathan*, there would be no need to emphasize the role of morality in political science and practice. Hence, the Machiavellian strict division of politics and morality resembles the Hobbesian removal of morality from politics, traces of which could also be found in the works of Mandeville.

4.3. Mandeville: Moral Vices are Political Benefits

THUS every Part was full of vice,
Yet the whole Mass a Paradise;
They were th' Esteem of Foreingners, And lavish of their Wealth and
Lives,
The Balance of all other Hives.
Such were the Blessings of the State;
Their Crimes conspi'd to make them Great:
And Virtue, who from Politicks
Had learn'd a Thousand Cunning Tricks,
Was, by their happy Influence,
Made Friends with Vice: And ever since,
The worst of all Multitude
Did something for the Common Good.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, ed. F. B. Kaye (Oxford: Clerandon Press, 1924), 24.

Bernand Mandeville (1670-1733) who came to be known “man-devil” in his times canonized all “moral vices” in the name of justifying public benefits: a number of actions might be denominated as “vices,” nonetheless; this is not to say that they are corruptive. For instance, pretending to be sincerely virtuous is indispensable for being a successful person who is interested in obtaining public benefits. Nevertheless, genuine sincerity is in fact not a genuine virtue within a commercial society rooted in feelings like envy and competition. For Mandeville what seems to be virtue is self-denial, and the realization of one’s own natural inclinations necessitates committing hypocritical acts.

At the beginning of *The Fable of the Bees*, in the section entitled “The Origin of the Moral Virtue,” Mandeville narrates a story about why the idea of morality has emerged and how it has functioned in a society: the human being is by nature an “extraordinary selfish and headstrong, as well as cunning Animal”¹²⁸ and this is why it is impossible that the people can be governed properly by force alone. Instead, lawgivers and other wise men—or “politicians” as they will be called—established their hegemony over the majority of people through flattery. They “began to instruct them in Notions of Honor and Shame; representing the one as the worst of all Evils, and the other as the highest good to which Mortals could aspire.”¹²⁹ Then, they decided to divide men into two classes: first are slaves of their sensual pleasures and have no regard of others’ good. These men are different from bestial animals in nothing but their outward appearance. But the other class consists in people who are free from selfishness because they “opposed by the Help of Reason their most violent Inclinations; and making a continual War with themselves to promote the Peace of others, aim’d at no less than Public Welfare and the conquest of their own Passion.”¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Ibid., 41-42.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 43.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 44.

This separation works perfectly in favor of administration of a society from the politicians' point of view. The followers of supreme moral ideals, namely those who belong to the second class of people or "Heroes" as Mandeville calls them, would easily resign from their desire to administrate in order to contribute the public good. The other class would probably be liable to hide their own imperfections and could make an effort to appear as public-spirited men. Therefore, the result is the following:

[T]he first Rudiments of Morality, broach'd by skilful Politicians, to render Men useful to each other as well as tractable, were chiefly contrived that Ambitious might reap the more Benefit from, and govern vast Numbers of them with Ease and Security. This Foundation of Politicks being once laid, it is impossible that Man should long remain uncivilized.¹³¹

For Mandeville, the invention of morality is hence a phrase of deliberative political strategy, "the skilful Management of wary Politicians"¹³², or, a means of effectively administrating the majority. What has been considered by people as "virtue" is in fact "contrary to the impulse of Nature."¹³³ Indeed, "Moral Virtues are the Political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride."¹³⁴

The success of politicians, virtues of "skilful politicians" or "skilful management" as Mandeville calls them a numbers of times throughout the *Fable*, stems from their ability to play with people's passions: "whoever would civilize Men, and establish them into a Body Politick, must be thoroughly acquainted with all the Passions and Appetites, Strength and Weaknesses of their Frame and understand how to turn their greatest Frailties to the Advantage of the Publick."¹³⁵

¹³¹ Ibid., 47.

¹³² Ibid., 51.

¹³³ Ibid., 48.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 51. For Mandeville on virtue, see Shelley Burt, "A world without Virtue: Mandeville's Social and Political Thought" in *Virtue Transformed: Political Argument in England, 1688-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 128-149.

¹³⁵ Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, 230. Consider

The transformation of individuals' "desires" and "vices" into the benefits of society is hence the groundwork of Mandeville's new science of politics, which is entirely free from the restraints of common morality and religious beliefs. In this way, politicians have to acquire certain technical or political skills for acting in compliance with putative moral virtues. The task of reason is no longer to uncover the truth and live in accordance with it, but to execute the art of cunning. Hypocrisy in this frame is not immediately blamed by appealing to "bygone" ethical principles. It is rather conceived as an inevitable fact to be understood and that must calmly be justified in certain cases.¹³⁶

Regarding the relation between ethics and politics, what seems hence to be common in Machiavelli, Hobbes and Mandeville is their challenge to set a gap between ethics from politics. It seems that these philosophers have a variety of reasons for mistrusting human nature. Machiavelli and Mandeville repeatedly describe majority of people as ingrate, versatile, insincere, whereas Hobbes conceives of their self-seeking nature as an unavoidable verity. One should be particularly attentive to the point that people's essential wickedness in this or that way were presented as one of the chief warrants behind the burden of eliminating ethics from politics, at least apparently in the philosophies of Machiavelli and Mandeville. One of the classical themes of their works is the endeavor to justify the putative gap between ethics and politics in alternative ways. Presiding over a state or a people is a mere technique for Machiavelli, which is unrelated with

also the following: "The Power and Sagacity as well as Labour and Care of the Politician in civilizing the Society, has been no where more conspicuous, than in the happy Contrivance of playing our passions against one another. By flattering our Pride and still increasing the good inspiring us on the other with a superlative Dread and Mortal aversion against Shame, the Artful Moralists have taught us cheerfully to encounter our selves, and if not subdue, at least so to conceal disguise our darling Passion, Lust, that we scarce know it when we meet with it in our own Breasts; Oh! The mighty Prize we have in view for all our Self-denial!" Ibid., 154.

¹³⁶ Regarding Mandeville, David Ruciman distinguishes two orders of hypocrisy: "First-order hypocrisy is the ubiquitous practice of concealing vice as virtue, which makes up the parade of our social existence. Second-order hypocrisy is concealing the truth about this practice, and pretending that the parade itself is a form of genuinely virtuous, and therefore self-denying, behaviour. We may need to hide the truth *about* ourselves in order to get by in this world, but we oughtn't to hide the truth *from* ourselves that this what we are doing." See his *Political Hypocrisy: The Mask of Power, from Hobbes to Orwell and Beyond*, 53-54.

common morals. According to Hobbes, politics is and ought to be a science, not a moral practice. Mandeville is a philosopher who passionately justifies the moral vices of society due to their beneficial outcomes. Nonetheless, in this intellectual climate, instead of grounding the emancipation of morality from politics, there was also an opposing tendency for defending the desire for the subordination of politics to morality, the well-known exemplar of which is the practical philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

4.4. Kant in the Conflict between Ethics and Politics

Kant opens his *Groundwork* with adopting the ancient division of philosophy into three foremost branches: logic, physics and ethics. Logic as a formal science is solely concerned with *a priori* fundamentals; in contrast, both physics and ethics have empirical parts. The empirical part of ethics as Kant calls it, is “practical anthropology” while its *a priori* part is the “metaphysics of morals,” which deals with concepts that should not in principle be derived from experience, namely concepts like “good,” “evil,” “duty,” etc. The task pursued in the *Groundwork* is then to explore the purely rational part of ethics, namely the “metaphysics of morals.”

The Kantian revolution in moral philosophy appears to initiate itself with one of *Groundwork*'s well-known assertions that the mixing of the empirical and theoretical parts of ethics, as exemplified in the philosophies of Hobbes, Mandeville or Machiavelli, inevitably leads to a moral degeneration. There seems to be two main reasons behind this contention. First, without sorting out pure rational part of ethics from the empirical, one would be unable to properly elucidate moral consciousness; for, this consciousness is supposed to be derived from an understanding of moral law and unconditional duty, which are again, for Kant, conceivable only when all the empirical elements, namely impurities, are taken out from the rational ground of morality. Second, as Kant would say, there might be no adequate criteria for making a distinction between “what is held to be good” and “what is genuinely good” if the *a priori* principles are mixed with empirical ones. Hence, one has to investigate the “pure ethics” with the intention

of establishing “supreme principles of morality.” This is or ought to be the ultimate condition of moral judgments, all of which should indeed be grasped entirely *a priori*. For instance, the idea of “good will,” so as to be genuine good will, ought to be independent from all external (or empirical) circumstances. It should be derived neither from its consequences, nor from desires, interests, impulses or instincts.¹³⁷ When an action originates from immediate inclinations, that is, the sum of the possible empirical conditions, self-interests, desires, instincts or impulses, which are also common to animals, these might bring about a vice. Therefore, the moral act is an act done from duty alone. This is the sole condition an act must fulfill to gain a moral worth.¹³⁸

Then, one might ask how one can be acquainted with how an action is done from duty? Kant deals with this question by focusing on the *maxim* or the principle according to which we act. Notice that *material* maxims satisfying particular desires or directing a particular consequence cannot be regarded as the ultimate ground for morally good action. For these reasons, the maxim of an action having moral worth ought to be an “objective” or a *formal* maxim, by means of which one can steer clear of vices originating from *material* maxims. If this can be done, the *formal* maxim would likely be written in the form of law, which is supposed to be valid for all rational agents. It is the duty:

Duty! Sublime and mighty name that embraces nothing charming or insinuating but requires submission, and yet does not seek to move the will by threatening anything that would arouse natural aversion or terror in the mind but only holds forth a law that of itself finds entry into the mind and yet gains reluctant reverence (through not always obedience), a law before which all inclinations are dumb, even though they secretly work against it; what origin is there worthy of you, and where is to be found the root of your noble descent which proudly

¹³⁷ For instance, Kant says that “[a] good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes, because of its fitness to attain some proposed end, but only because of its volition, that is, it is good in itself and, regarded for itself, is to be valued incomparably higher than all that conduct merely be brought about by it in favor of some inclination and indeed, if you will, of the sum of all inclinations.” See *Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4: 394.

¹³⁸ See *Ibid.* 4: 400-4:404.

rejects all kinship with the inclinations, descent from which is the indispensable condition of that worth which human beings alone can give themselves?¹³⁹

Duty is neither a law imposed on us, nor one originating from any stimulus of the senses, but from the thought that my will always voluntarily be under its command.¹⁴⁰ Then, a person would be a morally good person when one does not act out of a desire of satisfying of his desires or for attaining of happiness; but when this law is considered by him as the law that one ought to abide by for its own sake. This is the *categorical imperative*, the first formulation of which is the following: “act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law.”¹⁴¹ This imperative is the most general and empty form of moral law that every particular moral rule is obliged to be deduced from it. In this sense, it is an idiom of the highest dictum of morality. In other words and with reference to Kant’s own words, unlike conditioned imperatives such as hypothetical, problematic/technical, assertoric/pragmatic, this sort of imperative is objective, absolute and unconditioned in its general form, like “I ought to do such and such without any prior ‘if’ condition.” Kant exemplifies how this imperative should be put into practice. For instance, (i) when one commits suicide, it will certainly contradict with the perfect duty towards the self; similarly (ii) making a false promise simply means that one is not actually in the command of the perfect duty towards others; (iii) omitting the cultivation of our talents, on the other hand, would be in contradiction with an imperfect duty towards self; and finally (iv) omitting to help other persons implies that one does not pursue his task of realizing the imperfect duty towards

¹³⁹ Ibid., 5: 86.

¹⁴⁰ For instance, see *ibid.*, 5: 81: “[T]he concept of duty, therefore, requires of the action *objective* accord with the law but requires of the maxim of the action *subjective* respect for the law, as the sole way of determining the will by the law. And on this rests the distinction between consciousness of having acted in *conformity with duty* and *from duty*, that is, respect for the law, the first of which (legality) is possible even if the inclinations alone have been determining grounds of the will whereas the second (*morality*), moral worth, must be placed solely in this: that the action takes place from duty, that is, for the sake of the law alone.”

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 4: 421.

others.¹⁴² Hence, in the all cases in which we are unable to act in accordance with duty, “we find that we do not really will that our maxim should become a universal law since that is impossible for us, but that opposite of our maxim should instead be a universal law; only we take the liberty of making an *exception* to it for ourselves (or just for this once) to the advantage of our inclination.”¹⁴³

This is to say, there ought to be no external relationship between the maxim and the law that must be obeyed. Quite the opposite, only when this relationship is internalized by a certain, acting subject, only when there is no gap between “following a universal law” and “making a universal law” through the *formal* maxim, an action would properly gain its moral worth by means of the concept of duty. To put it differently, a rational agent must be the one who both makes and abides by the moral laws with reference to the *formal* maxim. This is the only way for a rational agent to elevate himself to the *kingdom of ends* where all rational agents are supposed to have dignity as law making members:

Now in this way a world of rational beings (*mundus intelligibilis*) as a kingdom of ends is possible through the giving of their own laws by all persons as members. Consequently, every rational being must act as if he were by his maxims at all times a lawgiving member of the universal kingdom of ends. The formal principle of these maxims is, act as if your maxims were to serve at the same time as a universal law (for all rational beings).¹⁴⁴

Understood in this way, in order to be deserving “dignity,” persons, as ends in themselves, are obliged to act through their formal maxims as if they were lawmaking members of kingdom of ends. Yet this is the compulsory, but not the sufficient condition for performing a moral act. If the will of the members in the kingdom of ends are governed by heteronymous principles, which could be mixed with empirical elements, they come to place themselves under the law of nature, not under the law of freedom. Simply for this reason, the principle of

¹⁴² Ibid., 4: 422-4: 424.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 4: 424.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 4: 438.

autonomy in Kant's ethics appears to be another necessary condition for all moral judgments.

What should thus be the relation between *will* and *autonomy*? Especially when the relationship between the concept of will and the origin of moral judgment is taken into account, it becomes plain that the will, for Kant, is free in the sense that it is opposed to natural necessity. The will must causally act without being caused; otherwise, an act cannot be denominated as a moral action, but like the acts of animals, entirely determined by natural necessity. Will, in this sense, must be free to act under laws.¹⁴⁵ And if these laws cannot be imposed by a subject, then the laws of freedom have to be self-imposed laws. This might be the reason why the concepts of autonomy and morality presuppose the concept of *freedom*. Another formulation would be the following: the origin of a rational agent's moral action must be a set of axioms which are in principle entirely independent of the external influences or impulses that reason by itself cannot preside over.

At this point, let us note that Kant's definition of morality is totally independent of both empirical reality and the social-political realm since he defines morality in terms of unconditional formal requirements to be expected from a noumenal self. One must conform to unconditional laws if one is willing to behave morally. This is similar to context independence of an axiomatic system, in which particular formal maxims of actions are deductively derived from the highest moral principles. For instance, in Kant's ethics, freedom is supposed to be a mere formal prerequisite that belongs to the intelligible world. This in turn basically means that within a social-historical realm, one cannot experience morality as such defined, but one would rather improve oneself in a way to imagine that he ought to be free and behave so. One is thus always indebted to behave in every instance as if he was free from all external, namely empirical or social and political, conditions. If this is so, it seems unsurprising that unconditional moral

¹⁴⁵ See Ibid. 4: 440-441.

dictums come into conflict with the current socio-political realm or politics in its general sense.

Kant in fact is well aware of this problem and in the appendix to his *Toward Perpetual Peace*, argues that “a true system of politics can therefore not take a step without having already paid homage to morals, and although politics by itself is a difficult art, its union with morals is no art at all; for as soon as the two conflict with each other, morals cuts the knot that politics cannot unite.”¹⁴⁶

As the quotation above exemplifies, for Kant, there must be no conflict between the moral laws and their execution in the political realm. Even so, this could be mere vain hope. For the majority of people, and also for Kant, it seems that the moral realm does not always conform to actual politics. Due to the selfish disposition of people, actual politics can deviate from the moral ideals that Kant advocates. Having been confronted with such a bare fact, Kant identifies two types of politician: “the moral politician” and “the political moralist.” In Kant’s words, “the moral politician” is someone “who takes principles of political prudence in such a way that they co-exist with morals,” whereas “political moralist” is the one who “frames a morals to suit the statesman’s advantage.”¹⁴⁷ If examined closely, the Kantian understanding of politics is likely to exist in a realm that ought to be subordinated to the realm of ethics, which is independent from empirical reality in its nature. However, the political realm inevitably rests on experience; it is undoubtedly an experimental realm, in which both moral reasoning and political judgments are open to revision and beg further discussion. Kant’s categorical subordination of politics to morality, in one sense, resembles Plato’s dream in *Republic* in which the ideally just city finds its ground in the metaphysics of forms. The political good is already a moral good in his view, and in fact there must be no disparity between these categories. The moral good and the political good are and ought to be the same. Once a certain kind of reality like

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 8:380.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 8: 372.

the “world of forms” or “pure practical reason” is assumed to be categorically independent of the realm of politics, there seems to be no way to bridge these realms again. Since all moral judgments are *synthetic a priori* and necessary, whatever the circumstance we are confronted with, then, there would be just one single way that remains to be followed. This way should be certainly found by a proper deduction from the values independent of the empirical world. Hence, from the Kantian perspective, the problem becomes finding a way to unite these realms that he had already separated:

If both [morals and politics] cannot coexist in one command, there is really a conflict of politics with morals; but if both ought nevertheless to be thoroughly united, then the concept of opposition is absurd, and the question of how that conflict is to be resolved cannot even be posed as a problem. Although the proposition *honesty is the best politics* contains a theory that is, unfortunately, very often contradicted by practice, the equally theoretical proposition *honesty is better than all politics* is raised infinitely above all objections and is indeed the indispensable condition of all politics.¹⁴⁸

Once again, Kant’s reflection is that politics ought to be the execution of morality in practice. The resolution of the conflict is, conversely, likely to be possible in theory, and if this resolution is put into practice, there would no longer be a conflict. Kant is, in other words, of the view that only when politics *qua* politics becomes the implementation of the proper inferences from ethics, the quarrel will surely be end. This implies that in a society where politics is often conceived as an amoral set of practices, it would not be unexpected that morality and politics are irreconcilable. If the conflict stems from the friction between the unconditional moral principles and the conditional requirements of politics, only within an ideal society would ethics and politics come into agreement:

Thus the harmony of politics with morals is possible only within a federative union (which is therefore given a priori and is necessary by principle of right), and all political prudence has for its rightful basis

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 8: 370.

the establishment of such a union in its greatest possible extent, without which end all its utilizing is unwise and veiled injustice.¹⁴⁹

This paragraph conveys the impression that the disagreement between ethics and politics may be nothing other than the mere expression of conflicts between current political reality and divine moral precepts. The clash between ethics and politics cannot be abolished unless a society is organized appropriate to the moral principles. This clash, however, would not serve as an excuse for vice in an imperfect society.¹⁵⁰ Since a moral person has to be free to choose the right thing to do, one should not be in any case a slave of external circumstances, which could possibly force him to conduct in a morally wrong manner.

Kant's response to the Machiavellian revolution is hence to reconcile ethics with politics by subordinating politics to ethics. For example, Mandeville's argument finds its determining ground of will and morality in *subjective* (or empirical) and *external* principles, which Kant criticizes as a futile endeavor.¹⁵¹ Machiavellian elimination of morality from politics or Kantian subordination of politics to ethics are two responses to resolve the conflict. It is worth accentuating that both responses embark on a dualist understanding of the quandary. One can believe that ethics either ought to be merged into political affairs in the Kantian manner or that it must be removed from it as exemplified in the Machiavellian revolution. In both cases, yet, the conflict remains unresolved. The contest between moral values and political practices was also a classical theme in Greek and Roman political thought. What changed, then, from the Socratic ideal pursued in Greek cities to the Machiavellian revolution and Kantian response to it in Europe?

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 8: 385.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. 8: 379.

¹⁵¹ See 5: 39-5:42. For Kant contra Hobbes, see also 8: 290- 8:306.

4.5. The Era of Politics as a Vocation: A Critical Assessment

In our contemporary world, confronting with variety of ethics an ordinary practice for those who are interested in practical philosophy: ethics of sports, ethics of technology, engineering ethics, medical ethics, ethics of international relations, business ethics, sexual ethics, feminist ethics, police ethics, computer ethics, environmental ethics, machine ethics, neuroethics, bioethics, media or journalism ethics, military ethics, animal ethics and so on. All these disciplines are often gathered under the term of “applied ethics” and within this frame, “ethics of politics” or “political morality” is a branch of “applied ethics,” which deals with the moral problems concerning political activities, political decisions or decision making procedures. The moral norms that ought to be adopted by politicians are also one of the foremost concerns of “ethics of politics” or of “political morality.” Politics in the present intellectual climate often seems to be considered as an activity, a realm or a career having a peculiar kind of morality.

From one perspective, the existence of diverse branches of ethics can be treated as parts of disciplinary specialization in the academy. The acceleration in and the proliferation of the problems with that we have faced, especially in the last century, could culminate in the elaboration of much more specific moral problems. But from another perspective, one seems to have a right to dispute that there is something strange in this scene. For both Plato and Aristotle, for instance, the term “political morality” or “ethics of politics” would have been labeled as category mistakes. Both philosophers could have insisted that there is only one way to be a virtuous person, regardless of whether one prefers to engage in political affairs or not. However, should there be special kinds of moral norms peculiar to different spheres of human activity? For instance, is it plausible to presume that politicians have to comply with a different set of norms of conduct from ordinary people?

It is still surely a fact that politicians in the present world have legal rights to arrive at extremely serious judgments about our lives and even about the death of huge number of human beings. Their vocation, at least for this reason, requires them to shoulder an extremely heavy responsibility. At this point we can assume that politicians, who have legal rights to employ power over the majority, should bear tremendous responsibility. And if it is so, do the elected officials have a right to deviate from the commonly accepted moral principles?

On the other hand, it seems reasonable to claim that professionals who belong to different occupational groups have to pursue a distinct set of moral norms while executing their occupational activity. This is both an ethical and legal obligation. Should we develop, then, similar codes of conduct for professional politicians? Should we conclude that we simply leave political matters to the conscience of the politicians?

