Afterword

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To understand Aristotle's educational ideas, one must understand the overall plan of his *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*) and *Politics* (*Pol.*). These works are records of a distinct series of lectures presented by Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) at his school, the Lyceum, in Athens. One concerns ethics and the other "legislative science," but they are closely related to each other as parts of the larger field of "political science." Aristotle regarded political science as a form of inquiry into the nature of happiness (*eudaimonia*) and how to arrange human affairs in such a way as to achieve it. As such, political science sought to determine the truth about these matters and to guide human conduct on the basis of its findings. The audience Aristotle sought to guide included both statesmen and citizens in their private lives. He sought to guide both the affairs of societies, encouraging political reforms that would enable people to lead better, more satisfying lives, and also the affairs of individuals in managing their own lives and households. Ethics provides an understanding of happiness or the highest good for human beings, the nature and acquisition of virtue, the importance of virtue for a happy life, and various related matters such as the nature of friendship and its role in a good life and a good society. Politics, or legislative science, is concerned with putting this understanding into practice through two interrelated tools of governance: law and education. It addresses the nature and proper aim of a political community, the different kinds of constitutions (including the best that is feasible for most societies, and the best that can be hoped for in the best possible circumstances), the measures that may be taken to stabilize and improve societies, education, and various related matters such as the significance of wealth for citizenship and personal well-being.

At the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle offers a preview of the *Politics* and makes his case for why everyone would benefit from not only a course in ethics, but also a course in legislation. It may seem odd that he would think that everyone who manages a household should have knowledge of legislative science. He argues it is "through laws" that people can become good, and becoming good is essential to living a happy life, so whether one is responsible for the care of many people (as a statesman is) or the care of just a few people (as the head of a household is), one must know how to legislate. This argument incorporates

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three propositions foundational to Aristotle's educational thought: (1) Good law is educative; it communicates truths about living well as a human being and a member of a society. (2) Virtue is a prerequisite for happiness. (3) Societies, heads of households, and educational institutions should all enable people to achieve happiness or the highest good for human beings, and should do so by enabling them to acquire and exercise virtue, goodness, or excellence (*arête*). The fact that Aristotle relies on these propositions in explaining the relationship between his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* illustrates how important education is to his whole philosophy of human affairs. To understand his educational ideas, it won't suffice to concentrate on the one part of his writings where education is addressed at some length: Book VIII of his *Politics*.

The purpose of what follows is to survey those aspects of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* that are most important to an appreciation of Aristotle's educational ideas, and to offer some closing reflections on the enduring value of these ideas. We must consider the moral and intellectual virtues, how they are acquired and how they are related to one another; the happiest kind of life and the role of virtue in achieving it; the nature of a political community; Aristotle's theory of constitutions; the "best possible" society described in Book VII of the *Politics*; the context these provide for the account of education in Book VIII of the *Politics*; and what is of most enduring value in Aristotle's philosophy of education.

1. The Moral and Intellectual Virtues, How they are Acquired and How they are Related to One Another

In the final book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (X.9), Aristotle observes that reasoned arguments alone are not enough to make people good. Many people are not moved by arguments based on what is admirable or appropriate (*kalon*), because they lack even a conception of what is *kalon*, having never been exposed to it. This echoes the opening lines of Plato's *Republic*, in which Socrates expresses a preference for using persuasion instead of force, and is met with the reply that people may not be willing to listen and be persuaded. Some central themes of