Whatever the rejoinder to these questions one could give, for the *Zeitgeist* of our era, it is obvious that the attribution of assorted sets of moral norms to diverse professions is considerably wide-spread and commonly espoused. Politics is often supposed to be a special occupation associated with its own unquestioned morality. It seems to be a principle derived from the common sense view that being a “moral” or a “good” person and being a “politician” are usually not identical. The majority of people are inclined to think of separate virtues: those of a morally good person and those of a politician. To repeat, whatever the reason behind the majority’s tendency towards perceiving morality and politics as two distinct realms, is it still ethically admissible to confirm that the existence of this gap is inevitable?

After the Machiavellian revolution, the responses to this query have usually been in the affirmative. Especially in the time of Max Weber, circa the end of 19th century to the first half of the 20th century, it seems that the supposed need for inventing a new ethics peculiar to politicians came to be realized in a broader

intellectual circle.¹⁵² The socio-historical reasons behind the emergence of literature regarding “political morality” or “ethics of politics” could be a subject matter of further investigations. For the time being, the crucial point to notice is the apparent relationship between the emergence of a new class of politicians in the West and the tendency towards defining politics as a vocation. Max Weber’s lecture, “Politics as a Vocation” appraised below can be considered as exemplary of the impact of this trend. Since politics became a professional activity, in or outside of the modern state’s infrastructure in Europe, the conflict between ethics and politics, in one sense, has been substantially established. To put it differently, in a world where politics itself had already turned out to be an occupation, a career or a profession, and was overwhelmingly perceived so publically, people were naturally prone to explore another set of moral norms pertaining to professional politicians. Weber, in his well-known lecture entitled “Politics as a Vocation” (1919), for instance, deliberately attempts to comprehend the warrants for the generation and constitution of professional politicians as a distinct class of people. What is more, in this lecture, he presents an outline of the occupational ethics for politicians. For Weber, it is an apparent historical verity that politics is already a vocation, which requires a morality proper to it. In one sense, this is another turning point in the history of political thought. Machiavelli had to provide a formula by which he could show why the prince’s behavior, which is the core of politics *qua* politics, ought to deviate from common morality. But for Weber, there was no need for such a stipulation. It was already a matter of fact, a salient social phenomenon that politicians in their occupational activity are not obliged to abide by common moral norms for this or that reason. This is not an essential part of their career. In Weber, we find the newest shape of the gap between ethics and politics. Before assessing his view, it should be noted that the target here is not to appraise Weber’s argument in detail. I will consider it as a representative instance of the common sense view under consideration.

¹⁵² A few of the representative examples of the literature are: Duke of Argyll, “Morality in Politics,” *Contemporary Review*, 30 (1877, June/November.), 319-333. Alfred Barratt, “Ethics and Politics,” *Mind* (October 1877), 453-476. J. S. Mackenzie, “The Use of Moral Ideas in Politics,” *International Journal of Ethics*, 12:1 (October. 1901), 1-23.

4.5.1. Max Weber: Politics as a Vocation

Max Weber analyzes the modern form of politics and its relation to ethics in his lecture entitled “Politics as a Vocation.” Sociologically speaking, for Weber, politics as a realm of human activity seems to be best understood by characterizing people who are known as politicians. But who actually are they? What makes a person politician?

Politicians in Weber’s conception are those whose endeavor is to gain more power, and in this sense, it does not matter whether a politician conceives of power as the ultimate end or as the means to reach a higher purpose. In Weber’s own words: “whoever is active in politics strives for power, either power as a mean in the service of other goals, whether idealistic or selfish, or power ‘for its own sake,’ in other words, so as to enjoy the feeling of prestige that it confers.”¹⁵³ Therefore, politics is by definition a power struggle and politicians are those who professionally partake in it for various reasons. Politics at the hand of these people could straightforwardly be converted into a challenge to attract votes by prompting trust to their followers. This is to say, in a society where “politics came to life only at election time,”¹⁵⁴ the focal concern of professional politicians is to collect votes in the electoral marketplace.

Weber’s primary concern at this point is not to ponder upon power struggles as such, but rather to comprehend how “professional politicians” (*Berufspolitiker*) behave. As far as the fundamental motive behind their engagement in politics is concerned, Weber identifies the chief types of politicians: occasional or professional. A typical occasional politician, as Weber argues, is the person who casts votes, applauds or protests a political pronouncement, makes a political speech, might be an active or inactive member of a political party, who can often participate in political meetings, etc. All local political agents are, in this sense,

¹⁵³ Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004), 33-34.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

occasional politicians.¹⁵⁵ Most of people in the current Western or Western-like democracies are thus occasional or part-time politicians whose engagement in politics is restricted with such activities.

There are, conversely, two types of full time politicians: those who live solely *for* politics or those who benefit contingently *from* politics.¹⁵⁶ Those who live *for* politics conceive of politics *qua* politics as the ultimate end in life. They take a part in politics just for attaining inner pleasure, because politics in their eyes is a way of life, an inevitable means for their own gratification. This is, in other words, devotion of oneself to politics without expecting any further reward other than enjoying politics itself. Living such a life requires economic independence in the sense that a person who lives *for* politics should have a sufficient income at least to satisfy his basic needs. Otherwise, a person who exclusively depends on money earned from politics can be subject to it, and this might obstruct the inner pleasure that is sought.

The people who benefits *from* politics in Weber's conception, in contrast, "can be a pure 'beneficiary' [*Pfründner*] or a salaried 'official.'"¹⁵⁷ This sort of professional politicians is by definition economically dependent on money earned in politics. When they find a better opportunity for gaining money or prestige, they might have no trouble giving politics up immediately. In this sense, those benefit *from* politics have no firm political principles anchoring them or what they appreciate.¹⁵⁸ They are completely without convictions and merely interested in how to acquire power in the form of money or prestige.

It would then be said that a person who lives *for* politics could be more inclined to be a good politician. This is an implicit consequence one might derive from Weber's argument. To repeat, it could be more probable that a person who has an

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 39.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 40.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 42.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 70.

inclination towards enjoying politics *qua* politics tends to espouse politics as a vocation. At this point, Weber raises the following question: “what inner pleasures may be expected from a political career and what are the personal qualifications called for those who choose it?”¹⁵⁹ For whom is it better to prefer politics as a vocation?

A politician who has a tendency to favor politics as a vocation should possess, for Weber, at least three character merits. There is a “passion in the sense of a *commitment to the matter in hand [Sachlichkeit]*.”¹⁶⁰ But this ought not to be a blind passion, that is, it should not be blended with a kind of romanticism or be bereft of a definite objective. Although this passion is sincerely felt, it must not be the only guiding emotion for a professional politician. Second, in line with this passion, a professional politician has to feel *responsibility* of his objectives, which are the purposes and the possible results of his own judgments and actions. Third, a politician must have a *sense of proportion*, which reflects “the ability to allow realities to impinge on you while maintaining an inner calm and composure.”¹⁶¹ This sense of proportion is possible by always keeping a distance from people and things.

Let us note that there is a predicament here, which is “to forge hot passion and a cool sense of proportion in one and the same person.”¹⁶² While a professional politician ought to acquire the habit of keeping a distance from things and people, he should at the same time be a passionate person. The genuine feeling of enjoyment through politics and the feeling of responsibility ought to be united in one and the same person. The improvement of a political personality is closely related to the possession and development of the unity among these characteristic qualities.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 76.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 77.

¹⁶² Ibid.

This line of argument implies that Weber noticeably distinguishes the qualities of a character whose endeavor is to be a moral professional politician from the character merits of a morally ideal person. Weber here seems to hold that without having a passion for devotion to politics, a sense of proportion and a sense of responsibility, one cannot be a moral professional politician. These traits are primarily conceived as the merits of a professional politician, to be continually improved upon. Nonetheless, there suddenly appears to be a “fatal enemy,” which can easily prevent a professional politician from perfecting his political personality. This is, in effect, *vanity*, and although it is so widespread that “perhaps no one is entirely free of it;” *vanity* is the source of “two kinds of mortal sin in the field of politics: the lack of commitment to a cause and the lack of sense of responsibility that is often, but not always, identical with it.”¹⁶³ Vanity in Weber’s conception, may lead the politician to lose his sense of objectivity, which in turn prepares an individual for “striving for the glittering facade of power.”¹⁶⁴ On the other hand, if one does not feel responsibility because of vanity, again, it “seduces him into enjoying power for its own sake, rather than for its substantive purpose.”¹⁶⁵ Hence, the person who is willing to settle in politics as a way of life has to be taught firstly how to make use of power ethically. A professional politician has to know how one may serve ultimate goals and how one can act in the service of an “ideal,” instead of promoting the ordinary ends of actions in everyday life. Moreover, if power is an indispensable instrument of all politics, one should always bear in mind the following questions: why do we really want to be powerful? Do we need power for itself, or only as a means to accomplish an ethical and/or political ideal? As Weber further asks, “quite apart from its specific goals, what vocation can politics have within the overall moral economy of our conduct of life? Where is what we might term the ethical location in which politics at home?”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 78.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 79.

Weber begins his analysis of these questions by contrasting the ethics of the Gospel with politics. What Weber calls the “ethics of Gospel,” or “ethics of conviction” is an unconditional ethics, like Kantian ethics, which has unambiguous commandments. Its absolute rules ought to govern all of our moral actions in every case. Thus, ethics of conviction, at the very beginning, refuses to estimate the possible consequences of actions. Whatever its outcomes are and whatever the context within which one acts is, one always ought to comply with the predefined set of moral laws. The duty tells the truth to the actor, in each case. For instance, “you ought to resist not him that is evil with violence [Matthew 19:21]”.¹⁶⁷ Such a person, as Weber says, would always prefer not to take a part in a war and should not even reveal the idea of “revolution.” This is an unworthy ethics of love that a person might get used to. In contrast, a politician must act on a different principle: “[y]ou *shall* use force to resist evil, for otherwise you will be *responsible* for its running amok.”¹⁶⁸ A professional politician should always take responsibility for both foreseeable and unpredictable consequences of his decisions and actions committed in a certain socio-historical realm. This is in fact a part of the problem with regard to the relationship between ends and means, namely whether the end justifies the means or not:

No ethic in the world can ignore the fact that in many cases the achievement of “good” ends is inseparable from the use of morally dubious or at least dangerous means and that we cannot escape the possibility or even probability of evil side effects. And no ethic in the world can say when, and to what extent, the ethically good end can “justify” the ethically dangerous means and its side effects.¹⁶⁹

Let us try to clarify Weber’s point. Suppose that one must judge whether or not to exterminate n amount of innocent people in order to cease a war in which m number innocent people are killed each day. And assume that m is overwhelmingly greater than n and there is no other option to stop or decrease the

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 82.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 84.

killings. Having been confronted with such a predicament, how should one come to a decision? The response, for Weber, would be the following: since politics is chiefly an expression of power relations among human beings and involves employment of force or violence and a commitment to repress violence, there always remains a moral tension between the means and ends. Consequently, “anyone who wishes to engage in politics at all, and particularly anyone who wishes to practice it as a profession, must become conscious of these ethical paradoxes and of his own responsibility for what may become of *him* under the pressure they exert. For, I repeat, he is entering into relations with the satanic powers that lurk in every act of violence.”¹⁷⁰

So, it may be argued that a right political pronouncement might cause unexpected negative effects, which could be ethically inadmissible. A morally good professional politician should therefore be the one who is at all times ready to take responsibility of his own faults and the unexpected outcome of his actions. Moreover, one must aspire to improve the aforementioned merits. This is the core of what Weber calls the “ethics of responsibility.” Weber’s argument thus implies that only those who are capable of being a good professional politician and of acting in line with the ethics of responsibility could resolve the dilemma between ethics and politics. Consequently, politics in its essence necessitates an unusual ethics from Weberian point of view. This ethics need not necessarily contradict with the common morality. However, there seems to be no guarantee that “ethics of conviction” and “ethics of responsibility” are mutually complementary.¹⁷¹

On the other hand, we should also consider that Weber’s moral suggestion for professional politicians would be an instruction for everyone. Abstaining from vanity, accepting responsibility for one’s own faults, passionately devoting oneself to a lofty aim are all morally reasonable submissions not only for professional politicians, but also for the people who have no interest in politics. If

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 90.

¹⁷¹ See Ibid., 83.

this is so, then, what makes Weber's ethics of responsibility an ethics peculiar to the professional politicians? Even if politics is a profession in the present world, should it be so? How can one become a political expert? To which aim should one devote oneself in order to be a professional politician?

It seems that there is neither a definite route towards becoming a professional politician, nor a firm purpose to be accomplished in professing politics as a vocation. Medicine, for example, calls for conforming to a set of pre-defined ethical, legal and technical requirements. Almost in every country there are medical vocational schools and without completing a medical professional training, one cannot have a legal right to introduce himself as a medical doctor. An occupational license in medicine is indispensable for professing the career. Medical practice is often checked by professional organizations with reference to the agreed moral and professional codes of the practice. Besides, taking the Hippocratic Oath is one of the oldest ethical prerequisite of being recognized as a medical doctor. Moreover, as long as diseases exist, healers will exist in a society. The rationale of medicine is of course to preserve and enhance health. Likewise, armies subsist in the present world order for the sake of victory in a possible war or of national defense; this is the reason why people may prefer to be soldiers.

It can be argued here that the seemingly divine purpose and function of professional politicians in a society is itself ethically controversial. Apart from this, it is still meaningful to ask what is and what should be the ultimate intent of politicians in the present or in a possible society? Is it, or should it be the resolution of disagreements, taking the morally right part in power struggles, increasing the wealth of the people? What is and what should be motive for a person who wants to be a professional politician in future?

There seems to be no need to pose similar questions with regard to the profession of the physician. This is principally the reason why politics cannot simply be appraised as an ordinary profession. The existence of such a career would itself

be regarded as an ethical problem. In addition, the conflict between ethics and politics is in fact a difficulty with which a person active in politics may be confronted with in every instant, as Weber argues. Furthermore, even if one does not engage in politics, can he be treated as free from the clash between ethics and politics?¹⁷²

One might further challenge that the meaning of “good life” in our times has turned out to be whatever the individual espouses without caring about “responsibility”. Within a culture of authenticity, an implicit “social contract” seems to be enacted by the members of the so-called “me generation”: “I do whatever pleases me. You do whatever pleases you. I cannot have any value judgment about you. You cannot have any value judgment about me. You are responsible only for yourself and only for what you are doing.”

This trend is perhaps associated with the complaints about the fragmentation of collectivism along with the rise of individualism in modern societies. I should underline a significant aspect of the issue under consideration: as far as politics concerns itself with all people, the identification of politics solely with a vocation that spares all responsibility to professional politicians would not provide a resolution to the conflict between ethics and politics. A broader perspective needs to be formulated, by means of which a moral critique of the whole of political life or of cultural and political constitution of a certain society can be posed. This is exemplified in Theodor Adorno’s dictum: “wrong life cannot be lived rightly.”¹⁷³

¹⁷² Marshall Berman formulates this as follows: “our society is filled with people who are ardently yearning and consciously striving for authenticity: moral philosophers who are exploring the idea of “self-realization;” psychiatrists and their patients who are working to develop and strengthen “ego-identity;” artists and writers who gave the word “authenticity” the cultural force it has today -some consciously influenced by existentialism, others ignorant of it, but all bent on creating works and living lives in which their deepest, truest selves will somehow be expressed; young people, hip or straight, seeking to “get themselves together,” determined above all to “do their own thing;” countless anonymous men and women all over who are fighting, desperately and against all odds, simply to preserve, to feel, to be themselves. All these seekers after authenticity are just beginning to learn a fact of life which our first seekers always know: *that whoever you are, or want to be, you may not be interested in politics, but politics is interested in you.* (I emphasized.) See Marshall Berman, *The Politics of Authenticity: Radical Individualism and the Emergence of Modern Society* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 324-325.

¹⁷³ For a detailed examination of Adorno’s dictum, see Robert B. Pippin, “Negative Ethics: Adorno on the Falseness of Bourgeois Life,” in *The Persistence of Subjectivity: On the Kantian*

This view can historically be traced back to Plato's severe criticisms against Athenian democracy: the majority of the people living in a certain society might in fact be driven by their moral disabilities. In a society where the "life of money making" is the most dominant life form, the majority would be far from realizing their higher moral potentials. Insofar as "politics are made up of two elements- utopias and reality-belonging to two different planes which can never meet,"¹⁷⁴ it would not be an exaggeration to say that the inconsistency between ethics and politics remains unresolved. For a utopian, then, politics *qua* politics in the present social order might be regarded as a set of immoral practices and relations. Politics is not, on the other hand, something exclusively independent of the moral fabric of a society. Furthermore, politics cannot solely be associated with whatever is undertaken by those known as politicians. Let us now undertake a review of the alteration of the problematic relationship between ethics and politics, from the ancient Greek polis to modern times.

4.6. From Socratic Ideal to Machiavellian Revolution

In the climate of the emergence of modernism and the domination of scientific culture, one might argue that *Realpolitik* could no longer be anchored in religious or Christian values. The clash between common morality pursued by the majority of people and the current political practice, in this sense, seems to be intimately related with the internal dynamics of secularization process, in which religious values implicitly or explicitly became the constant target of philosophical criticism. While the political institutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe were intentionally organized and established in accordance with secular values, a trend to characterize politics as a science or technique have become apparent. In this framework, the propagation of the Machiavellian revolution categorically and practically means that the disagreement between ethics and politics can be disentangled whereby eliminating the bygone understanding morality from the new state of political affairs. In other words,

Aftermath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 98-120.

¹⁷⁴ Edward H. Carr, *The 20 Years Crisis, 1919-1939* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 93.

once the independence of the political realm from the religious or previous moral norms is established, the conflict under consideration disappears. Norberto Bobbio puts it as follows:

The dualism between ethics and politics is one of the elements of the great contrast between Church and the State, a dualism that could only arise from the antagonism between, on one hand, an institution whose mission is to educate, to preach, and to commend universal laws of conduct laid down by God, and on the other hand, an earthly institution whose duty is to restore temporal order in the relations amongst human beings. In reality, the contrast between ethics and politics in the modern State, from the very beginning, goes back to the contrast between Christian morals and the praxis of those engaged in political activity.¹⁷⁵

The major rationale behind this many-faceted metamorphosis is therefore the very dynamics of historical transformation of social formation. We can note here another factor responsible for the contrast between modern understandings of the problem and its Ancient counterpart. The average population of a *polis* in Classical period was between 500 to 2000, although the population of fifth century Athens' was about 40,000, which is extremely exceptional at that time.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Norberto Bobbio, "Ethics and Politics" *Diogenes* 186. Vol. 46:2, 18.

¹⁷⁶ The ideal state of Plato at most contains 5040 citizen families, the army of which should be about 1000 men (*Rep.* 432a). Likewise, Aristotle states that "a city that is made of too few is not self-sufficient (yet the city is self sufficient), but one that is made of too many, although self-sufficient in its supply of necessities (as is a nation), is none the less no city, for it is not easy for it to have a political system. Who shall be a general of a multitude so excessive, and who a herald-unless he is like Stentor? So the first city must be the city of such a number that is the first number that is self-sufficient for a good life in a political community. It is also possible that a city that exceeds this one in number is a grater city, but as we have said this is not possible indefinitely (*Pol.* 1326b2-10). On the other hand, V. Ehrenberg's estimation about sizes of *polis* in Classical period, as quoted and summarized by George Klosko, is the following: "A reasonable estimate for Athens at its peak would be 40.000 citizens. Including women and children, this figure would be 110.0000-150.000, while the entire population, including metics (foreign residents) and slaves was perhaps 300.000. In comparison, Sparta at its height had approximately 4000-5000 full citizens (12.000-15.000 including women and children), ruling over a subject population of some 200.0000-300.000. In the light of the fact that Athens and Sparta were by far the largest *poleis*, Plato's ideal states may seem a bit small, but not unusually so. Typically, the *polis* would contain both rural and urban areas, generally a series of agricultural villages ringing a walled central city. These territories were, again, small and can be assessed quite accurately. Athens was relatively large, encompassing some 1000 square miles. Sparta, including subject areas, encompassed some 3300 square miles, but other *poleis* were much smaller. Corinth had 340 square miles, Samos 180, Aegina 22, and Delos less than 2." See. George Klosko, *The Development of Plato's Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5.

This indicates that in the scale of a typical *polis*, all male citizens could at least be indirectly acquainted with each other's character traits. For example, a citizen could be justified in supporting a man who would most probably be one of the by voting for the presidency of a council. The scale of politics was then small enough to observe and to be informed properly about merits of every citizen. Conversely, politics in today's world, all throughout the globe, seems to be operating like a huge advertisement industry in which there is a sharp distinction between the way people present themselves and what they really are. The well-known epistemological problem, namely the relation between appearance and reality, in one sense, became a striking political problem also. In our "modern" world, one has always a reason to ask by whom and he is actually ruled. This question might easily be justified with the apparent circulation of abundant conspiracy theories regarding *Realpolitik*.

In contrast to modern politics, one might hold that politics in a *polis* was rested on mutual recognition between citizens and that the locus of the political was the very public space, or politics was "in the middle" (*en mesoi*). This might be the reason why even Socrates has frequently advised his pupils to stay away from politics, he was actually perceived as an active and an extremely dangerous "politician" in the agora so dangerous so as to have been executed by the citizens of Athens in 399 BC. Likewise although, the Cynic Diogenes always insisted on rejecting an engagement with political affairs, and even though he called himself "citiless" (*apolis*), he inevitably became an attractive political figure, a part of the "political" in general sense (*politeia*). Similarly, such political inevitabilities could also be one of the historical reasons behind Aristotle's definition of "political association" (*koinoia*) as the mutual friendship with an agreement on what is just. In short, whereas in the Greek world there was no apparent distinction between the "public" (*political*) and the "private" (*personal*) due to the lack of bureaucratic impersonality and facelessness, in the history of the "Western" world, it became possible during the Roman Empire for the first time to draw a bold line between *res publica* and *res privata*. From this differentiation, one can infer that the inclination towards contradistinguishing the realm of ethics

or morality from that of politics has continually changed. This transformation could be regarded as a process of the privatization of morality accompanied by the distancing of it from sphere of politics. As Vittorio Hösle states, “[i]n the modern period morals and politics were much more strictly separated from one another than would have been possible in antiquity, even though the question of legitimation was first raised in that period.”¹⁷⁷

On the other hand, concepts like “interest,” “will” and “passion” have been frequently employed in 17th and 18th centuries’ Western political thought.¹⁷⁸ In antiquity terms like “happiness,” “virtue,” “wisdom,” “pleasure” had been the noticeable conceptual apparatuses in ethical and political treatises. These terms were also often used in the literature of 17th and 18th centuries political thought, yet the permeation and domination of another set of notions in these decades is plain to eye. This is another indication of how social structure changes. It looks as if a “paradigm change” has taken place in the philosophical literature as a response to the ongoing transformation of life. Philosophers and social scientists of the aforementioned decades seemed to have undergone a Kuhnian “gestalt switch.” Kuhn argued that “what changes with a paradigm is only the scientist’s interpretations of observations that themselves are fixed once and for all by nature of the environment and of all the perpetual apparatus.”¹⁷⁹ In natural sciences, as Kuhn states, the “crisis” results from the accumulation of anomalies or the decline in the empirical prediction power of theories. However, unlike in the natural sciences, the conceptual tools of philosophy and social sciences, especially those concerning moral and political problems, are not likely to alter due to the same causes, where there can hardly be a search for more powerful conceptual schemes or a necessity to eradicate the anomalies in the same sense as in physical sciences. The conception of “gestalt switch” or “paradigm change” in

¹⁷⁷ Vittorio Hösle, *Morals and Politics*, trans. Steven Rendall, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 10.

¹⁷⁸ See, for example Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

¹⁷⁹ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1970), 120.

social sciences and philosophy is not a mere analogy with what Kuhn argued for in the natural sciences. One can argue that paradigm changes or conceptual shifts in social sciences and philosophy are closely related with the changes in “present worries,” according to which philosophy and social sciences are forced to invent or emphasize new concepts.

Whatever the reasons behind this many-faceted transformation are, one might further observe that from ancient recommendations for the retreat from politics, to the Machiavellian engagement, or to the Kantian suggestion for the resolution of the conflict, one thing has remained the same: common sense understanding of the relationship between ethics and politics. I will argue in the next chapter that this can be overcome by an Aristotelian approach.

CHAPTER V

THE RELATION OF ETHICS AND POLITICS FROM THE ARISTOTELIAN PERSPECTIVE

There could no longer be a quarrel between ethics and politics in an ideal society in which the major problems regarding the implementation of justice in the social practices are untangled in the eyes of a considerable amount of citizens. This is because politics would then become a leisure-time activity personally committed for sake of pure pleasure.

The constitution of such a perfect state might be a utopia dream for which one can always demand its realization, though the insurmountable difficulty remains unsettled insofar as the active participation in politics in a non-ideal society requires committing or at least shutting one's eye to immoral acts. Those who perform an action with the belief that there should be no split between what is ethical and what is political, such as for students of Plato, would be willing to materialize their utopia whenever they take the political power in their hands. This is the only opportunity for a Platonist to resolve the conflict between ethics and politics. But if the *Realpolitik* in the present city life does not conform to the highest moral principles, the Academy will naturally turn out to be a citadel of virtuous life for the Platonists. For them, immoral acts cannot be justified by having recourse to honorable purposes. A Kantian would also take a similar path as soon as he sees that people are often treated as mere instruments in the current political affairs. Given that the course of actions in the political realm seems to be constituted upon the principle of political success, which is exclusively irrelevant to the *categorical imperative*, a Kantian is likely to contain himself with posing a *critique* of the present immoral politics.

Alternatively, an Epicurian might hope that the whole city could be a garden of friendship, indeed he would always prefer to not to partake in crude political affairs so as to realize this dream. Instead of striving for political success, one can spare much more time for his friends living in a secure garden. A Stoic favors remaining indifferent to the affirmation of various immoral ways of life by the majority; for, there is no an essential relation between being virtuous person and being part of political practices in the Stoic doctrine. A Stoic *prokopton* might rather prefer to walk his own way to be a wise person, whether he is a slave like Epictetus or a Roman emperor like Marcus Aurelius. Likewise, for a Cynic it is already a fact that the great majority of people are foolish. Pursuing the Cynical way of life would itself be the resolution of the opposition between ethics and politics. A Cynic always insists on advocating a visionary political ideal, although he carefully avoids being a part of common foolishness, namely ordinary political affairs. A life leading in accordance with the model of Cynics does not necessitate transforming the entire political life of a city; a Cynical life is the only virtuous way to pursue. The Sophist Thrasymachus, in contrast, as Machiavelli and Mandeville did, corroborates the vices of majority so as to justify the apparent moral vices of a politician. In view of the fact that politics is a mere game of power totally inappropriate to common morality, it would be better to be a triumphant politician by comprehending how to rule the people properly, instead of trying to make them good people, which should rather be considered as a vain hope. A politician must, first of all, unlearn to be good; otherwise, he could be a victim of his powerful enemies who hardly pay respect to any moral norm. In the political realm, what is valid is the law of jungle, not supreme ethical principles.

Let us note that Aristotle in his life span had an opportunity to hear these divergent arguments and to observe how and by whom they were defended. His challenge, in one sense, can be regarded as an alternative to all of them. Aristotle was well aware of the fact that his students of *politike* would most probably live in a variety of non-ideal cities. They would often be witnesses of unjust distribution of honor and wealth. At this point, the following problem emerges:

what should they do? Should they live, like Platonists or Stoics, in the ivory tower of ethics by remaining unresponsive to the affairs of politics? Should they commit immoral acts in order to transform the existing society into the ideal one? Would it be better for them to pursue the life of theory under all circumstances without appealing to political life at all? What is or ought to be the relation between ethics and politics? Let us now examine Aristotle's response to these questions.

5.1. From the non-Ideal to the Ideal City

For Aristotle, one of the most primary concerns of *politike* is to cope with the problem of ruling. In other words, the question "Who should be ruled by whom, according to which principles and in which kind of regime?" is one of the crucial queries that Aristotle comes to grips with throughout the *Politics*. In Book I, he first tries to answer this question by classifying four dissimilar kinds of administrative relations: the relation between state and statesmen, master and slave, household-manager and children, and lastly those between males and females (*Pol.* 1252a7- 16). In contrast to Plato's point of view, the king (*basileus*), the statesman (*politikos*), the household-manager (*oikonomos*) and the master of the slaves (*despotes*) do not possess one and the same knowledge of administration. These diverse relations rather require their own characteristic sorts of knowledge (1253b17-20) due to their incompatible natures: "for that which can use its intellect to look ahead is by nature ruler and by nature master, while that which has the bodily strength to labor is ruled, and by nature a slave" (1252a30-33). To put it another way, a slave is a living possession, a tool which can merely be utilized for an action by his master or to whom he belongs (1253b23-1254a17). Rooted in Aristotle's argument is that the rational part of soul should in any case preside over the non-rational part, since a slave lacks reason but nonetheless has a capacity of apprehending it, it is both better and beneficial for him to obey his master (1254b5-26). This kind of governance resembles tyranny (*NE* 1160b30). Similarly, a male master has a natural right to rule over his wife and children. Supervision of children is similar to the royal rule, since the elders by their experience have a natural superiority over the

underdeveloped younger (*Pol.* 1259b10-17, cf. *NE* 1160b25). The relation between men and women, in Aristotle's classification, corresponds to another political regime, namely to aristocracy; “if, however the man controls everything, he changes it into an oligarchy” (*NE* 1160b35). Slaves, women and children are essential parts of a house. Aristotle studies their administration under the title of household management and he takes it as being unrelated with politics *qua* politics in contrast to our modern conception. The governance of a state, a female, a slave and a child are all exercised in diverse ways, simply because “the slave is completely without the deliberative element; the female has it, but it has no authority; the child has it, but undeveloped” (*Pol.* 1260a11-13).

For Aristotle, all those relations except that between state and statesman are founded on an obvious natural inequality. There exists a natural hierarchy among them. Household management is a natural *monarkhia*. However, governance would turn into a political problem when the relations between free and equal citizens are considered. And this last constitutes the realm of politics in Aristotle's view. In this sense, women, slaves, children cannot be considered as subjects of politics. Political realm consists only of the relations between free and equal citizens. If so, first of all, it has to be asked who “free and equal citizens” are. Second, who should be the ruler or the governors among them?

5.1.1. The Good Citizen and the Good Man

We have already examined that household management is, for Aristotle, something unrelated with politics *qua* politics. The exclusion of slaves and women from the political realm might seem to be a strange categorization to a modern reader. Let us note that since politics in a city, for Aristotle, concerns basically the governmental activities of its citizens (*politai*), the political sphere in a *polis* is not determined by anyone who lives within the defined borders (1275a6-7). At the opening sections of the third book of the *Politics*, Aristotle says that living in a city cannot be treated as the necessary and sufficient condition for being a citizen proper. The “citizen proper” or a “full citizen” is the one who participates in deliberative and juridical office: “the citizen proper is

distinguished by nothing else so much as by having a share in giving judgment and exercising office” (1275a22, cf.1275b20). Partaking in administration of a city or exercising an office is hence a prerequisite for being citizen proper. This is because the young people are “not yet full” citizens (*politai ateleis*) and the old are in fact “superannuated” citizens (*politai paremakotes*), although parents of children are citizens proper (1275a14-18). The political sphere of a city, according to Aristotle, is then primarily a society of “full citizens” who take a role in the exercise of an office and thus share a common constitution. For this reason, a city can no longer be regarded as the same city when its constitution changes (1276b1-5). The full citizens can thus be defined as those who share the honors of the city (1278a37).

Aristotle initiates his discussion on the distinction between the good man and the good citizen after he characterizes what a citizen proper is. The designation of citizen proper is rather a technical definition: sharing a constitution and participating in affairs of the state are necessary and sufficient conditions to be a full citizen of a city. But who is the “good citizen”? Are the meanings of “good man” and “good citizen” always identical?

A good person for Aristotle is perhaps the one who has a proper character and intellectual traits as elaborated in the *Ethics*. The qualifications and actions of a good person do hardly depend on external factors; they are rather intimately associated with the perfection of one’s own character in accordance with the precepts in the *Ethics*, the expression of which can be observed in one’s activities. Being a good citizen, on the other hand, cannot simply be equated with being a good man: in the first place the former, in contrast to the latter, is relative to the constitution (1276b28-29, 1283b43-44, and 1293b5-7). In a deviant regime such as tyranny, for instance, it is difficult to be both a good citizen and a good man. When a man pursues unjust commands of a tyrant, he might well perform his function as a good citizen. But in this case he would no longer be a good person by his unjust acts like the regime in which he lives. The reverse is also correct: if citizens are excellent, the city tends to be excellent (1332a32). Let us

consider further that for Aristotle, not only a single person, but also diverse social groups and even diverse cities have certain character traits peculiar to them. Aristotle insists on the idea that the good of a city and the good of its each citizens are one and the same (*NE*, 1094b7-8; *Pol.* 1277a1-5, 1324a5-7; 1325b14-16; 30-32; 1333b37-38; 1334a11-13). In other words, the supreme end of a city and each of its citizens must be the same, and this leads them to a happy life (*Pol.* 1328a25-26, 1334a11-13). For instance, “courage, justice and wisdom of a city have the same capacity and form as that which each human being shares in when he is called just, wise, and temperate” (1323b34-36, see also 1323b40-1324a2, 1324a5-7, 1325b15-17, 1334a11-13). Similarly, “if weakness of will exists in an individual, it also exists in a city” (1310a18-19).

According to Aristotle, Sparta as a city is far from being wise, just and temperate (1323a28-9), and not virtuous enough in comparison to Athens. Sparta as the society based on a war economy is good at only the improvement and expression of military virtue (1271a41-b3, 1333b5-14, 1334a40-b3, 1338b11-16). The economy of a good city should not be anchored in a war economy (1324b3-5, 1333a35, 1333b1-3 1334a2-5, 19-20). This amounts to saying that societies as well as single individuals come to be morally virtuous or base together. In a morally superior city, it is more probable that its citizens are inclined to be good persons than otherwise: when the citizens are willing to be superior in virtue, a city *qua* city would be more liable to be a virtuous city. The reverse is also true: in a city where its citizens are under rule of the imposed laws that are far from being just, most of the citizens can hardly improve their merits in a way to be just persons. For instance, the majority of the citizens of a militaristic society, such as those of Sparta, are expectedly more disposed to be brave and powerful soldiers. Under such constitutional laws, they are inclined to be “good citizens” by performing their assigned tasks in a proper manner while they become more and more incapable of enhancing their moral development. Aristotle says that in a perfectly good city, the goodness of a citizen and that of a person are mostly identical. In contrast, in a deviant regime, they can hardly be treated alike.

The second warrant behind Aristotle's insistence on the distinction between being a good person and a good citizen is perhaps the following: since the city is composed of unlike members and each should do the job prescribed to him well, there is no a single goodness subsuming all citizens (1276b35-1277a11, cf. *NE* 1130b29). Despite the fact that goodness of person remains the same regardless of time and place, being a good citizen is relative to both the constitution and the specific duties or tasks assigned to each citizen. A good instructor of mathematics and a good soldier are both citizens, but they have dissimilar senses of mission. The latter has to be first and foremost bodily powerful and brave to perform his task well, the former need not to be so. It is enough for him to be superior in intelligence and to be good at teaching mathematics in order to be counted as a good citizen.

It is therefore clear that due to various specific tasks assigned to each citizen and constitution-relative definition of goodness of a citizen, the goodness of a person and that of citizen cannot always be identical: "it is possible to be a good citizen and not yet possess the goodness of a good man" (*Pol.*1276b34). Further, "the citizen needs not to be wise" (1277a17). Even in the good city, all men cannot be good (1277a4-5, cf. 1276b37-38). Aristotle states his conclusive argument on the distinction between the good citizen and the good man: "whether or not we should say that the goodness of the good man is the same as that of the good citizen is clear from what has been said: he is the same in some cities and not in others; and where he is the same he is not every citizen there" (1278a42-43).

The crucial question here is in what respect the goodness of a citizen and that of a man coincide and in what respect they differ from each other? For Aristotle, to perform the assigned duties in a proper manner is likely to be sufficient for being a good citizen. Nonetheless, in an ideal city the goodness of a man and that of a citizen must be identical (1288a39-40). What should we do then if we are obliged to live in a non-ideal city? Is it ethically possible that a good citizen under the rule of a tyrant does nothing against him? What would Aristotle say concerning the how should one live in a city under the rule of a perverted regime?

5.1.2. Participation in Politics in non-Ideal Cities: From Conditional Best to the Absolute Best

In his detailed study on Aristotle's differentiation of the good citizen from the good man in ideal and non-ideal cities, David Keyt concludes that an Aristotelian good man would not comply with the rules of a tyrant or unjust laws under certain circumstances.¹⁸⁰ Meanwhile, let us note that nowhere in the *Ethics* or the *Politics* Aristotle either explicitly states or implicitly contends that it would be better for his pupils to retreat from politics in non-ideal regimes, even if the life of contemplation is likely to be the best way of life to be desired.¹⁸¹ This

¹⁸⁰ For the development of the argument, see David Keyt, "The Good Man and the Upright Citizen in Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*," *The Social Philosophy and Policy* 24(2): 220-240.

¹⁸¹ In *NE* X 6-8 Aristotle no doubt identifies the most complete and self-sufficient *eudamonia* with the *bios theoretikos* and this is consistent with his criteria of completeness developed in *NE* I. 7. This argument also seems to be further supported in *Pol.* VII. In fact, it is still a matter of controversy among scholars that whether theoretical or political life is conceived as the best way of life in Aristotle's practical philosophy. For the defense of the superiority of philosophical life over the political life, see Arthur W.H. Adkins, "Theoria versus Praxis in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Republic*," *Classical Philology* 73 (1978): 297-313 and Anthony Kenny, "Aristotle on Happiness" in *Articles on Aristotle, Vol. II: Ethics and Politics*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (London: Duckworth, 1977): 25-32. This is known as "intellectualist position," according to which the most choiceworthy, complete, self-sufficient and hence happiest life in Aristotle's practical philosophy is the life of contemplation. As an alternative to this interpretation, scholars like J. L. Ackrill, Terece Irwin, Martha Nussbaum, David Keyt underline the significance of character related excellences. This is the "inclusivist account," which primarily puts emphasis on the role of virtuous activities and intrinsic goods for the attainment of *eudamonia*. Let us note that it is a problem for the intellectualist position that Aristotle neither explicitly nor implicitly advocates the necessity of withdrawing from political life for the sake of pure contemplative life, although his appreciation of theoretical life as the most honorable life is evident. Further, it seems to be controversial to say that no one would be counted as happy and virtuous person if he is inactive throughout his life. "for, it seems someone might possess virtue but be asleep or inactive throughout his life; or, further, he might suffer the worse evils and misfortunes; and if this is the sort of life he leads; no one would count him happy, except to defend a philosopher's paradox" (*NE* 1095b34-1096a3). Note that these lines are written right after the criticism of political life, but the rationale behind this critique is not to condemn political life as such. Remaining inactive seems to be ethical problems if Aristotle's other remarks are taken into consideration: an inactive person in fact achieves no good (1099a1-3). He rather lives the life of a plant (*NE*, 1176a35). Nevertheless, the human good in general, and particularly happiness, is activity expressing the virtue (1098a6-17, 1100b10, 1102a16, 1102a5, 1103a31, 1134a1, 1176b1, 1177a1-2, 17, 1179b4, *Pol.* 1323b22-33, b40-1324a2). This might be the reason why "to give praise to inactivity than to activity is not correct. For happiness is activity, and furthermore the activities of those who are just and temperate bring to completion much that is noble." (*Pol.* 1325a31-33). Hence, Aristotle continues to argue that "knowing about virtue is not enough, but we must also try to possess and exercise virtue" (1179b3-4). Exercising the virtues that one have like justice would only be possible with participation in politics; even contemplation is also an activity for Aristotle (1325b13-26). The important point here is, I think, political and philosophical lives do not seem to be mutually exclusive. As pointed out by David J. Depew: "in *Pol.* VII.1-3 Aristotle does not intend to privilege and politicize the contemplative life, or to define it stipulatively as an active life. Rather, he rejects the ways of life both apolitical intellectuals and conventionally political

diagnosis especially makes sense when Richard Bodéüs' comprehensive exploration on the essential pedagogical role of Aristotle's practical philosophy is taken into account: the target audience of the *Ethics* and the *Politics* are the pupils who should be trained in such a way that they become good legislators in future. Aristotle's purpose in these lectures is nothing other from instructing his pupils in the craft of lawmaking. Bodéüs supports this claim with rich textual evidence from which he infers that "put into perspective in this way, Aristotelian ethics, far from describing an individual ethics alien to politics, presents, on the contrary, the essential body of learning with which the lawgiver must fortify himself when legislating."¹⁸²

The aim of Aristotle's practical philosophy is thus undoubtedly practical as he himself frequently emphasizes. He was well aware of the fact that his students of *politike* will most probably live in a variety of non-ideal societies, in diverse kinds of perverted regimes. A student of *politike* should therefore be educated as a legislator who is capable of grappling with tortuous political problems that might emerge in all deviant regimes. Their resolution would not be easily formulated by appealing to a set of universal ethical principles to be pursued in any given case. The knowledge of what is the right thing to do in a given context, *politike* has a lower level of certainty in comparison to mathematics or physics, as I have discussed in the first chapter. It is not then mere coincidence that in *Pol.* III.1 and 2 Aristotle summarizes the main questions of *politike*, which obviously originate from his methodology of prudence: (i) which constitution is the best one

men as models for the happy life of both the individual and of the state. The claim that contemplation is an activity serves to cancel both extremes, and to construct a space in which political and contemplative engagements can fuse into *sui generis* way of life, or rather into a pair of possible lives that have more in common with each other than either has with conventionally political or exclusively contemplative lives." See his "Politics, Music, and Contemplation in Aristotle's Ideal State," in *A Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, eds. David Keyt and Fred D. Miller, Jr. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 352. This is to say, there are right and wrong paths in both contemplative and political lives. Regarding the scope and aim of the present study, I should contain myself with emphasizing again the point that even if the philosophical life is the most supreme life for Aristotle, there seems in principle no obstacle in fusing it with political life in a proper manner.

¹⁸² Richard Bodéüs, *The Political Dimensions of Aristotle's Ethics*, trans. Jan Edward Garret (New York: SUNY Press, 1993), 123.

in an ideal situation? (ii) Which constitution is the best for whom? (iii) How can an ideal constitution be produced and preserved? (iv) Which constitution is the most suitable one for the all cities? (v) How many possible constitutions are there? (vi) Which laws are the best? (vii) What are the main differences among constitutions? (viii) How can and should each constitution be established? (ix) What are the reasons behind the obliteration of constitutions and how will their preservation be possible?

The answers to these questions are extremely important for a student of *politike* who is expected to be a good legislator in the future. These questions would serve the following purpose: whatever the political circumstances a good student of *politike* might confront with, he ought to be capable of choosing the best option under those given conditions. In Aristotle's own words; "the good legislator and the true politician must know both what is best absolutely and what is best in the circumstances" (1288b26-27). A *politike* student should not confuse the conditionally best option with the absolutely best one. In other words, in a non-ideal regime, what the best political action mainly depends on carefully evaluating the social and political conditions. For instance, throughout the *Politics*, Aristotle does not support kingship as unconditionally the best regime. As a political regime, kingship has certain defects. First, it is highly possible that a king appoints his son as the next king. The father can be a magnificent person, but his son weak in character and in political ability (1286b22-28). This brings about the problem of succession in ruling: first, if the subsequent king is not good enough in his merits and political ability, kingship could be perverted in a way to become tyranny. Second, suppose that in the present state of affairs, there exists an ideal king like Pericles who perfectly governs all citizens in a proper manner. But what should we do if such king goes insane in his old age? (1270b40). Third, there is the possibility that the king becomes a target of upper class' envy, which might result in a political conflict again (1264b8-10). Fourth, the sovereignty of one best man seems to be oligarchic in form, which leaves more persons without honor by excluding them from the affairs of state (1281a29-31). Fifth, it is in principle better to be ruled by many instead of one. A single person would do

wrong if he behaves emotionally, for example, his decision would be likely to be corrupted by an emotion like anger or envy. But a large number of qualified people do not straightforwardly tend to be under the control of a passion. This is why a qualified multitude could in principle arrive a better judgment than a single man (1286a24-40, 1281b15-37, 1282a14-23, 1286b8-22). Aristotle highlights the merits of ruling by many instead of one or the few: “if the good man ought to rule because he is better, two good men are still better than one. This is the ‘when two go together,’ and Agamemnon’s ‘would I had ten such advisers’” (1287b11-14). Seventh, it would be hard for a single person to oversee everything (1287b8-9). And last, since (i) “the law is reason without appetite” (1287a32) and (ii) “law is the mean” (1287b4), it is still preferable to be ruled by laws than by the best man (1287a18).

Given these general disadvantages of kingship, why does Aristotle count it as one of the best regimes? After these criticisms, one expects that Aristotle would disregard kingship as a candidate of being one of the best regimes. Nevertheless, even if kingship has the above mentioned defects, as Aristotle maintains after his apology of “rule of law” against the rule of absolute king in *Pol.* III.16, “perhaps, ... things are like this in some cases but not others” (1287b36). This simply means that although the rule of law is *always* absolute best to be attained and kingship a regime which has some apparent defects peculiar to it, there might be *some cases* in which it would be the best regime for a city. At this point, Aristotle gives the following example:

If there is one man who differs so much in excess of goodness (or more than one, who are nevertheless not enough to fill up a city) that there is no comparison between the goodness and political ability of all other persons and theirs, if there is more than one of them (or his, if he is only one), then they must no longer be reckoned as part of a city. For it will be wrong to expect them to submit to equal shares, when they are so unequal in goodness and political ability. Such a man is presumably like a god among men...for such men as these there is no law; they themselves are law. Anyone who tried to legislate for them would be ridiculous (1284a3-13).

If there is such a high-minded man, nobody is permitted to try to expel him from the city, but should rather approve him as the king who has a legitimate right to administrate the city (1284b22-34). Along these lines, Aristotle may be aiming at justifying the legitimacy of kings like Alexander the Great. Whatever he had in mind when he said these, as a general principle Aristotle suggested that if there is someone who is both extremely superior in virtue and also in political ability, and further powerful enough to do best things, it is then noble to follow him and abide by his decisions (1325b10-14). Hence kingship is not absolutely, but conditionally the best option to prefer. If the aforementioned conditions are satisfied, a student of the Aristotelian *politike* will be a supporter of kingship in a certain city. This does not, however, entail that the same student will defend kingship forever in the same city. Thus a *politike* student must be capable of responding to the alteration of political situations and finding out the most proper way to transform the existing establishment to the best possible one.

Let us consider further that Aristotle employs his ethical nomenclature in evaluating the degree of goodness or badness of regimes. Democracy and oligarchy are, for instance, perverted political regimes; for, in these constitutions the rulers are permitted to pursue solely their own advantage, not the common advantage (*Pol.* 1274b1-3, 1279a17-21, 1294b4-6). Elsewhere, Aristotle holds that a “tyrant considers his own advantage, but the king considers the advantage of his subjects. For someone is a king only if he is self-sufficient and superior in all goods; and since such a person needs nothing more, he will consider the subjects’ benefit, not his own” (*NE* 1160b3-7). This is why, for Aristotle, deviant constitutions such as tyranny, oligarchy or democracy are far from materializing the idea of justice in the governance of free and equal citizens. It is no surprise that wherever the sole legitimate motive behind the affairs of state is to seek one’s own advantage, citizens are more prone to form factions. Let us note again that in deviant constitutions honor as an external good is distributed with reference to other external goods. This is the major source of political faction: if the worth of people is measured by the external goods that they have, then, this means that the whole city is not organized with respect to the improvement of

ethical virtues of each citizen, but in proportion to the accumulation and possession of external goods. In a city where the majority merely seeks external goods instead of learning the right proportion in having and sharing them, the citizens willingly or unwittingly become estranged from the ethical ideals. For Aristotle, wide-spread adoption of this habit gives rise to political struggles, the enduring resolution of which becomes possible only by means of a proper distribution of honor in accordance with virtue; for, virtue alone is worthy or award of honor (1123b35, 1124a26, 1163b4). Although it is difficult to determine the right proportion between one's virtues that belong to his soul and its corresponding degree of honor, the essential principle advocated by Aristotle is evident: one deserves to be honored for his virtues. Aristotle's conditional justification of kingship as one of the best constitution is hence not a mere Machiavellian guidance for a student of *politike*. It is in fact directly derived from Aristotle's conception of justice elaborated in *NE V*.¹⁸³

To repeat, a student of Aristotle would conditionally uphold kingship for a certain city in the above-mentioned circumstances. But what should he do when a tyrant takes the power, who merely "pursues his own good" (1160b8)? Aristotle's reply appears to be the following: since a "vicious king becomes a tyrant" (1160b11); a student of *politike* could attempt to contribute the tyrant's moral development by advising him to imitate a virtuous king (*Pol.* 1314a29-1315b10). A tyrant might become a king or at least might resemble a king by improving his merits or by imitating virtuous behavior. For Aristotle, the transformation of tyranny into kingship would, at least in principle, be possible if the tyrant can be persuaded that imitating a king would be better both for him and the citizens' life. A perverted regime such as tyranny would thus be transformed into one of the best regimes Aristotle's *politikos* is therefore a reformer.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ See David Keyt's comment on *Pol.* 1301b26-1302a in Aristotle's *Politics: Books V and VI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 56-62.

¹⁸⁴ "Aristotelian statecraft is realistic, but it is not a forerunner of *Realpolitik*. Aristotle's statesman is better described as an *approximist* than a perfectionist. He recognizes moral principles and wishes that actual society could be organized according to them. But he does not take the all-or-nothing stance of the utopian perfectionist, who either dreams of a "heavenly city"

It seems that as far as the socio-political context permits, an Aristotelian politician will try to come close to the best possible political ideal in current state of affairs, although this is not unconditionally the ideal one.¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, unlike Machiavelli who recommends those who are willing to be a governor to learn “how to not to be good,” Aristotle does not validate immoral acts of a politician by elevating political success to his ultimate aim. Instead, he suggests that one must first become skilled at how to be good and to act wisely: “the true politician seems to have spent more effort on virtue than on anything else, since he wants to make the citizens good and law-abiding” (*NE* 1102a8-20). The task of rulers, accordingly, is merely to seek out the common advantage or justice, not their private advantage (1282b15-17). This is possible only when the rulers are superior in virtue (*Pol.* 1260a14-24). Aristotle says that “for the [true] political man is one who chooses to perform fine actions for their own sake (*EE* 1216a25-26).¹⁸⁶ This is the goal of *politike*, which is nothing other from improving the merits of citizens (*NE* 1100a1-3, 1180a6).

Textual evidence presented above appears to be enough to conclude that Aristotle’s *politikos* must be a moral role model. Otherwise, it would be absurd to expect that a morally weak ruler has a legitimate right to demand from the ruled to conduct virtuously. The absurdity can be explained in the following way: as a ruler, one cannot have a right to command those whom he administers to behave in accordance with just laws, if he is not just. That is to say, only an honest person would have a right to demand from the others to conduct honestly. On the other hand, only the ones who are morally and intellectually superior to others are capable of transforming the existing perverted regime into one of the best

or stands aloof from politics (Kraut 2002). For Aristotelian statesman the best constitution serve as a *regulative ideal*. Practical politics should aim at reforming the existing system so that it approximates this ideal as closely as is feasible.” See Fred D. Miller, Jr. “Aristotelian Statecraft and Modern Politics,” in *Aristotle's Politics Today*, ed. Lenn E. Goodman and Robert B. Talisse (New York: SUNY Press, 2007), 18. For more on Aristotle as a reformer, see Richard Kraut, *Aristotle: Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 372-383.

¹⁸⁵ See for instance Richard Kraut’s comments on 1324b42-1325a15 and 1325b33-1326a5 in Aristotle’s *Politics: Books VII and VIII*, 68-69, 76-77.

¹⁸⁶ Citations from *Eudemian Ethics* are taken from Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics: Books I, II and VIII*, trans. Michael Woods 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

regimes. However, there still remains a dissimilarity between ethics and politics; for, politics is at the same time regarded by Aristotle as an “art” or “ability” (*Pol.* 1282b14-23, see also 1273b32,3, 1274b18-19, 1325b40-1326a18-19) and “practical science” or “wisdom”(1289a12). Let us now see the continuity and rupture between ethics and politics in some detail.

5.2. Finding the Mean in Ethics and Politics

In the *Politics*, there are two salient sociological observations about the general habits of the majority. First, great majority of people are inclined to believe that a certain amount of virtue would be sufficient for them; but as far as wealth, property, power and reputation are concerned, it seems that they all seek these external things without any limit (1323a35-38, cf. 1257b23-24 1257b32-40, 1332a21-27). This wide-spread tendency implicitly or explicitly adopted by the vast majority is in fact one of the main reasons of unjust acts often committed in the political realm. In Aristotle’s words: “the pretty well majority of deliberate acts of injustice are caused among men by ambition and love of money” (1271a15-16). Second, the major sources of conflicts, factions or constitutional alterations in the political realm are wealth, honor and superiority (1302a31-1302b20).¹⁸⁷ Unjust distribution of either gives rise to political conflicts and then may result in a constitutional change (1301b26-28). In Aristotle’s own words, “it is because of profit and honor men are incited against one another ... not in order that they may get them for themselves, but because they see others (some justly, some unjustly) getting more” (1302a40-b1).

Pol.V is devoted extensively to explore the origins of these factions and constitutional alterations through many historical examples. The questions of how regimes change, why revolutions occur and how an enduring constitution could be established in which cities and under which conditions are primary concerns of this book. Albeit philosophically is not so rich in comparison to his other books,

¹⁸⁷ Other sources that might be counted as secondary are fear (1302b21-24), contempt (1302b25-33), and disproportionate growth (1302b33-1303b13).

from a practical point of view, namely in terms of providing examples to the students of *politike*, this book is an extremely important lecture. In an ideal society where ruling and living are in accordance with the idea of *eudamonia*, as Aristotle advocates throughout his politics lectures, citizens must, first of all, untangle political instability among themselves; for, otherwise, they cannot create an opportunity to accomplish the ultimate good of living in their city, namely *eudamonia*. This does not mean merely to properly execute commercial relations or to form a political alliance for the sake of security against external threats, but rather primarily to live well and happily together in a peaceful manner (1280a25-1281a1). Forming a political alliance for security and organizing commercial relations are necessary prerequisites to be fulfilled for the actualization of the definitive end of a city (1280b30-34). In fact, commerce as an ethically worthless life form is several times degraded by Aristotle: “the citizens must not live the life of a vulgar craftsman or a commercial life. For such a life is ignoble and contrary to virtue” (1328b39-40, cf.1337b9-14). In other words, commercial occupations concerned with buying and selling goods are basically banal (*EE* 1215a26-34).

5.2.1. Limiting to Posses External Goods

In his practical philosophy lectures, Aristotle frequently reminds us that when the means and ends are confused with each other, whatever is said on ethics and politics, turns out to be an empty talk. That is to say, as far as the means are perceived by majority as the ultimate purpose of their life, power struggles over honor (either in the form of superiority or reputation) and over money (either in the form of money or property) will be inevitable. Only those who cannot succeed in improving their character qualities either due to the lack of ethical knowledge, improper habituation, insufficient training or the weakness of will (*akrasia*), would be inclined to partake in meaningless struggles for possessing more and more external goods. Most of the people are apt to esteem an external good like pleasure, wealth or honor. This is already the most honorable purpose of life in their eyes, but they may easily change their minds about the highest good. When one becomes ill, one might begin to suppose that the real highest

good is actually health. Likewise, when one gets poor, the real good in his eyes may turn to be the wealth (*NE* 1095a21-24). Since these external goods appear to people as goods worthy of acquiring, they do not discern any moral vice in their constant endeavor to possess these goods by paying their costs. The main cause of love of money without limit is the base disposition of those who are concerned with living an ordinary life, not a good life: these people may prefer to run after bodily pleasures; for, they could demand more and more wealth (*Pol.* 1257b40-1258a10). Whatever the real motive behind the aforementioned habit, it seems that “these people make all skills into skills of acquiring goods, into the belief that this is the end, and everything has to be directed towards the end” (1258a11-13).

Hence, for Aristotle, the majority’s confusion of the means with ends would stem from their ignorance or from their undeveloped character qualities, but among the wise “there is some other good that is something in itself and also causes all these goods to be goods” (*NE* 1095a27-29). Conversely, the great majority of people are liable to accept as true that their life form is the best among others, one of the most common misconceptions of which is no doubt life of money-making. This is why the ignorant majority are always apt to seek money without limit. Money or wealth is merely useful things; for, they have no intrinsic value and might solely be choiceworthy only for accomplishing some other end (1096a7-10). The sources of pleasure like victory, honor, fame and wealth are not necessarily pleasant and ethically valuable, but they are rather choiceworthy (1147b29-30). In his ethics lecture, Aristotle finds it even unnecessary to criticize the life of money-making in detail. It is apparently a base form of life: “clearly wealth is not the good we are seeking” (1096a6).

On the other hand, there is another well-known candidate for the best way of life among the majority. This is the life of action, in which the majority of cultivated people prefer to engage due to attain the purpose of possessing honor or virtue. Yet, if these people aim at being virtuous or being honorable while pursuing success in political life, they misperceive what virtue and honor are. First of all,

let us note that honor is something that we cannot actually have. Someone is always honored by others: “it [being honorable] seems to depend more on those who honor than on the one honored, whereas we intuitively believe that the good is something of our own and hard to take from us” (1095b25-26). Virtues are, in contrast, essentially intrinsic to our souls or characters. Secondly, the one who pursues honor is likely to be looking for being honored by virtuous people for his putative virtue. People of this kind seem to convince themselves that they are actually good men. Therefore, virtue is superior to honor (1095b27-30). On the other hand, honor is the reward of virtue (1123b35) and since the majority is inclined to perceive it as an expression of virtue, distribution of honor causes political conflicts especially in aristocratic regimes (*Pol.* 1306b22-36).

This does not however entail that honor in itself is utterly worthless. It is possible to desire honor in a right way; being honor-loving or remaining indifferent to honor even for good things are two excessive ways of dealing with honor (*NE* 1125b10-23). A Cynic might be totally disinterested with honor and would strongly reject to partake in the honor distribution in a city. But a Cynic entirely distances himself from seemingly honorable distribution of offices in the existing constitution. The majority, however, tend to be passionate honor-lovers. This is, for Aristotle, another excessive way of dealing with honor. Honor is neither something to be passionately run after nor to be carefully abstained from in all cases. Honor can be desired in the right way and it would seem to be better to be honored than not in certain cases (1108a28, see also *NE* IV.3-4). For instance, “some payment [for ruling] should be given; this is honor and privilege, and the people who are unsatisfied by these are the ones who become tyrants” (1134b5-8). In contrast, honor-loving is terrible as the abstaining from honor like Cynics. Honor of course cannot be the ultimate end of life; for, it is merely an external good that one should find out the mean for acquiring. As Aristotle argues in the *Ethics*, money and honor are two primarily significant external goods that the majority runs after, simply because they regard them as indications of superiority and as ends in themselves. But, why are honor and wealth counted as “external goods”?

In contrast to the majority's misconception, Aristotle's regards goods like wealth, political power, honor, good fortune, good birth, property, beauty, reputation as external goods in the sense that they are not parts of our souls. In one sense, they do not actually belong to us. This is simply the reason why they are merely the means, cooperative instruments to accomplish the highest good of our life, namely *eudamonia*, which is an activity and the good of the soul (1098b13-20). The locus of all ends is therefore our souls and the means are external; they might be wisely utilized if we are willing to improve excellences of our character. External goods play a significant role in being well and doing well, but they are in themselves valueless. It is worth emphasizing that from this Aristotle does not infer a Cynical or a Platonic conclusion. Zeno, the Stoic, Diogenes, the Cynic and Plato would all agree with Aristotle regarding the point that money is ethically worthless in itself. For them, in an ideal political community, there must be no usage of money, which they conceive as an indication of moral degeneration. Indeed, it should be abolished in an ideal political order. Aristotle's way of thinking diverges from these philosophers at this point. He rather prefers to illuminate the place of external goods in the happy life in *NE* I.9. Here it is sufficient to consider one of his remarks:

Nonetheless, happiness evidently also needs external goods to be added [to the activity], as we said, since we cannot, or cannot easily, do fine actions if we lack the resources. For, first of all, in many actions if we use friends, wealth and political power just as we use instruments. Further deprivation of certain [externals]- e.g. good birth, good children, beauty-mars our blessedness; for we do not altogether have the character of happiness if we look utterly repulsive or ill-born, solitary or childless, and have it even less, presumably, if our children or friends are totally bad, or were good but have died. And so, as we have said, happiness would seem to need this sort of prosperity added also; that is why some people identify happiness with good fortune, while others [reacting from one extreme to the other] identify it with virtue (1099a31-1099b8, also cf. 1178b5-8).

Since we commit actions for the sake of an end and since the ends are essential parts of our soul, external goods are merely cooperative instruments that are valuable in so far as they contribute to being well and doing well. From the

Aristotelian perspective, then, a man who is running after money would be the man who forgets why he wants to get it. The psychological reasons behind accumulating money in an excessive manner are perhaps diverse. Money, wealth or property is or ought to be instruments that might be useful in enhancing one's quality of life and contributing his happiness if he uses them wisely. Ethically speaking, getting rid of money like Cynics do or pursuing it like the majority as if it was the most honorable end of the life are two extremes that should be avoided. In a city where life of money-making is the most dominant and wide-spread life form, it is not surprise that political conflicts arise.

At this point, one may be tempting to think that this line of argumentation would bring an ethical and political resolution to the problem under consideration. If pursuing money and honor are two fundamental sources of unsettled political conflicts and factions, presenting alternative ways of life like the Cynics' or like Plato's propose would lead to the resolution. Nevertheless, Aristotle himself does not derive a similar political consequence from his ethical assessments. There seems to be a striking disparity between his ethical thought and political recommendations. For instance, a Platonist might insist that since the life of money-making is an ethically worthless form of life, and further it is principal reason of political conflicts, it would better to abolish money in an ideal society. In this sense, politics should be nothing different from putting universal morality into practice. In this case, political practice and ethical conduct would be consistent with each other. Otherwise, as far as the realm of *Realpolitik* remains as a set of amoral relations, it would seem to be right to remain indifferent to politics. This is how Plato handles the problematic relation between ethics and politics.

In line with Plato, Aristotle thinks that the life of money-making or running blindly after pleasure is a base form of life. But, for him, this cannot be presented as a reason for the political argument for completely abolishing these life forms in an ideal city, notwithstanding. That is to say, for Aristotle, even if the life of money-making ethically has no value in itself, and is political problem, its

resolution would not be the abolishment of money or other external goods, but the following: there should be a limit to gaining wealth, although most of people have a base tendency to increase their money without limit. To put it differently, the majority of the people are in the habit of superfluous acquisition of goods, the most unnatural form of which is to accumulate wealth by interest (*Pol.*1258b8). It is interesting to note that when Aristotle directs his criticisms against the female domination in Sparta, he maintains that this situation increases greed for money (1269b12-25, cf.1270a11-14). The domination of men by women, for Aristotle, results in a tendency towards wealth and luxury (1269b23-24). Furthermore, when people are apt to regard wealth as an object of honor, this might lead to oligarchy (1286b13-16, cf. *NE*, 1161a3).

According to Aristotle, there is, on the other hand, a practical rationale to limit overall wealth of a city-state. If a city becomes extremely rich, then greedy and powerful neighbors might be greedy for its wealth. But if there is not enough wealth to sustain the expenses of an army of a proper size, the city cannot protect itself against the threats of its neighbors. In Aristotle's own words: "perhaps, therefore the best limit [to wealth] is one which offers to the stronger side no profit in going to war on account of the excess, but only what they would get even if so many resources were not possessed" (*Pol.*1267a30-33). The overall wealth of city should therefore be limited by finding the mean between two extremes again. Aristotle once more recommends that for a city and accordingly for its citizens, it would always better to be prudent in gaining wealth. Finding the mean in political affairs of a city and conflicting feelings of one's own soul are two sides of the same coin: the former is associated with politics; the latter is intimately related with ethics.

Aristotle's proposal regarding the restriction of accumulating wealth does not depend solely derived on an ethical appraisal. Ensuring the security of the city is one reason among the aforementioned proposal. Like for each of its citizens, it would better for a city to find the mean between possessing excess or deficit in wealth. Politically, there is a possibility of degeneration of the regime into

oligarchy if people misperceive the value of wealth. This could, for Aristotle, be avoided by the moral improvement of each citizen. Regarding the distribution of wealth, Aristotle would therefore again point out that life of money-making as such should not be forbidden in an ideal city, although it is ethically a base form of life.

Plato alternatively prefers to pursue the highest principles of morality, which naturally lead to the establishment of a kind of communist society. And if the ideal political order can be realized in a city, there would no longer be a clash between ethics and politics. Yet, for Aristotle, moral psychology of the human beings along with their general habits would not permit to constitute a kind of communist regime. Even if it becomes possible, this could be far from being an enduring state and the most virtuous option to choose for a city, simply for the following reasons: (i) people particularly take care of private property rather than the communal (1261b33-34); (ii) people are generally inclined to cherish the feeling of possession (1262b22-23); (iii) in case of communism, there would most probably be conflict between those who work hard and take less, and those who take a lot without working much (1263a10-15); (iv) communism cannot be successful in getting rid of moral vices because they simply do not arise from the existence of private ownership, but from depravity (1263b20-25, cf. 1267a2-17, 1267b1-8); (v) there exists not a single kind, but rather plurality of dissimilar types of persons (1261a22-23).

A communist regime as advocated by Plato or by Phaleas of Chalcedon does not hence seem to be a reasonable alternative from Aristotle's perspective. The moral education or traditional habits of the majority would not easily allow people to willingly adhere to an ideal political order like that of Plato's communism. Private property in its essence is not an ethical evil. Rather, only its improper use would lead to moral vices and political factions. Furthermore, private property or money provides the necessary condition of the virtues of generosity and magnificence (*NE* 1178a29-30, cf. *Pol.* 1263b7-14, 1265a28-38). Without private property, people cannot rejoice in helping and doing favors to friends, strangers,

and companions (*Pol.*1263b5-6). Magnanimity and generosity are two important virtues to be improved, and the political precondition of their flourishing is private property. The joy of sharing is the fundamental emotion behind these virtues and Aristotle is against the idea that this feeling alone cannot be a foundation of an ideal state like that of Plato's. Property should in one sense be communal, but in general be private (1263a25-27, 38-40). Selfishness should be condemned, which refers to love of oneself more as in the case of excessive love of money (1263b1-5), it must be balanced with the joy of sharing.

Aristotle therefore tries to find the mean between the excesses of niggardliness and extravagancy. Joy of possession and sharing them with friends are two competing feelings that should also be balanced in one's own soul. Moral improvement of a character so as to be generous (or magnanimous if the person is rich enough) seems to be intimately related with balancing these two competing feelings.

Further, generosity and magnificence are classified as the virtues concerned with external goods. These virtues are said to be related with giving and taking wealth. The majority of people tend to be niggards; for, they are simply money-lovers (*NE* 1121b14-15). A generous man, on the other hand, does not respect wealth (1120b32, 1121a6). This might be the reason why "it is not easy for a generous person to grow rich, since he is ready to spend, not to take or keep, and honors wealth for the sake of giving, not for itself"(1120b14-16, cf.1121a6). It is hence evident that the precondition of being a generous person is not to run after wealth.

This is truer for magnificence (*megaloprepedia*), which is by definition willingly spending the large amount of money on a large purpose like meeting the expenses of a warship-captain, a feast or a common meal. In other words, it is the virtue that pertains to spending great amount of money on a common good. This is why the poor cannot be magnificent (1122b27). Another characteristic of magnanimity is its distinctive aim. A magnanimous person must be the one who "spends money on the common good, not on himself" (1123a4-5). Indeed, although a

magnanimous person does not conceive honor as the greatest good (*NE* 1224a17), he is worthy of honor (1123b21) and “he will accept [excellent people’s] honors, since they have nothing grater to award him” (1224a8-9). When people honor a magnanimous person to, he accepts it elegantly. Spending a great amount of wealth for the sake of common advantage without expecting something in return is therefore the definition of magnanimity.

Magnanimity requires being rich and overcoming the wide-spread base tendency of human being towards accumulating wealth. A genuine magnanimous person would thus be very rare. Let us note that magnanimity is in fact “adornment (*logos*) of the virtues,” “a complete virtue” (1124a1, 9). Moreover, “greatness in each virtue also seems proper to the magnanimous person” (1124b30). This might be the reason why Aristotle advocates that “it is hard to be truly magnanimous, since it is not possible without being fine and good” (1124a3-4). Then, what could be the reason behind speaking well of magnanimity? Why does Aristotle acclaim this virtue?

Aristotle seems to be indicating the ethically right way to his students in dealing with wealth while mentioning these two virtues. He appears to explicate how external goods can be utilized wisely. Moderation in conflicting feelings of sharing and possessing is directly associated with these two virtues as well as with justice. When Aristotle begins to describe the best possible ideal society in *Pol.* VIII, he holds that “[h]appy life, whether this consists, for human beings, in enjoyment or virtue or both, belongs to those who are extremely well equipped in character and mind but who possess only a moderate level of external goods, rather than those who possess the latter more than useful, but are deficient in the former” (*Pol.* 1323b1-5, see also *NE* 1178b33-1179a13). It is hence better for a man to be extremely virtuous, though he has a moderate amount of external goods, than to be deficient in virtue, though he has a great amount of external goods. This seems to be one of the Aristotle’s ethical recommendations. Apart from this, these virtues as well as justice are considerably significant for the distribution of wealth and honor within a city. Establishing the best possible order

would be much easier with the existence of generous and magnanimous citizens. Those who do not honor wealth and are inclined to share it willingly could naturally be more prone to live with respect the idea of justice. Improvement of these virtues has also a political significance in the eyes of Aristotle: the poor should be educated in a way to be satisfied with limited resources, but generosity is the virtue that conforms to people who are neither extremely rich nor extremely poor; and it is morally better for the richest to be magnanimous, a political equilibrium and stability could be more easily established, if the moderate ones is educated in a way not to be greedy, and if the rich behaves generously or magnanimously. Let us investigate this ideal in more detail.

5.2.2. The Middle Class Politics

What is the best constitution, and what is the best life, for most cities and most men, judging by the standard not of a goodness surpassing ordinary men, nor of an education requiring a fortunate nature and circumstances, nor an ideal constitution, but of a life that the majority can live in common and a constitution that most cities can share? ... All these matters are to be judged on the same principles. If it is true, as was said in the *Ethics*, that goodness is a mean, then the middle life must be the best, that of the mean which it is possible for each to achieve. These same marks must apply to the goodness and badness of a city and a constitution, since the constitution is a form of the life of a city (*Pol.*1295a25-40)

This is one of a few paragraphs in the *Politics*, by which Aristotle explicitly draws our attention to the relation between his *Ethics* and the *Politics*. Consider again that the task of ethics would be learning to hit the golden mean between conflicting feelings. There is no virtue either in accumulating money in an unrestricted way, or in wasting it. The mean is to conduct with regard to the sense of balance without which one can deviate from virtue in this or that way. Likewise, for Aristotle, an ideal city must be in the middle, but in which sense?

Sharing wealth equally among all is the communist option, which is, in the eyes of Aristotle, a deviation from the middle, as we have seen. An idea of equality like that of Plato would bother the nobility; they would most probably feel that

they do not deserve equality. On the other extreme, there is another alternative, which is allowance to possess limitless private property; however, this might give rise to the establishment of a perverted regime like tyranny. As already noted, Aristotle states several times that these perverted regimes stem from excessive love of external goods like wealth and honor. The point is, in other words, to find a middle for the establishment of an ideal society by avoiding these extremes: the former would politically bring about a deviant regime like tyranny; the latter might lead to communism. First of all, equal division of total wealth would again not be a solution to the problem at hand. When Aristotle raises his criticism against the proposal of Phaleas of Chalcedon to equalize citizens' private property, he argues that

it is not enough for a lawgiver to equalize resources; he must aim at the midway point. Yet even if one were actually to fix moderate resources for all, that would be no use; for one should even out appetites rather than resources (1266b26-29).

Even if the total wealth is distributed equally to all, the problem of instability still remains, since covetousness is an essential part of human nature, the majority spend their lives for its satisfaction (1267a37-b5).

Aristotle hence argues that education of citizen's appetites is the only way to counterbalance demands of diverse groups in a society. In his critique of Plato's ideal state, especially in *Pol.* I-VI, Aristotle boldly underlines that a state consists of diverse types of persons.¹⁸⁸ Throughout his *Politics*, he examines the plurality of different groups of people instead of the individual citizen abstracted from his material conditions and characters qualities: men, women, children, slaves, the poor, the rich, improper citizens, etc. It is therefore evident that political implementations of universal ethical principles in a city would not seem to Aristotle a plausible alternative. This practically means that character qualities, dispositions of the people in a city are so diverse that one should not impose an

¹⁸⁸ See, for instance, *Pol.* 1261a18-20, 1261a22-24.

extreme oneness like Plato (1261b10-15). This would be both a futile endeavor and further an oppressive policy.

The student of *politike* should rather be well aware of the fact that there are mainly three groups of people in almost all cities, namely the poor, the rich and those in the middle (1295b1-4). The people in the middle are those neither excessively rich nor excessively poor. These people have natural inclination to be the most moderate having a natural tendency to listen to the *logos* and to strive for acting virtuously. Aristotle justifies this claim by appealing to his sociological observations: excessively rich people, first of all, tend to become rogues and pettily bad, and unsurprisingly bring about crimes. Further, they neither wish nor know how to be ruled; they are instead inclined to rule despotically; whereas the needy people are deprived of gifts of fortune, strength, and wealth. Their friends are also prone to be humble. For this reason, the needy people only know how to be ruled slavishly. These inclinations make the needy envious while the rich contemptuous and since these two feelings are the enemies of cultivating friendship among people, it is better for a city to consist of equal and similar persons as much as possible. Hence, increase in the number of those in the middle would create a friendlier climate in a city (129513-27).

Secondly, due to the fact that the people in the middle condition are the most reliable citizens, they are not apt to be jealous of property like the poor (1295b28-31). Thirdly, “parties and factions occur least among the citizens, when there are many people in the middle. Large cities are more stable for the same reason, namely that the middle class is numerous in them” (1296a7-11). Fourth, if the middle class has a larger share in the distribution of honors and greater in number, this makes democracy safer and more lasting than oligarchies (1296a13-17, see also 1304a38-40, 1308b28-30). And lastly, it is a historical fact that the best legislators like Solon have come from middle class (1296a18-21). Basically for these reasons, Aristotle concludes that the most enduring, stable constitution, the best possible ideal social order would be the “middle-constitution” based on the middle class, which is dominant both in number and political activity.

This could be possible when the private property and its sharing are balanced in a proper manner. “Equality, or at least a moderate degree of regulation, should be sought in [distribution of external goods]; otherwise everything must go unregulated” (1267b12). One of the regulating policies that might be helpful in finding the mean between private ownership and common usage of external goods would be the following:

we ought to talk first about distribution of [land]... since we say that possessions should not be held in common, as some have said, but should be common in their use, as befits friends, and that none of the citizens should be in need of food...Accordingly, it is necessary to divide the territory into two parts, one held in common and the other private, and each of these must in turn be divided into two. One part of the common territory must be used for public services for the gods and the other for expenditure on the common meals (132940b-1330a14).

In one sense, Aristotle politics is derived from an implementation of balance, the main target of which seems be preserving the stability of a constitution. Furthermore, it appears that Aristotle in his ethics and politics lectures argues for two different kinds of moderation closely related with each other. In the *Ethics*, the emphasis is rather on a single person’s merits. Ethical knowledge as a branch of *politike* provides a student to find the mean between his conflicting desires and appetites. Perfection of one’s own soul by learning the proper use of reason and with acquiring right habits is the purposes of Aristotle’s lecture on ethics. Anyone who is unsuccessful in governing his own feelings and is unable to act virtuously cannot administrate people according to the idea of justice. The distinct groups of people in differing in character traits and dispositions are more prone to be in a struggle with each other in a non-ideal regime.

A student of *politike* must therefore learn to cope with varying dispositions of the different groups of people and other those of the city states. In the *Politics*, that is to say, Aristotle rather lays emphasis on moderation of diverse groups of people.

Counterbalancing their conflicting desires, dispositions and needs related with using and having external goods is a part of the craft of politics. For example, the needy have a tendency to be jealous; the rich are more inclined to be contemptuous. It does not matter whether Aristotle's observations are true or not, but we must note that having knowledge regarding characteristic liabilities of fundamental social groups in a society plays a significant role in the implementation of a balance policy. Aristotle, for instance, argues that when a part of city is rapidly getting rich in comparison to other parts, one must rebalance the inequality by implementing the following policy: "try either to mix together the mass of needy and the number of the prosperous or to augment the middle class (for this breaks up factions due to inequality)" (1308b28-30). Owing to the fact that unjust distribution of external goods, especially wealth and honor are the basic sources of these struggles, moderating appetites of dissimilar people in accordance with the idea of justice is the core of Aristotle's middle class politics. This is a principle rooted in his "golden mean" approach in the *Ethics*.

CHAPTER VI

FINAL REMARKS AND CONCLUSIONS

From the emergence of the clash between ethics and politics in ancient Greek city states to Weber's conception of politics as a vocation in our modern world, disassociating ethics from politics or merging them in this or that way has been exemplified in many philosopher's works. Let me refer to two taxonomical attempts so as to classify these various philosophical approaches to the relation between ethics and politics whereby two articles. Thereafter, I will emphasize the some peculiarities of Aristotelian viewpoint.

Noberto Bobbio, in his article "Ethics and Politics," gives a wide-ranging sketch of divergent conceptions of the relation between morals and politics in the history of philosophy. The major philosophical traditions that coped with this problem are denominated by Bobbio as "monism" and "dualism." Let us begin with the basic characteristics of the monist theories. The philosophical standpoints which reduce either politics to morals, or morals to politics can be labeled as different versions of "rigid monism," both of which rely on the premise that there is and ought to be only one normative system, which is either moral or political.¹⁸⁹ For instance, when Kant subordinates politics to morality and refuses the validity of political judgments deviating from universal moral laws, he propounds a rigidly monist theory. His view depends on the supposition that there should be one normative system, namely ethics, which ought to encapsulate all human activities, whether committed in the political domain or not. The Hobbesian theory is an example of the second version of rigid monism due to its constant challenge to identify politics with morality. In both sorts of rigid monism, that is to say, the norms regulating our behaviors are either ethical or political.

¹⁸⁹ Noberto Bobbio, "Ethics and Politics," 20.

In the theory of “flexible monism,” on the other hand, moral law is put aside when one faces with bizarre political circumstances. Although the commandment “thou shalt not kill” is a universal moral law that one should always comply with, in the case of self-defense, this rule would legitimately be transgressed. Apart from the exceptional conditions, one ought to appeal to the normative system of ethics. According to flexible monist theories “the state of necessity justifies what would be considered immoral in a normal situation.”¹⁹⁰

Dualist theories on the relation between morals and politics, in Bobbio’s taxonomy, have two distinct kinds. Two different versions of “apparent dualism” conceive morals and politics as dissimilar, but not completely independent normative systems. They differ in giving priority to one of them: either morals are hierarchically superior to politics or *vice versa*.¹⁹¹ In other words, according to one version, the moral normative system is superior to the political (as in Croce’ theory), or *vice versa* (as exemplified in Hegel’s theory). Real dualism, conversely, as in Machiavelli’s approach, rests on the assumption that although finalized actions have intrinsic values, instrumental actions have no value, except in serving to the desired end. If so, “the sphere of politics is the sphere of instrumental actions that, as such, must not be judged for the acts themselves, but according to their greater or lesser ability to serve an end.”¹⁹² The real dualist understanding of the relation between ethics and politics is hence founded upon the assumption that politics and ethics are completely independent from each other.

Steven Luke gives a different taxonomy. Lukes classifies four central responses to the “dirty hands problem,” which are related to the question whether a politician commit can amoral actions. The first is the “ideological response,” which has consequentialist and Orwellian forms. For a consequentialist, the

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 24.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 27.

¹⁹² Ibid., 31.

dilemma between moral principles and political practices is rather a fiction, because if “[i]n any given case, there is only one correct answer to the question: ‘what is right to do?’ which requires us to override the constraints of ordinary morality, then in that case, to do so could not be wrong.”¹⁹³ It doesn’t matter for a consequentialist whether our actions in daily life or a politician’s decisions is the concern. In every circumstance in the social or the political realm, what is to be assessed is rather the success, or the consequences of the action. From this perspective, finding the right thing to do in a given context appears to be independent of the agents’ relation to moral norms, but it rests on the precision of calculations and their relevance to the context. According to view, the maxim or the motivation of an agent would rather concern metaphysical speculation. People prefer to perform an action in this or that way for certain aims. Indeed, only the consequences are open to observation; the motivation of agents can only be inferred from their behavior. Thus, a consequentialist may blame a politician only for his inappropriate calculations. Violation of ethics in politics might hence be a problem for Kantian ethics or for the common sense view when seen from consequentialist point of view.

The Orwellian form of ideological response, on the other hand, advances the consequentialist view by glorifying the ends, which requires employing seemingly amoral means:

The Orwellian ...re-describes the means in the light of the end pursued. Here, the means are purified or sanctified; the dirty hands are washed clean by the nobility or the correctness of the cause. Actions that might appear to be (in Machiavelli phrase) contrary to “those things by which men are considered good” are ideologically redefined. You do not kill heretics; you maintain and protect the faith. You do not torture or wrongfully arrest or imprison people; you maintain law and order or eliminate the class enemy. You do not repress freedom of speech; you eliminate harmful opinions, and prevent obscenity and the spread of corruption. You do not intervene in other countries

¹⁹³ Steven Lukes, *Moral Conflict and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 194.

affairs; you offer friendly assistance against counter-revolutionary subversion.¹⁹⁴

The Orwellian response in a sense is a justification of *Realpolitik* currently implemented throughout the globe. The decision-making procedure in politics in the Orwellian conception has its own characteristics that may not always be compatible with ethics, and further it should not be so.

The second rejoinder to the predicament of dirty hands, as Lukes denominates it, is the moralistic response. He further distinguishes its two diverse types, namely the liberal and the utopian ones. The liberal moralistic reaction is principally rooted in the supposition that “*politicians should always have clean hands.*”¹⁹⁵ There ought to be no disparity between various spheres of human activity and hence one is not permitted to attribute a kind of morality supposed to be peculiar to political activities. The liberal version of moralistic response “relies on a deontological theory that is in turn justified by reference to the will of God or the Moral Law or some notion of personal integrity or respect for persons.”¹⁹⁶ This standpoint can be contrasted with the consequentialist ideological response. This is to say that whatever the context one faces, following a set of unconditional moral norms or principles is the imperative. Ethics has nothing to do with exceptions. Once a moral law or principle is transgressed, it paves the way for another one, and so on. It would then be stated that Levinas adheres to this view when as he argues even in the position of self defense, one ought not to exterminate the other, and even one will die as a result of this preference.

The utopian type of moralistic view, on the other hand, proposes to overcome the current amoral nature of politics with a radical criticism. In a world where politics is legitimately amoral, being a politician would be the worst option to choose. If the world is not the ideal in the sense that people coexists peacefully and morally,

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 194-195.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 195

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

its transformation towards the utopia is the necessary precondition for resolving the conflict between ethics and politics. In Lukes' own words, thus, the utopian form of moralistic response is the justification of the view that "political life will be purified and the problem of dirty hands will disappear-not through the imposition or the manipulation or the engineering of consensus, but through enlightenment and insight."¹⁹⁷

The third view is called by Lukes the cynical response: "*Everyone in politics has dirty hands*: politics is a sink of corruption, self-interest, and ambition."¹⁹⁸ This is a popular reception of politics rather than a well-constructed theory. Its ground is the public and private distinction, through which while morality is conceived as a part of private life, politics is rejected due to its amoral nature. An active participation in politics for a person who adopts the cynical attitude would at best be nonsense.

The last reaction to the dirty hand problem is the political response, according to which the tension between ethics and politics could not easily be eliminated, since "there is in political life no impartial arbiter, no neutral standpoint from which 'correct' practical conclusion can be derived."¹⁹⁹ Weber's position could be evaluated as the paradigm of this perspective. Politicians' duty is not only to go behind the supreme moral principles, but also to grapple with the complicated historical contingencies. In this sense, the tension between ethics and politics cannot be resolved in abstract terms, but within the very activity of politicians, these solution should be tried without forgetting moral recommendations like that of "ethics of responsibility."

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.,196.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

Table I and II in presented in the “Appendix” both recapitulate and visualize the taxonomical attempts canvassed above. At this point, let us note further that the Aristotelian perspective proposed in the present exposition cannot simply be placed into these schemas. What are the peculiarities of Aristotelian treatise on the relation between ethics and politics?

Let us highlight Aristotle’s genuine conception of ethics and politics by exposing some initial remarks concerning how one should read the *Politics*. In interpreting *Politics*, one should always keep in mind that Aristotle always derives a set of generalizations from the previous studies possibly made by his pupils, at least under his supervision. These studies were on the histories, constitutions and other main characteristics of 158 city cities or political organizations. This could be a reason why Aristotle gives abundantly many examples from histories of Greek city states to demonstrate a specific conclusion. Principles in Aristotle’s practical philosophy can be conceived as the generalizations that had already or could in future have certain exceptions. In Aristotle’s logics, the statement that “this proposition is false” amounts to saying that this proposition is unconditionally false. However, in *Politics* asserting that “this is false” means that “but perhaps this is not wholly correct” (*Pol.* 1282a14). This might be the reason why Aristotle frequently employs the word “might be” or “perhaps” in *Politics*.²⁰⁰ Aristotle’s inquiry in the *Politics*, in this sense, is consistent with context-sensitivity and non-relativism discussed in the first chapter. Since the subject matter of *Politics* has not an unalterable nature like mathematics, one should always be cautious about the scope and degree of certainty of the statements regarding *politike*.

From the Aristotelian angle, it seems that we cannot conceive human beings as independent from the political realm. As long as we live in a community, the moral fabric of the society has inevitably a considerable impact on our behavior. In a society where hypocrisy is supposed to be an indispensable part of political acts, the majority of people will unsurprisingly be prone to behave insincerely.

²⁰⁰ See Richard Robinson, “Introduction,” in *Aristotle’s Politics: Books II and IV*, tras. Richard Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 2005),

This does not however entail that we are obliged to be an ordinary political animals, which gain certain political skills to preserve their interests. This would be neglecting to improve our moral and intellectual capabilities peculiar to us. From the Aristotelian viewpoint, it seems to be difficult to affirm that we are always and already slaves of the laws peculiar to human nature. Otherwise, one would approve a naïve justification of a position taken by philosophers like Machiavelli without hesitation. And this paves the way for developing a specific system of norms peculiar to the politicians or political activities due to its supposed internal requirements. Nonetheless, as far as ethics or politics is interested in what is up to us, what can be otherwise, politicians have no right in justifying their amoral acts whereby appealing to an excuse like “this is because of the politics.” One can always prefer not to engage in politics like old Plato, Cynics or Epicurus. Yet, one can still have right to argue that successful politicians are those who are capable of resolving the political problems in extremely vexed situations. This is not a moral issue, but merely a technical skill. And if the most honorable task of politicians is to arrive at and execute the proper decisions in exceptional, unique cases, there seems to be a vexed obscurity in developing a specific system of norms peculiar to the politicians or political activities due to unpredictability of the future exceptions. On the other hand, if the function of successful politicians is merely executing the art politics properly so as to cope with such astonishing complex cases, like poets are often inclined to be against precisely defining what a beautiful poem is, professional politicians might have also a right to be resisting against a theory of “ethical politics.”

On the other hand, an ethical connotation of Aristotelian principle “it is better for us to be governed by the best ones” seems to be the following: if the citizens are maladministrated, then, the governed people would not easily find an opportunity to improve themselves morally. When a tyrant, for instance, takes the power at his hand, a considerable amount of citizens would tend to pursue a life of money-making or to be honor-lover. It would hence be said that when a tyrant becomes a ruler, the citizens in this city would be more inclined to be morally corrupted persons; for, they are in fact governed by character weaknesses of a person and in

accordance with them. But when city is administrated by a king whose character and intellectual merits are extremely superior in comparison to all citizens in a city, this would provide occasions to improve their character qualities. This is the reason why, seen from the Aristotelian perspective, the Machiavellian justification of the rulers' moral degeneracy would be a advocating the impossibility of moral progress in civil life. Let us note that the Aristotelian conception of ethics and politics are solely concerned with what is up to us, what can be otherwise and this is the reason why he would oppose the view under consideration. It is a much better preference to act in a way to transform tyranny into kingship under certain circumstances. This does not, though, entail that kingship is the best kind of regime to be implemented in all cities and at every time, as discussed in the fourth chapter in detail. Aristotle's rationale to prefer kingship instead of tyranny or aristocracy instead of oligarchy would be the following: a student of *politike* should fully comprehend the existing political condition and evaluate the general moral fabric of the current society appropriately in order to transform the existing regime to the best possible constitution. Thus, the best politician should not be the one who enjoys his superior position in a hierarchical order or gets a high share in external goods, but rather he ought to have a vision to prepare the material and legal infrastructure by which the citizens can enhance their merits and life quality. A good politician, then, is the one whose aim is approximating the existing political order as far as possible to the ideal of *eudamonia* as depicted in the last book of the *Politics*. This person must also have significant moral and intellectual merits. When intellectually and morally weak persons lead the society, it seems inevitable that their moral vices degenerate the other citizens. The reverse is also correct: when a considerable number of citizens are superior in virtue, it would become much more difficult for a tyrannical soul to take power in his hands.

If one pays attention to the practical conclusion of Aristotelian principle "it is better for us to be governed by the best ones," then, the contrast between ethics and politics seems to be an ethical mistake. It doesn't matter whether one is politician or not, he should always be responsible for his own moral vices. It is

possible that one might prefer to not to engage in politics, if it demands from him to be a morally baseness. Ethics, in Aristotle's view, is more associated with improvement of one's own character by eliminating unhealthy desires, false beliefs and enhancing virtuous acts. Politics as a *techne* and *episteme* is, on the other hand, something related with living in a community. Likewise law, which has both ethical and technical dimensions, but cannot be reduced to either of them; politics as practices in the realm of human affairs and interactions, has essentially the same aspects. It is neither a mere science, a mere technique, nor can its domain be restricted to that of ethics. Since there are different types of men, regulation of their conflicting aspirations appears to the task of politics, if one is unwilling to impose a single ethical doctrine to all like Plato. If the vast majority of the people pursue only external goods like money and honor, what should the role of ethics and politics be? This question needs to be answered.

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APPENDICES

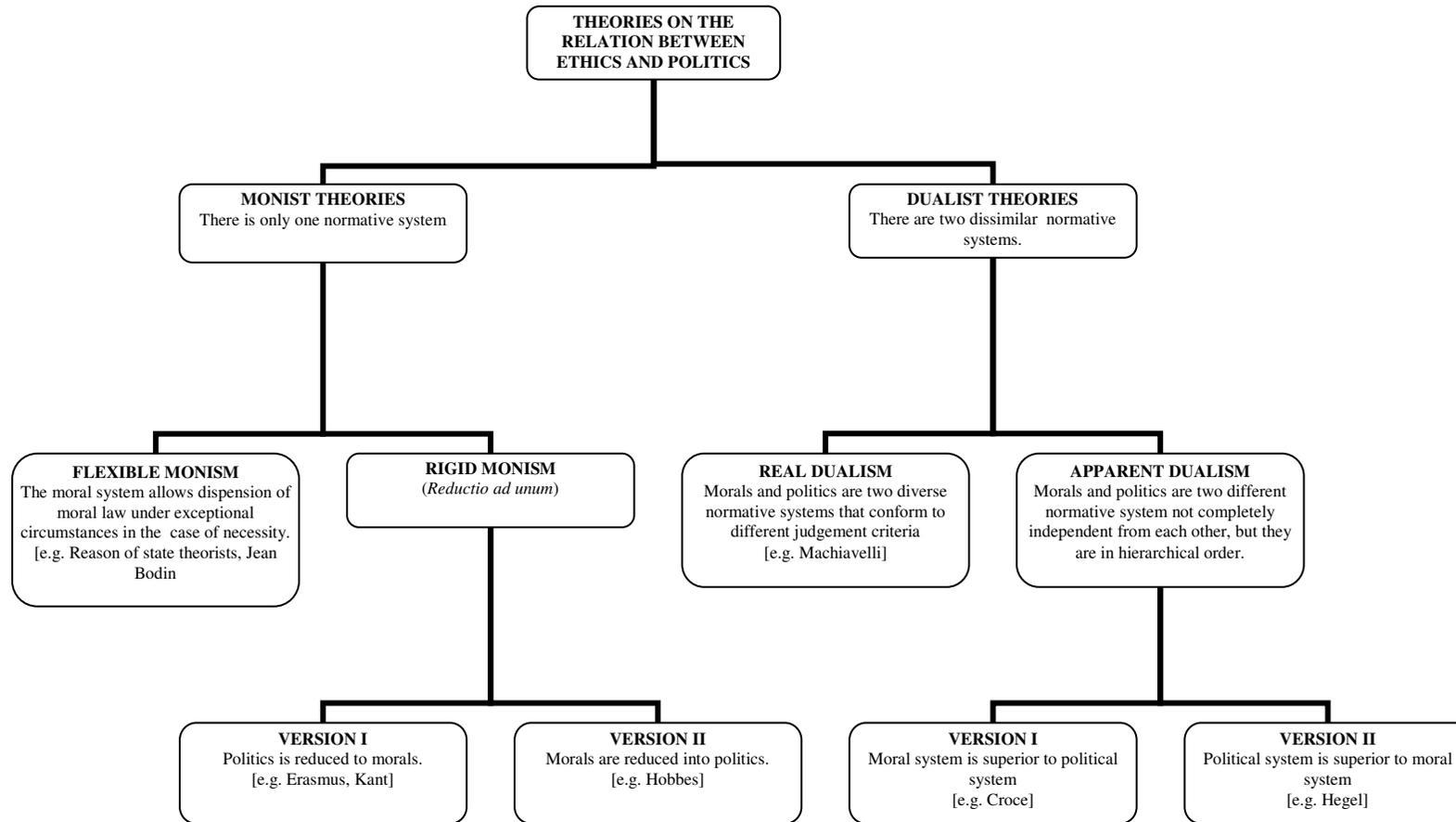


TABLE I: Theories on the relation between ethics and politics. After Bobbio's "Ethics and Politics."

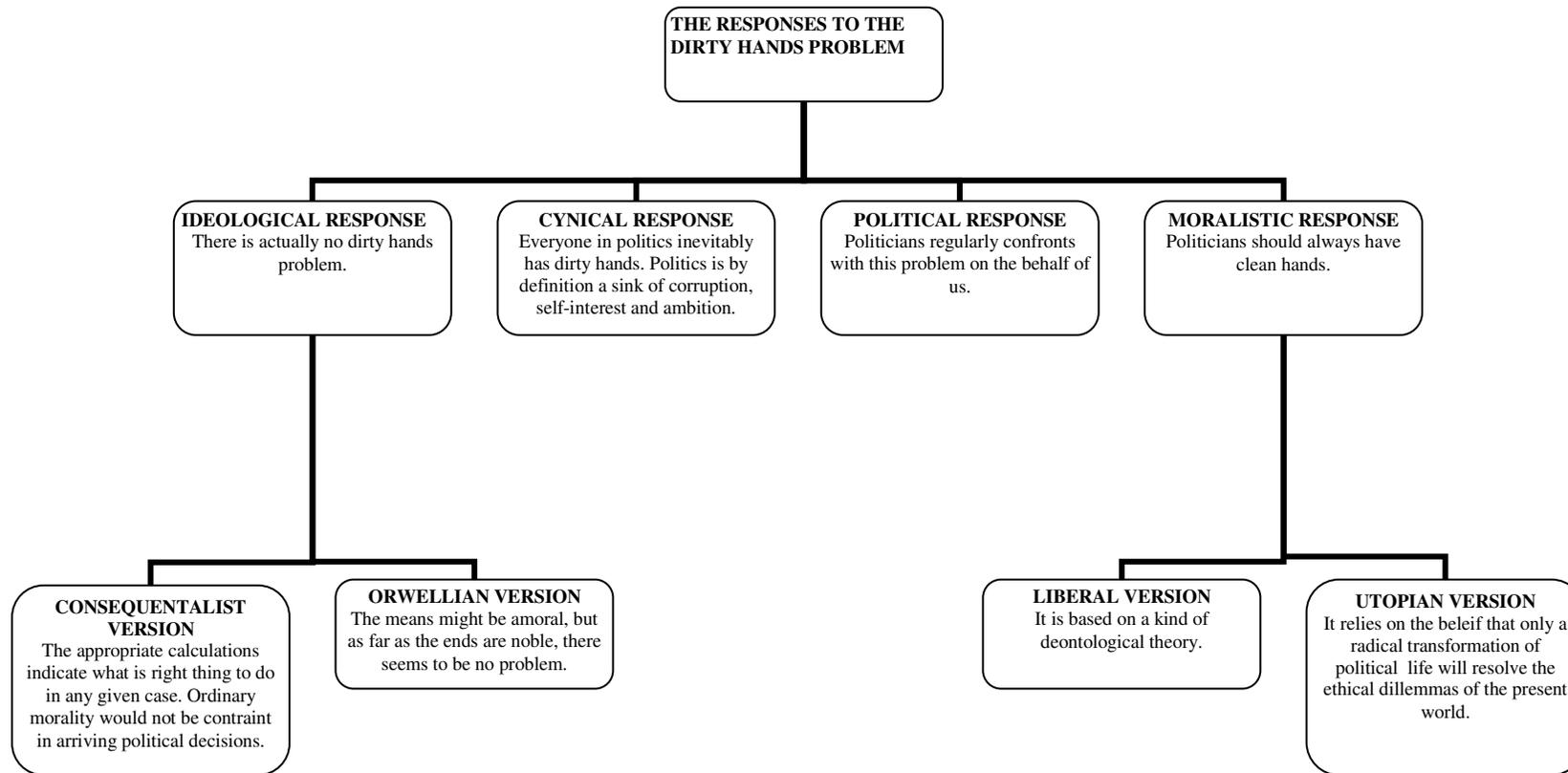


TABLE II: The Responses to the Dirty Hands Problem. After Steven Lukes' *Moral Conflict and Politics*.

APPENDIX C

TURKISH SUMMARY

ETİK VE SİYASET AYRIMINA İLİŞKİN BİR ARAŞTIRMA: ARİSTOTLESÇİ BİR DEĞERLENDİRME

Etik ve siyaset arasındaki ilişki nedir ya da ne olmalıdır? Genellikle söylenildiği gibi etik ve siyasetin bulunduğu ortak bir zemin yok mudur? Bütün siyasi eylemler etik bir araştırmanın konusu mudur? Etik ve siyaset basitçe özdeş midirler ya da özdeş olmalı mıdır?

Bu tezde temel olarak bu sorular yanıtlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Belirli bir bakış açısından “ahlak,” “etik” ve “siyaset” kavramlarının analitik olarak tanımlanması, bu soruların gerektirdiği yanıtları vermek için yeterli görülebilir. Bu çalışmada ise felsefi metinlerde farklı yan anlamlar kazabilen bu kavramların ne anlama geldiğine değil, sorunun daha çok yaşamsal yönüne dikkat çekilmiştir. Bu tür bir yaklaşımın benimsenmesi etik ve siyasetin doğasına daha uygun gibi görünmektedir. “Pratik felsefe” olabildiğince pratik olmalıdır.

Dolayısıyla bu çalışmanın temel ön-varsayımlarından birinin şu olduğu söylenebilir: Etik ve siyaset ilişkisi soyut bir biçimde çözümlenebilir bir ilişki değildir. Bu ilişkiyi insanların gündelik yaşamlarında karşılaştıkları bir ilişki olarak ele almak daha makul bir tercih olacaktır. Çoğunlukla kullanılan “ahlak,” “etik,” ve “siyaset” gibi kavramlar öncelikle ve temel olarak gündelik deneyimlerimize göndermede bulunur ve aslında gündelik deneyimlerimizin birer ifadesidir.

Günümüz dünyasında “ahlak” kavramı özel yaşam ya da kişisel tercihlerle ilişkilendirilebilir. Bu çerçevede “ahlak”ın bir dizi inanca dayandığı söylenebilir. Diğer bir deyişle, insanlar ahlak ya da etik değerleri kendi “özel yaşam” ya da “kişisel tercih”leriyle tanımlama eğiminde gibidir. Bu onların meşru olduğu varsayılan “kişisel” ahlaki değerlerine ya da “tercih”lerine karşı çıkıldığında birdenbire eleştirel bir tutum benimsemelerinden bellidir. Çağdaş liberalizm çağında “Batı” ya da “Batı-benzeri” demokrasilerde yaşayan insanların büyük bir çoğunluğunun değerlerin çoğulluğuna saygısı varmış gibi görünür. Ne var ki bu çoğulculuk ne denli bir ideal olarak kalmıştır ya da ne kadar samimi olarak pratikte işlemektedir, bu bir tartışma konusudur.

Bu tartışmaya ilişkin olarak savunulan bakış açısı her ne olursa olsun, sonuçta insanların çoğunluğunun belirli bir ahlak ve siyaset anlayışıyla eyledikleri açıktır. İnsanların çoğu etik ve siyaseti farklı, birbirine indirgenemez, ilişkisiz alanlar gibi görmektedir. Bu nedenle çoğunluk, siyasetçilerin genel ahlaka uymayan gayrimeşru eylemlerini onaylama eğiliminde gibidir. Bu tezde ise hem çoğunlukça hem de felsefe tarihinde birçok felsefeci tarafından birbirinden ayrı alanlar gibi ele alınan, çözümlenmeye çalışılan etik ve siyasetin neden birbirinden bütünü bağımsızlaştırılmayacağı, fakat birbirilerine özdeş olarak da görülemeyeceği tartışılmıştır.

Bu amaçla bu çalışmada Aristotelesçi etik ve siyaset felsefesine odaklanarak etik ve siyaset arasındaki yakınsama ve farklılıklar aydınlatmaya çalışılmıştır. Belirtmek gerekir ki bu tezin temel amacı Aristoteles’in asıl felsefesini bulmak da değildir. Yine de tezde Aristoteles’in pratik felsefesini yorumlama çabalarına, çağdaş Aristotelesçi karşı çıkışlara da bu çalışmanın temel savıyla ilişkili olduğu ölçüde yer verilmiştir. Kaldı ki, yinelemek gerekirse, bu tezin amacı ne Aristoteles’e ne de çağdaş Aristotelesçilik ya da Aristotelesçiliğe odaklanmaktır. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı etik ve siyaset arasındaki sorunlu ilişkinin hayati önemini vurgulamak ya da basitçe yeniden hatırlatmaktır. Bu tezin diğer, ama gerçekleştirilmesi çok daha zor amacı ise bu konuda Aristotelesçi bir bakış açısı önermektir.

Bu noktada “neden Aristoteles?” diye sorulabilir. Örneğin Kantçı ya da Hobbesçu bir araştırma yöntembilimi yerine Aristotelesçi bir araştırma yöntembiliminin tercih edilmesinin nedenleri nedir? Neden etik ve siyaset arasındaki ilişkiyi irdelemek için yeniden Aristoteles’e dönmek zorundayız? Her şeyden önce “neo-Aristotelesçi” ya da “Aristotelesçi” demek ne demektir?

Birinci bölümde bu sorulara yanıt vermek için Aristotelesçi yaklaşım diğer bazı bakış açılarıyla karşılaştırılmış, böylece Aristotelesçi yaklaşımın özgüllükleri belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu özgüllükler şu şekilde özetlenebilir: Aristotelesçi yaklaşım Immanuel Kant ve Thomas Hobbes gibi ontolojik olarak değişmeyen bir nitelikler ya da eğilimler kümesine indirgenebilen, tarihsel süreçler ve toplumsal düzenden bağımsız belirli bir insan doğası anlayışına dayanmaz. Örneğin her iki felsefecinin pratik felsefeye ilişkin araştırma yöntembilimleri, her ne kadar birbirinden birçok açıdan oldukça farklı olsalar da, belirli bir insan doğasının olduğu ya da olabileceği varsayımına dayanır. Bu tür insan doğası kavramsallaştırması ise akli ya da insanlar arasındaki ilişkileri yöneten bir dizi yasanın olduğunu ya da olması gerektiğini varsayar. Bu nedenle Kantçı açıdan bakılırsa aklın, Hobbesçu açıdan bakılırsa insanların toplumsal ilişkilerindeki temel eğilimlerinin yasaları bulunduğu insan eylemlerini yöneten ya da yönetmesi gereken ahlaki ya da siyasi kural ya da değerler bu yasalardan tündengelimle çıkarsanabilir. Oysa Aristotelesçi yöntembilim insan doğasına özgü belirli yasaların olduğu ve bunların da doğa yasaları gibi değişmediği gibi bir varsayımına dayanmaz. Etik ya da siyaset insana bağlı olan, başka türlü de olabilecek olanlarla, yani insanların tercihine bağlı yapıp etmeleriyle ilgilidir. Bu nedenle insan doğasının özü bakımından değişmeyen bir yapısı olduğunu varsaymak Aristoteles açısından sorunludur. Öyleyse insan doğasının sabit bir doğası olduğu, bu doğayı yöneten belirli yasaların bulunduğu ve etik ya da siyasete ilişkin değer ya da ölçütlerin bu yasalardan tündengelimsel bir şekilde türetilebileceği söylenemez. Yinelerseniz, Aristotelesçi yaklaşıma göre ontolojik nitelikleri sabit bir insan doğası yoktur; daha çok farklı nitelikleri olan bir insanlar yelpazesi vardır: çocuklar, kadınlar, köleler, zenginler, yoksullar, orta halli

olanlar, para peşinde koşanlar, haz peşinde koşanlar, onur peşinde koşanlar, bilgiler vb. gibi. Aristoteles'e göre karakterlerinin nasıl oluştuğuna göre de insanlar çeşitli, birbirinden oldukça farklıdır. İnsanların geliştirilmeye açık çeşitli meziyetleri ve kurtulduklarında daha mutlu olacakları düşünülen zaafı vardır. Dolayısıyla insanları basitçe ahlaklı ya da ahlaksız olarak sınıflandırmak doğru değildir. Daha çok birbirinden farklı karakterlerin hangi meziyet ve zaafı olduğuna bakmak gerekir. Bir insan karakterindeki zaafıdan doğru eyleyerek kurtulduğunu, meziyetlerini geliştirmeye çalışıldıkça daha iyi, daha mutlu bir insan olacaktır. Zaafının esiri olanlar ise hem gün geçtikçe iyi bir insan olma çabasıyla uzaklaşacaklar, hem de mutlu olamayacaklardır. İnsanlar etik bilgi edindikçe yanlış inançlarından ve sağlıksız arzularından kurtulacak, böylece *eudamonia* idealine uygun bir biçimde yaşamaları daha olası olacaktır. Etik, bu açıdan bakıldığında ucu açık bir araştırmadır; bir öğrenme sürecidir. Amacı ise ahlak konusundaki evrensel yasaları, erdemlerin kesin tanımını bulmak değil, mutlu olmak, bir insanın karşılaştığı bağlam her ne olursa olsun erdemlere uygun eyleyerek yaşamaktır.

Aristotelesçi bakış açısının bir başka özgülüğü ihtiyatlı olma konusundaki ısrarıdır. İhtiyat ise hem bir yöntem bilim, hem de bir karakter erdemidir. Etik ya da siyasete ilişkin yapılan bir araştırma ise yöntem bilimsel bir ihtiyat anlayışına dayanırken kişinin ihtiyat erdemini geliştirmesini de amaçlar. Oysa Kantçı yaklaşımlar pratik felsefe alanında matematiksel ya da fiziksel yasaların kesinliğe ulaşabileceğini umarak insanlar arasındaki ilişki ve olaylara ilişkin matematiksel ya da fiziksel yasalara benzer yasalar araştırır. Bu tür bir yaklaşım Aristotelesçi açıdan pratik felsefenin yöntem bilimsel ihtiyatından uzaklaşma, bir aşırıya sapmadır. Bu noktada belirtmek gerekir ki bir başka aşırılık ise etik ya da siyasete ilişkin görececi bir tutumun benimsenmesidir. İnsanların farklı ahlaki değerleri benimseyerek yaşamaları, hepimizin için daha iyi olabilecek değer ya da erdemlerin olmamasına gerekçe olarak gösterilemez. Aristotelesçi bir açıdan bakılacak olursa Kantçı bir evrenselcilik ya da Nietzscheci bir görececilik kaçınılması gereken yöntem bilimsel iki aşırılıktır. Bu nedenle Aristotelesçi pratik felsefenin görececi olmayan, bağlama bağımlı değil, bağlama duyarlı, ihtiyatlı bir

hakikat araştırması olduğu söylenebilir.

Aristoteles'in *Nichomakhos'a Etik* çalışmasında birkaç kez uyarıda bulunduğu bir konu vardır. Nasıl ki matematiğin araştırma konusu matematiksel nesnelere, fiziğin araştırma konusu daha çok cansız nesnelere arasındaki ilişki ve olaylar, biyolojinin araştırma nesnesi ise canlı varlıkların doğasıdır, *politike*'nin araştırma nesnesi de insanlar arasındaki ilişki ve olaylardır. *Politike* ise hem bir *techne* hem de bir *episteme* olarak insanlar arasındaki tüm ilişki olaylarla ilgili bütün araştırma disiplinlerini kapsar ve bu disiplinlerin yöntembilimiyle araştırılarak elde edilen bilgileri kullanır. Bu nedenle ilgili literatürde çoğunlukla yapıldığı gibi *politike*'yi "siyaset bilimi" olarak çevirmek yanlış anlaşılmalara yol açabilir. *Politike*'nin tanımlayıcı araştırma alanı insanlar arasındaki bütün ilişki ve olaylar olması nedeniyle *politike* iktisat, sosyoloji, antropoloji, tarih, hukuk, psikoloji gibi disiplinleri kapsayan bir bilgi türüdür. Diğer yandan *politike*, doğa bilimleri ve matematiğe göre düşük bir kesinlik düzeyine sahip *episteme*'dir. Bu konuya ilişkin olarak Aristoteles, bir araştırmada ulaşılabilecek kesinliğin o araştırmacının ele aldığı konunun doğasına uygun bir kesinlik olması gerektiğini söyler. Dolayısıyla hayata, mutluluğa (*eudamonia*) ilişkin yapılacak bir araştırmadan matematikçilerin ya da fizikçilerin ulaştıkları kesinliğe ulaşmasını beklememek gerekir. Kendini bilen kişi her araştırmada, araştırılan konunun doğasının izin verdiği ölçüde bir kesinlik düzeyine ulaşmayı amaçlar. Bu açıdan bakıldığında etik ya da siyasete ilişkin araştırmalarda ele alınan konu yaşamın kendisi olduğu sürece bu alanda matematiksel bir ispattan ya da istisnalardan bağımsız fiziksel yasalara benzer yasalardan söz edilemeyecektir. Buna rağmen *politike* bilgilerin teleolojik hiyerarşisinde bütün bilim ve pratiklerin üstündedir. Aristoteles bu konuda üç temel gerekçe öne sürer: Birincisi, her ne kadar *politike* en düşük kesinliğe sahip bir bilim olsa da, bize hangi bilgiye ne kadar gereksinimimiz olduğunu gösterir. Örneğin bir kentte kaç tane matematikçi, kaç tane tıp doktoru olması gerektiğine *politike* karar verir. İkincisi, askerlik ya da iktisat gibi disiplinler *politike*'ye tabiidirler. Örneğin iktisadın amacını *politike* tayin eder. Üçüncüsü, *politike* diğer bütün bilimleri kullanır ve ne yapılıp ne yapılmaması, kent yaşamının *eudamonia* idealine göre nasıl düzenlenmesi gerektiği konusunda

yasalar koyar. Bu nedenlerle *politike* bütün bilimlerin en kapsamlısı ve en önemlisidir.

Politike'ye özgü olan araştırma yöntembiliminin temel hatları ise şu şekilde özetlenebilir: (i) Görünümleri, genel kanıları, ortak deneyimleri, insanlara doğru gibi görünenleri incelemek; (ii) bunları doğruluk, tutarlılık, olası bağlamlara uyumluluk, mutlu olmaya hizmet edip etmemesi açısından değerlendirmek; ve böylece (iii) önyargılardan, yanlış inançlardan, sağlıksız arzularından kurtulmak ve akılcı bir şekilde irdelenen doğru genellemelerden yola çıkarak *politike*'ye ilişkin araştırmayı sürdürmek.

Bu çalışma yukarıda betimlenen araştırma yöntembilimi benimseyerek yapılmıştır. Bu nedenle öncelikle felsefe tarihinden seçilen örnek yaklaşımlara odaklanarak etik ya da ahlak ve siyaset arasında bir ilişki olmadığı ya da dışsal bir ilişki olduğuna ilişkin felsefi görüşler II. ve III. bölümlerde kısaca serimlenmiş, eleştirel bir açıdan değerlendirilmiştir. IV. bölümde ise Aristotelesçi yaklaşımın diğer yaklaşımlardan etik ve siyaset arasındaki ilişkinin gerçekçi bir biçimde çözümlenmesi açısından daha üstün olduğu iddia edilmiştir. Pratik felsefe alanında Aristotelesçi yöntembiliminin sonuç bölümünde sunulan iki taksonomide yerinin olmamasının da Aristotelesçi yaklaşımda etik ve siyaset ilişkisinin birinden tamamıyla bağımsız iki alanın dışsal olarak ilişkilendirilmesi varsayımına dayanmamasından kaynaklandığı öne sürülmüştür.

İkinci bölümde Eski Yunan'da "Sokrates ideali"nin ortaya çıkmasıyla birlikte ahlak ya da etik ve siyasetin birbirine karşıt olarak kavramsallaştırmasının izi sürülmeye çalışılmıştır. Örneğin "Sokrates ideali"ni belki de aşırı bir biçimde izleyen Kinikler "ahlaki ideal"e göre yaşama ülküsünün kentten erdemden uzak siyaset hayatına müdahil olarak gerçekleştirilmeyeceğini düşünüyorlardı. Kinikler'e göre etik bir hayat sürmenin olmazsa olmaz önkoşulu, toplumun insanları köleleştiren uzlaşma ve yasalarından bağımsız olarak, doğaya uygun bir biçimde yaşamaktır. Bu nedenle Kinikler her türlü mülkiyet ilişkisini, biçimi her ne biçimde olursa olsun kentteki onur dağıtımını, siyaset hayatıyla ilgilenmeyi

topyekûn bir biçimde reddederek köpekler gibi yaşarlar. Bir Kinik Atina'nın ahlaki olarak yozlaşmış siyaset hayatının bir parçası olmaktansa, köpek gibi yaşamayı erdemli gören ve buna göre yaşayandır. Etiğe ilişkin bir doğru, tutarlı akıl yürütmeleri öne sürerek değil, bizzat kişinin kendi yaşama biçimiyle temellendirilebilir. Kinikler için iki tür insan vardır: Kinikler gibi erdemli yaşayanlar ve kent siyasetinin bir parçası olarak aptallıklarını kentin uygar vatandaşları olmakla gerekçelendirenler. Oysa bilge kişinin Sokratesçi "kendine yetebilme" ilkesi dışında dilemesi gereken bir şey yoktur. Doğru yaşam *kosmos*'a göre, doğal güdü ve isteklerimize göre yaşamakla olanaklı olacaktır; kentin köleleştirici, gayriahlâkî uzlaşısı ve yasalarına uyararak değil.

Ne var ki "Sokrates ideali"ni Platon'a göre aşırıya kaçarak izleyen Kiniklerin kentteki siyasi olay ve ilişkilerin gayriahlâkîliğini gerekçe göstererek siyasetten bağımsız olduklarını düşünmelerinde, kendilerinin siyasetten bağımsız olduklarını iddia etmelerinde çözülmemiş bir sorun vardır. Çünkü biz siyasetle ilgilenmesek bile siyaset bizimle ilgilenir. Örneğin Kinikler her ne kadar yaşam biçimleri ve düşünceleriyle siyasetten bağımsız olduklarını öne sürseler de, hâlâ bir kent içinde yaşamakta, dolayısıyla ister istemez dönemlerinin önemli bir siyasi hareketi olarak algılanmaktaydılar. Sokrates her ne kadar kendisinin siyasetle ilgilenmediğini, siyasetçi olmadığını ısrarla söylese bile hatırı sayılır sayıdaki vatandaşlarının gözünde etkili ve hatta oldukça tehlikeli bir siyasi figür olması nedeniyle ölüm "ceza"sına çarptırılmıştır. Dolayısıyla birisinin siyasetten azade olduğunu öne sürmesi, onun gerçekten de siyasetten bağımsız olmasının gerek ve yeter koşulu değildir. Siyaset, her şeyden önce bir arada yaşamakla ilgili bir olgudur.

İnsanlar arasındaki gereksiz çatışmaların çoğunlukla para ve/veya iktidar tutkusundan kaynakladığını gören Platon ise bu çatışmaların temel nedenini ortadan kaldırarak çözmeyi denemiştir. *Ütopya*'da bu nedenle para olmamalıdır; hatta bir annenin çocuğunu sahiplenmesi bile, yani en geniş anlamıyla "mülkiyet"te. Yönetici ise, yönetici olmak isteyen birisi değil, adalet *ideası*'nı gören ve ona uygun bir biçimde toplumu sevk ve idare eden birisi olmalıdır.

Platon'un filozof-kralı adalet *idea*'sına göre toplumu yönettiğinde ve vatandaşlar ruhlarının eğilimlerine, meziyet derecelerine göre toplumsal iş bölümünde kendilerine uygun düşen yerleri kabul ettiklerinde siyaset hayatı zaten etik olacak ve dolayısıyla kentteki mevcut siyasi olay ve ilişkilerin gayriahlâkîliği sorunu kökünden çözülmüş olacaktır. Fakat ütopyanın etik değerlerinin, ahlaki yasalarının geçerli olmadığı ve hatta aşağılandığı bir kentte ne yapılmalıdır?

Bu konuda en azından yaşlı Platon, her ne şart ve koşulda olursa olsun ütopyanın yasalarına uymanın erdemli yaşamının gerek ve yeter koşulu olduğunu düşündüğünden, bilge kişinin kendisini siyasi olay ve hareketlerden uzak tutması gerektiğini söylemiştir. Kentin siyasi düzeni sistematik bir iki yüzlülük, insanların hak ettiklerinden çok daha fazlasını isteme eğilimi üstüne kuruludur ve bu kör bir iktidar savaşından başka bir şey değildir. Vatandaşlar bu durumda adaletli davranmak, adaletli yönetmek, erdemli olmak için değil, ahlaki ya da entelektüel nitelikleri diğerlerine göre pek gelişkin olmasa bile, diğerlerinden hiyerarşik olarak üstün bir konuma geçmeye çalışır. Bu tür bir adaletsizliğin parçası olmak ise haksızlığa uğramaktan çok daha kötüdür. Bu nedenle bilge kişi vatandaşlar arasındaki bu kör dövüşüne katılmamalı, seçkin bir yalnızlığı tercih ederek hakikate uygun yaşamalıdır. Platon bu nedenle *Akademi*'ye sığınmayı salık verir. *Akademi*'nin kent merkezinden uzakta kurulması bunun göstergelerinden biri olarak görülebilir.

Stoacı bilgelik anlayışına göre ise siyaset alanı “bize bağlı olmayanlar” dandır. Etik ise “bize bağlı olanlar” la, yani görüngülere ilişkin izlenimlerimizi bilgece yönetme bilgisi ve zanaatıdır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında Stoacı bilge siyasete kayıtsız kalır. Stoacı bilge Marcus Aurelius gibi bir Roma İmparatoru olabileceği gibi Epiktetos gibi bir köle de olabilir. Köle ya da İmparator olarak doğmak kişinin elinde değildir. Siyaset ise “bize bağlı olmayanlar” dan olduğuna göre etik ya da bilgece yaşamakla siyasetin bir ilişkisi yoktur. Stoacı bilge her ne kadar ister istemez siyasetin bir parçası olsa da kendinde siyasetten bağımsız olma olanağı görür. Bu nedenle Stoacı bilge için siyasete karşı kayıtsız kalmak, *ataraxia* idealine uygun bir biçimde yaşamının önkoşuludur.

Epikuroşuların ise bahçede yaşamayı tercih etmeleri, siyasetten uzaklaşmak istemelerinin açık bir göstergesidir. Siyaset hayatı güvensiz bir hayatı beraberinde getirir. Bir kere, siyaset hayatında dostluğun yeri yoktur. Siyaset her şeyin meşru olduğu bir iktidar savaşı üstüne kuruludur. İkincisi, siyasette yükselmek güvenliğin nasıl sağlanacağına yönelik yanlış bir inanca dayanır. Kişi siyasette başarılı oldukça güvenliğini sağlamakta zorlaşacaktır; zira bu durumda çok daha güçlü düşmanları olacaktır. Epikuros, bilge kişinin siyasi olay ve konular konusunda dikkatli olmasını, fakat siyaset hayatından olabildiğine uzak durmasını öğütüyordu. Bu nedenle “kendini gizle” ilkesi Epikuroşular tarafından benimsenen temel ilkedir. Aynı zamanda bir Epikuroşu “ne zarar vermek ne de zarar görmek” isteyendir. Siyasetten yalıtılmış, kadın, köle, yabancı ve vatandaşların eşit olduğu bir bahçede dostlarla birlikte hakikate ilişkin araştırmalar yapmak ruhun *ataraxia* idealine, yani dinginliğine ulaşmak için yeterlidir. Onun için Epikuroşular dostluk ve güvenliğin bulunmadığı siyaset yaşamından uzaklaşarak bir bahçede yaşamayı seçerler.

Öğretilerinin temel hatları etik siyaset ilişkisi bağlamında kabaca özetlenen bu Sokratesçi okullar açısından bakıldığında benimsenen etik yaşam biçimi ile mevcut siyasi yaşam bir çatışma, bir uzlaşmazlık içindedir. Bu anlamda, etik ile siyasetin birbirinden bağımsız iki eylem, yaşama alanı ya da biçimi olarak görülmesi Eski Yunan kentlerinde ortaya çıkan etik yaklaşımların mevcut siyasi düzeni temellendirmemesi, dolayısıyla onunla uyumlu olmamasından kaynaklanır. Ahlak ile siyaset arasındaki çatışma, bu anlamda, bilgenin benimsediği etik değerlerle siyaset yaşamı arasındaki çelişkinin bir ifadesidir. Bu durumda bilge kişi adaletsiz, etik olmayan siyasi eylem ve olaylara katılmak, onların bir parçası olmaktansa kendini o ya da bu şekilde siyasetten uzaklaştırır; kendini gayriahlâkî bulduğu siyaset hayatının bir parçası olarak görmek istemez. Bu aynı zamanda ahlaki zaaflarından kurtulamamış ve belki de kurtulamayacak olan çoğunluk içinde yaşama stratejidir.

Eski Yunan kent devletlerinden Niccolo Machiavelli'yle birlikte modern felsefede etik siyaset ilişkisinin nasıl ele alındığına geldiğimizde ise tam tersi bir tutumun gittikçe benimsenir olmaya başladığı söylenebilir. Machiavelli'ye göre insanların çoğu ikiyüzlü, düzenbaz, hırslı, iktidar düşkünü, hain, dalkavuk ve yalancıdır. Bu durum ise değiştirilemeyeceğine göre *Prens* eğer onlara güvenir, onların iyi birer insan olabileceğine inanırsa yalnızca aldatılacaktır. Siyaset alanında ahlaki bir değer ya da buyruğun ulvi bir anlamı olmadığı gibi bu tür değer ya da buyruklara uygun bir biçimde davranmak olumsuz sonuçlara yol açacaktır. Machiavelli'nin temel izleği Hıristiyanlığın ahlakıyla devlet yönetilemeyeceğidir. Bu nedenle Prens, etrafındaki düşmanlarına karşı her zaman tetikte olmalı, devletin ya da kendi çıkarıyla daha önce yapmış olduğu bir anlaşma ya da vermiş olduğu bir söz çeliştiğinde ise bu anlaşmanın ya da vermiş olduğu sözün gereğini yerine getirmemelidir. Siyaset, ahlaki zaaflarıyla malul olan birçok insan arasında yaşama sanatı ya da tekniğidir. Dolayısıyla siyasetin ahlaki değer ya da kurullarla herhangi bir ilişkisi yoktur. Her kim ki etik değerleri benimseyerek yaşar, siyaset yaşamında başarısız olacak ve üstelik sürekli olarak kandırılacaktır.

Hobbes'a geldiğimizde ise Machiavellici bir biçimde siyasetin etik ya da ahlaktan oldukça keskin bir biçimde ayrıldığını görüyoruz. Hobbes felsefeyi temel olarak “doğa felsefesi” ve “siyaset ya da toplum felsefesi” olarak ikiye ayırır. Siyaset ya da toplum felsefesi siyasi varlıkların özelliklerinden yapılan çıkarsamalarla ilgilenirken “ahlak” insanların duygularından yapılan çıkarsamalarla ilgilenir. Bu çerçevede siyaset ya da toplum felsefesi bir bilimdir ve ahlaktan tamamıyla bağımsızdır. Hobbes, insanlar arasında barışı sağlamak için ahlaki buyrukların yüceliğinden söz etmenin ve insanların bu buyruklara uyması beklemenin gerçekçi bir tutum olmadığı konusunda ısrarlıdır. Hobbes'un bakış açısına göre akılcı bir biçimde yapılan toplumsal sözleşmenin kurullarına uyulduğunda -ki bu kurullar ahlaki varsayımlardan çıkarsanmamıştır- “doğa durumu”ndan kurtularak barışçı bir biçimde yaşamak olanaklı olacaktır. Bunun tek yolunu ise ulvi olduğu düşünülen etik değerler değil, bir bilim olarak siyaset ya da toplum felsefesi gösterecektir. Kendi güvenliğimizi korumanın yegâne yolu budur. Hobbes yalnızca kendi çıkar ve güvenliğimizi gözettiğimizde bile barışçıl bir biçimde yaşamının,

akılcı bir biçimde konulan yasalara uymanın bizim için en makul tercih olduğunu söyleyecektir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında insanların ahlaki erdemlere göre eylemesini beklemek pek gerçekçi görülmemektedir.

Zamanında “şeytan-adam” (*man-devil*) olarak ünlenen Bernand Mandeville ise ahlakın becerikli politikacılar tarafından insanların duygularını yönetmek için icat edildiğini öne sürmüştür. Örneğin Hıristiyanlığın ahlaki öğretisini benimsemiş birisi karşılaştığı haksızlıklara karşı mücadele etmeyecek, siyasetçilerin kurnazca koyduğu kurallara uymayı tercih edecektir. Bir sanat olarak siyaset, Mandeville’e göre, yalnızca bir “kurnazlık sanatı”dır ve bu sanatın eski ahlaki değerlere göre icra edilmesini beklemek ise yalnızca safdillik olacaktır. İkiyüzlü olmak, yalan söylemek ve düzenbazca davranmak siyaset sanatının olmazsa olmaz parçalarıdır. Mandeville bu ahlaki nitelikleri daha yüksek olduğuna inandığı etik değerleri öne sürerek eleştirmek şöyle dursun, ayrıntılı bir şekilde temellendirilir. Rekabet ve başarı ilkeleri üstüne kurulu bir toplumda erdemli olmaya çalışanın yazgısı başarısız olmaktır. Ulvi olduğu düşünülen etik değerler doğrultusunda yaşayanların yazgısı ise kendi çıkar ve arzularını gerçekleştirilememektir.

Dolayısıyla Machiavelli, Hobbes ve Mandeville’in siyaseti bir teknik, zanaat ya da bilim olarak ahlak ya da etikten keskin bir şekilde ayırdıklarını, siyasetin ahlaka indirgenemeyeceğini, aralarında anlamlı bir ilişki kurulamayacağını görüyoruz. Yalnız bu yaklaşımın modern felsefenin karakteristik eğilimi olduğu pek söylenemez. Örneğin Kant bu yaklaşıma şiddetle karşı çıkmıştır. Ampirik dünya ve önermelerden bağımsız olan ahlaki değer ve kurallar yalnızca ve yalnızca “koşulsuz buyruk”tan tümdengelimle çıkarılmalıdır. Herhangi bir eylemim *maksim*’i koşulsuz buyrukla çeliştiğinde bu eylemin ahlakiliğinden söz edilemez. Stoacı bir ilkeyi, yani etik olarak insanların hiçbir zaman araç olarak değerlendirilmemesi, her zaman amaç olarak görülmesinin pratik felsefesinin temel ilkesi olarak benimsemiş Kant, siyaset alanında insanların genel olarak araç olarak görüldüğü gerçeğinin farkındadır. Bu durumda kişi siyasetle ilgilendiğinde ne yapmalıdır? Kant’a göre siyasetçinin her ne şart ve koşulda olursa “koşulsuz buyruk”a aykırı davranması mazur görülmez. Öyleyse siyaset ile ahlak

arasındaki çatışma ancak benimsenen etik değerlere uygun bir toplumsal düzenin kurulmasıyla somut olarak çözülmüş olacaktır. Dolayısıyla Kant'ın etik ve siyasetin gerilimli ilişkisine olan yaklaşımı, Platon'un yaklaşıma benzer bir biçimde, siyasetin yasalarını evrensel olduğunu düşündüğü etik yasalar altında açıklamaya çalışmaktan ibarettir. Ne var ki bu yaklaşım sorunun çözümü olmaktan çok yalnızca bir temenniye dile getirmekle sınırlı gibi görünmektedir.

19. yüzyıl ve sonlarına geldiğimizde ise siyasetin bir teknik, bilim ya da zanaat olarak değil, gittikçe bir meslek olarak tanımlanması eğiliminin baskınlaştığı ve yaygınlaştığı söylenebilir. Bu yaklaşımın en önemli temsilcisi ise, kuşkusuz, Max Weber'dir. Weber'e göre mesleğinin erbabı olan bir siyaset adamı, belirli bir etik kurallar dizisini her koşulda izlemeyi salık veren bir "inanç etiği"ne sadık kalarak değil, siyaset alanındaki eylemlerin sonuçlarını da gözetecek bir "sorumluluk etiği"ni benimseyerek eylemelidir. Amaçların doğruluğu ve araçların ona uygunluğu bağlama bağlı bir sorun olduğundan, bu sorunun bağlamdan bağımsız bir biçimde çözülmesi Weber açısından pek olanaklı değildir. Belki de bu nedenle Weber, iyi bir siyaset adamında bulunması gereken karakter niteliklerine dikkat çeker. İyi bir siyasetçi hem benimsediği ulvi amaçlara tutkuyla bağlı hem de soğukkanlı olmalıdır. Kibir ve kör bir iktidar istenci siyasetçinin her an yenmesi gereken iki duygudur. Kibir insanın kendisini tarafsız bir biçimde görmesinin önünde bir engeldir; kibirli siyasetçiler kendi hatalarını düzeltmeye çabalamayı, kendi hatalarının sorumluluğunu üstlenmeyi bırakın bir kenara, kendi hatalarını göremezler ve hatta temellendirebilirler. İktidar istenci ise hiçbir amacı savunamamaya ve sorumluluk duygusu taşımamaya yol açar.

Ne var ki yukarıda kabaca özetlenen ve siyasetçilere özgü olduğu düşünülen "sorumluluk etiği"nin siyasetle uğraşanlara özgü bir etik anlayışı olarak değerlendirilmesi makul olmayacaktır. Kibirden uzak durmak, ulvi bir amacı gerçekleştirmeye çalışmak, kör bir iktidar istencinin esiri olmamak gibi etik ilkelere uygun bir biçimde davranmanın yalnızca siyasetçiler için değil, tüm insanlar için salık verilebilecek ilkeler olduğu söylenebilir. Kaldı ki günümüz dünyasında siyaset bir meslek olarak icra edilse bile, gerçekten de bir meslek mi

olmalıdır? Bir insan neden ve nasıl siyasetçi olur ve hangi tür bir amacı, nasıl gerçekleştirmesi gerekir? Weber'in "sorumluluk etiği" bu tür sorulara yanıt vermemekte, siyasetin bir meslek olarak icra edilmesini değiştirilemez bir tarihsel olgu olduğunu varsaymaktadır.

Dolayısıyla Eski Yunan kent devletlerinden modern döneme Machiavellici devrimle geçişe baktığımızda özetle şunlar söylenebilir: Kent devletlerinin nüfusları göz önüne alındığında vatandaşların birbirinin meziyet ve zaaflarını doğrudan olmasa da en azından gıyaben bildiklerini, dolayısıyla Eski Yunan kent devletlerinde vatandaşların huylarını bildikleri kişi ya da kişiler tarafından yönetildikleri söylenebilir. Oysa modern dönemde görünüş ve gerçeklik sorunu, aynı zamanda neredeyse siyasi bir sorun olmaya başlamıştır. Bu saptamanın doğruluğu siyasete ilişkin birçok komplo teorisi oluşturulmasından da bellidir. Diğer yandan Eski Yunan kent devletlerinde "erdem," "mutluluk," "bilgelik" ve "haz" gibi bir kavram öbeği çerçevesinde yürütülen etiğe ya da siyasete ilişkin araştırmalar modern dönemde "istenç," "çıkar" ve "arzu" gibi yeni bir kavram kümesini benimseyerek yapılmış gibidir. Bu dönüşüm Kuhncu anlamda bir "paradigma değişimi" olarak adlandırılabilir. Bu dönüşümün ardındaki tarihsel nedenler her ne olursa olsun "Sokrates ideali"ni izlemekten Machiavellici bir devrimle yeni bir döneme geçildiği oldukça açıktır.

Oysa Machiavelli'yle birlikte bir teknik, Hobbes'la birlikte bir bilim, Mandeville'le bir "kurnazlık sanatı" olduğunu varsayılan siyasetin büsbütün etik alanından ve ahlaki değerlerden bağımsız olduğunu düşünmek de akla uygun bir tercih olmayabilir. Zira örneğin Hobbes'un etikten bağımsız olduğunu savladığı siyaset bilimi bir dizi ahlaki varsayıma dayanırken insan doğasına değişmez nitelikler yükler. Benzer bir biçimde Machiavellici bir bakış açısıyla çoğunluğun etik olmayan biçimlerde yaşadığı gerekçesiyle siyasetçinin gayriahlâkî eylemlerinin temellendirilmesi de sorunludur. Etik ve siyaset doğal zorunluluklarla değil, bize bağlı olanlarla, başka türlü de olabilecek olanlarla ilgilendiği sürece insanlar arası ilişki olaylar konusunda doğa bilimlerinin nedensellik anlayışına dayanarak kaçınılmaz zorunluluklardan söz etmek

epistemolojik açıdan son derece sorunludur. Bu, benimsenen bir tercihin zorunluluk gibi gösterilmesi anlamı da gelecektir. Başkalarının yanlış bir biçimde yaşaması, benim yaptığım yanlışın gerekçesi olamaz. Adorno'nun dediği gibi yanlış bir hayat doğru yaşanamayacaktır.

Öte yandan federatif bir birlik kurulduğunda etik ve siyaset arasındaki uzlaşmazlık sorunun çözüleceğini söyleyen, siyasetin etiğe tabii olması ve siyasetçinin her ne şart ve koşulda olursa olsun koşulsuz buyruklarla temellendirilmiş etikten sapmaması gerektiğini savunan Kant ise daha çok temennilerini dile getiriyor gibidir. “Amaçlar Krallığı”nın bir üyesi olmak gibi bir tahayyülün peşinde koşanlar siyaset alanında insanların çoğunlukla bir amaç olarak değil, birer araç olarak değerlendirildiklerini ve kullandıklarını gördüklerinde ister istemez Platoncu bir tutumu benimsemek zorunda kalacaklardır.

Tezin sonuç bölümünde felsefe tarihinde etik ve siyaset arasındaki ilişkiye nasıl yaklaşıldığına ilişkin daha önce yapılan iki taksonomi çalışmasına yer verilmiş ve tezde savunulan Aristotelesçi yaklaşımın bu taksonomilerde yeri olmadığı öne sürülmüştür. Bu iddianın gerekçeleri özellikle IV. bölümde verilmiştir.

Bu bölümde tartışılan Aristotelesçi etik ve siyaset anlayışının özgüllükleri şu şekilde özetlenebilir. Etik daha çok bir kişinin karakterini nasıl yetkinleştireceği, karakterindeki zaafardan doğru huyları edinerek nasıl kurtulacağıyla ilgilidir. Örneğin kıskançlık, kin, haset gibi olumsuz duygularından yetkin bir karakterin kurtulması gerekir. Bu tür duygular karakterin yetkinleşmesinin önünde bir engeldir. Fakat örneğin öfke her durumda kaçınılması gereken bir duygu değildir. Öfke sevdiğimiz bir insanın bizi yanlış değerlendirmesine karşı verilen bir tepki olabilir, bariz bir adaletsizliğe karşı öfkelenmemek ise erdemsizlik olarak görülebilir; ama öfke kişinin karakterinin yeterince gelişmemişliğinin bir ifadesi de olabilir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında Aristoteles Kant gibi bütün duygular, duygulanımlardan arınmış olmayı bir eylemin ya da kararın ahlaki anlamda doğruluk niteliği kazanmasının olmazsa olmaz koşulu olarak görmez. Tam

tersine, yetkin bir karakter hangi durumda ne yapması, düşünmesi, hissetmesi ve nasıl eylemesi gerektiğini bilen, hatta bunu hesaplamaya bile gerek duymadan zaten erdemli bir şekilde kendiliğinden eyleyendir. Aristoteles'in etik ve siyasete ilişkin derslerinde ihtiyatın hem yöntembilimsel hem de karakter erdemi olarak ne kadar önemli olduğunu altını ısrarla çizmesinin temel nedeni karakterin birbirine karşıt duyguları arasındaki dengeyi bulması içindir ve bunun daha çok pedagojik bir anlamı vardır.

Zira insanların çoğu haz, para, şöhret, güzellik ya da onur peşinde koşarken aslında kendilerini mutlu bir yaşanabilecek bir hayattan uzaklaştırıyor gibidirler. Aristotelesçi bir açıdan bakıldığında ne Kinikler gibi her ne şart ve koşulda olursa olsun paradan ya da onurdan kaçmanın bir anlamı vardır ne de çoğunluk gibi bu dış iyiler peşinde ısrarla koşmanın. Ne Platon'u izleyerek Tanrı olduğumuzu sanmak akla yatkındır, ne de Kinikler ya da hedonistlerin yaşam biçimini benimseyerek hayvan gibi yaşamının. İnsan, tanrısal ve hayvani nitelikleriyle insanca yaşamının yolunu bulmalıdır. Etik bilgisi temel olarak dış iyilerle olan ilişkimizi, hangi tür meziyetlerimizi yetkinleştireceğimiz ve hangi tür zaaflarımızdan nasıl kurtulacağımızla ilgilenir. Adı üstünde onur ya da para dış iyilerdir; yani aslında bize ait olmayanlardır. Öğrenilmesi gereken etik anlamda bir değeri olmayan bu dış iyileri nasıl kullanacağımızdır. Örneğin hiyerarşik örgütlenmeler içinde yükselmek adına dalkavuk olmak etik açıdan daha değersiz bir hayatı benimsemek anlamına gelecektir. Zengin olmak gibi bir amaç edinerek para peşinde koşarken cömertlik erdemi yerine cimri bir insan olmak ya da benzer bir biçimde erdem adına ya da parayla nasıl ilişki kurulacağını bilmeyerek savurgan olmanın da Aristoteles'e göre bir anlamı yoktur. Bu iki aşırılığın ortası birbirine karşıt olan sahip olma ve paylaşma duygularının ortasını bularak cömert olmaktır. Ne var ki cömert insanlar çoğunlukla zengin olamayacaklardır.

Kısaca söylemek gerekirse Aristoteles etikten söz ederken daha çok bir karakterin çelişkili, birbirine karşıt duygularıyla nasıl uğraşarak yetkinleşeceğini konu edinir. Bir insanın neden ve nasıl adil, cömert, cesur, nazik, ılımlı, samimi olması gerektiği ya da olabileceği etiğin temel araştırma konusudur. Dış iyilerin

kullanımının ve aşırı duyguların ortasını bulmak da pedagojik açıdan önemlidir. Aristoteles'in ne yapılmaması gerektiğinden sıklıkla söz etmesinin nedeni, ne yapılması, nasıl bir insan olunması gerektiğini anlaşılır kılmak olduğu düşünülebilir.

Bu açıdan bakıldığında etik daha çok bir kişinin karakterini nasıl yetkinleştireceği, mutlu olacağına odaklanır. Siyaset ise daha çok birbirimizin keyfini kaçırmadan, olabildiğince keyifli bir biçimde nasıl yaşayacağımızın bilgisi ve tekniğidir. Örneğin etik açıdan her ne kadar para ve onur gibi dış iyilerin kendilerinde bir değer olmasa da, insanların çoğunluğunun bu dış iyiler peşinde koşmaya yönelik hevesleri, bu dış iyilerin kullanımını ve dağıtımını olabildiğince adaletli ve gerçekçi bir biçimde, farklı toplumsal sınıf ve grupların kendilerine özgü eğilimlerini göz önü alarak düzenleme zorunluluğuna yol açar. Bu Aristoteles'in sağgörü politikasının temel ilkesidir. İnsanlardan bu tür heves ve eğilimlerinden derhal vazgeçmelerini salık vermek gerçekçi bir çözümle sonuçlanmayacağı gibi baskıcı bir rejimi de beraberinde getirecektir. Belki de bu nedenle Aristoteles aşırı zenginliğin ve yoksulluğun olabildiğince az olduğu, orta sınıfın olabildiğince geniş olduğu bir kent yaşamı önerir. Onun için Aristoteles orta halli olmayı önerir. Ne zenginlikte ne de yoksullukta bir erdem vardır. İnsanların mülk edinme arzusundan vazgeçmelerini beklemek ise gerçekçi değildir.

Platon ise erdemli yaşamın bir parçası olmaması nedeniyle ütopyanın gerçekleştiği bir kent yaşamında para ya da mülkiyetin ilgasının zorunlu olduğunu öne sürmektedir. İnsanlar arasındaki adaletlisizliğin ve çatışmaların temel nedeni paraysa, paranın olmadığı bir toplumsal düzen içinde yaşamak Platon için etik ilkelere göre toplumsal yaşamı düzenlemektir. Ne var ki Aristoteles Platon'dan tam da bu noktada ayrılır. Ona göre de para ya da mülkiyet gibi dış iyilerin etik anlamda bir değeri olmasa da, insanların çoğunun bu dış iyiler peşinde koşmaları nedeniyle, bu dış iyilerin kişilerin sahip olduğu başka dış iyilere göre değil, karakter niteliklerinin gelişkinliğine göre dağıtılması gerekir. Örneğin soylu bir ailenin mensubu olmak bir dış iyidir. Fakat herhangi bir

entelektüel ya da karakter erdemine sahip olmadan, yalnızca bu dış iyiyi gerekçe göstererek daha fazla onurlandırılmayı ya da mülkiyete sahip olmayı talep edenler adaletsizlik ve sonuçta mücadele etme, çatışma ve hatta savaşın koşullarını yaratırlar. Bu durumda ise daha fazla dış iyi elde etmek uğruna birbirine düşen vatandaşlar ve kent *eudamonia* idealinden gittikçe uzaklaşır. Bu noktada Aristoteles etik olarak değersiz olan para ve onur gibi dış iyilerin kent yaşamından ilga edilmesi yerine bunların kişilerin meziyetlerine göre ve olabildiğine hakkaniyetli bir biçimde paylaşılmasını, bölüşülmesini önerir. Siyasi olarak ne yapılması gerektiğinin yalnızca etik ilke ve değerlerden çıkarsanmaması etik ile siyaset arasındaki Aristotelesçi ayrıma işaret eder. Diğer bir deyişle *politike* etiğe indirgenemez, ne var ki etikten de büsbütün bağımsız değildir; tıpkı hukukun hem etik hem de teknik yönlerinin olması, fakat bu ikisinden birisine indirgenememesi gibi.

Aristoteles'in bu noktada izlediği yol, etik dersinde bir karakterin karşıt duygularının dengesini bulmayı salık verdiği gibi, siyaset derslerinde farklı toplumsal grupların kendilerine özgü eğilimlerin ortasını, dengesini bulmaya çalışmaktır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında siyaset hem bir bilgi, hem de zanaattır; bir anlamda etik derslerinde geliştirilen “orta yol” öğretisinin siyaset alanında izlenmesidir. *Politike*'nin iyi bir öğrencisi verili bir siyasi durumu doğru değerlendirerek söz konusu durumu mutlak anlamda en iyiye doğru değil, öncelikle olabilecek en iyiye doğru yönlendirebilen birisi olmayı öğrenendir. Bu nedenle *politike* bilgisine haiz bir öğrenci tiranlığın kurulduğu bir kentte krallığı savunabilecektir. Bu krallığın mutlak anlamda benimsendiği anlamına gelmez. Tam tersine, bir rejim olarak krallığa özgü birçok siyasi sorun vardır. *Politika*'da krallığın tiranlık yönetimine karşı savunulması, belirli bir durumda daha iyisinin gerçekleşmesi yönünde eylemin önemine işaret eder. Bu, *politike* bilgisiyle eyleyen öğrencinin her ne şart ve koşulda olursa olsun krallığı savunacağı anlamına gelmez. Daha iyisinin, örneğin cumhuriyetin olanaklı olduğu bir durumda *politike* bilgisiyle eyleyen öğrenci krallığı cumhuriyete doğru dönüştürmeye çabalayacaktır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında *politike* mevcut olan bir durumdan olanaklı olan en iyiye doğru gerçekçi bir biçimde nasıl gidilebileceğini

konu edinir.

Ne var ki birisinin siyasetle ulvi olduđu düşünölen bu amacı gerçekleřtirmek yönünde çabalaması, onun karakterinin zaaflarının, eylemlerinin gayriahlâkîliğinin meşru gerekçeleri olarak görölemez. Tam tersine, siyasetle ilgilenecek kişinin hem entelektöel hem de karakter niteliklerinin olabildiğince gelişkin olması gerekir. Dürüst olmayan bir yöneticinin vatandaşlarından dürüst olmasını beklemesi haksızlık olacaktır; kokak bir komutanın askerlerine cesurca savaşmalarını emretmesi gibi. Bir insanın kendisinin sahip olamadığı bir erdeme göre bir başkasının yaşamasını talep etmesi gerekçelendirilemez. Kendilerini bile erdemli bir biçimde yönetemeyenlerin, zaaflarının esiri olanların kent yaşamını *eudamonia* idealine yaklařtırmak yönünde eylemesini beklemek gerçekçi olmayacaktır. Yöneticinin yönetilenlerden ahlaki ve entelektöel nitelikleri açısından üstün olması gerektiğinin Aristoteles açısından sıklıkla salık verilmesinin temel nedeninin bu olduđu söylenebilir. Bu nokta Aristotelesçi yaklaşımda etik ve siyasetin birbirine olan koşutluklarından birisidir. Hiyerarşik örgütlenmeler içinde yöneticinin ahlaki zaaf ve meziyetleri yönetilenlerin karakterlerine de bulaşacaktır.

Diğer yandan, Aristoteles'in yalnızca bireyleri değil, kentleri ve siyasi rejimleri de etik bir kavram kümesiyle değerlendirdiğini de vurgulamak gerekir. Aristoteles'e göre Sparta savaş ekonomisiyle yönetildiğinden bu kentin vatandaşları daha çok cesaret erdemlerini geliştirme olanağı bulur. Oysa erdemli bir kentin savaş ekonomisiyle yönetilmemesi, vatandaşların karakterlerini yetkinleşmesine olanak sağlayacak maddi ve siyasi bir altyapıyı kurabilmesi gerekir. Ancak bu durumda vatandaşlar karakterlerini yetkinleştirme olanağı bulacaktır. Kısaca, bir kentin erdemleri bir karakterin erdemleriyle aynıdır.

Öte yandan, kentte genel olarak benimsenen ahlaki değerler, diğer bir deyişle kentin genel ahlaki dokusu, ister istemez vatandaşların davranışlarını etkiler. Erdemli insanlar arasında olanlar erdemli yaşamaya eğilimli olacaklardır; ama yozlaşmış insanlar arasında olanların ise yozlaşma eğilimi içinde olmaları daha

olasıdır.

Son olarak, aristokrasinin temeli olarak bilinen “en iyi olanların yönetmesi” ilkesinin pratikteki bazı sonuçlarına dikkat edersek, o zaman siyaset alanını kendisine özgü bir ahlakı olan bir pratikler bütünü olarak görmenin etik olarak yanlış bir tercih gibi görülebileceğini söyleyebiliriz. Kaldı ki ister siyasetçi olsun ister olmasın, bir kişi etik olarak değersiz olan eylemlerinden sorumlu tutulmalıdır. Bu nedenle siyasetin kendisine özgü olduğu varsayılan bir ahlaki değerler bütününe göre değerlendirilmesi etik açıdan sakıncalı olacaktır. Diğer yandan siyasetten, örneğin Kinik bir şekilde bağımsız olduğunu düşünmek ise aslında farklı bir etik anlayışını benimseyerek siyasete müdahil olmak anlamına gelebilir. O zaman bir *politike* öğrencisinin çeşitli ahlaki yetilerini geliştirmeyi amaç edinirken belirli bir durumda siyasi anlamda ne yapılması gerektiğini mevcut siyasi durumu doğru değerlendirerek karar vermeyi ve eylemeyi öğrenmesi gerekir. Siyasetin Aristoteles açısından hem bir sanat hem de bir bilgi ve eylem tarzı olmasının temel nedeni belki de budur.

Bu noktada örneğin bir siyaset anlayışı olarak Aristotelesçi “en iyi olanlarımız yönetsin” ilkesinin etik anlamının ne olduğunu bir de şu açıdan yorumlamaya çalışalım. Eğer ahlaki nitelikleri gelişmemişler tarafından yönetilirse, içinde yaşadığımız kentteki vatandaşlar da zamanla ahlaki yetilerini geliştirmelerine uygun bir ortam bulamayacaklardır. Tiranın, yani ahlaki yetileri, karakter nitelikleri pek gelişmemiş birisinin yönetimi ele aldığı bir kentte vatandaşların bir bölümünün kendilerini yöneten tirana özenerek para ve onur düşkün olmaları olasıdır. Tam tersine, bazı vatandaşların da tirana boyun eğerek korkaklaşacakları, birer dalkavuk gibi davranacakları ve dolayısıyla “cesaret” ve “samimiyet” erdemlerini geliştiremeyecekleri de az çok bellidir. Dolayısıyla, tiranın yönettiği bir kentte vatandaşlar para ve onur gibi dış iyileri erdemlerle, diğer bir deyişle karakter yetkinliklerini karıştırarak karakter niteliklerini yozlaştırma eğiliminde olurlar. Çünkü kendilerini yöneten kişi onları aslında ahlaki zaaflarıyla ve ahlaki zaaflarına göre yönetmektedir. Fakat eğer kenti ahlaki ve entelektüel nitelikleri epey gelişkin bir kral yönetirse, kentteki vatandaşların

karakter ve yaşama olanaklarının iyileşmesine uygun bir ortam sağlanmış olur. Bu nedenle, siyasetçilerinin ahlaki zaaflarının temellendirilmesi, yöneticinin Machiavellici bir biçimde ahlaki zaaflarının meşrulaştırılması kentteki vatandaşlarının ahlaki gelişiminin olanaksızlığını savunan bir tutum olacaktır. Siyasetin bir zorunluluklar alanı olarak değil, bir tercihler alanı olarak kavramsallaştıran Aristoteles bu nedenle Machiavellici anlayışa karşıdır.

Diğer yandan, siyasetle uğraşan kişinin mevcut iktidar ilişkilerinde hiyerarşik olarak üst konumda bulunmanın keyfini yaşayan, dış iyiler peşinde koşan birisi olması değil, kenti, kentteki vatandaşların karakter yetkinliklerini geliştirmesine olanak sağlayabilecek birisi olması çok daha makul bir tercih olacaktır. Bu kentin *eudonomia* idealine doğru yaklaşması için atılan bir adımdır. Dolayısıyla bu açıdan bakıldığında iyi bir siyasetçi mevcut siyasi durumu mümkün olan en iyiye doğru Aristotelesçi ilkelere göre dönüştürmeyi amaç edinen ve ahlaki zaafı olabildiğince az olandır. Cesur, kurnaz ve para düşkünü bir yönetici tarafından sevk ve idare edilen vatandaşların çoğunun da para düşkünü olma zaafiyetine düşmesi bir rastlantı değildir. Tam tersine, para düşkünü olan vatandaşlar da kendilerine para düşkünü bir yönetici seçme eğiliminde olacaklardır.

Sonuç olarak, insanların çoğunun para ya da onur gibi dış iyiler peşinde koşmasına dair etik ve siyasi olarak ne düşünülmesi gerektiğinin bu sınırlı çalışmadan sonra yapılacak araştırmalarda ayrıntılı bir biçimde yanıtlanması gerektiği söylenebilir.

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SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

International

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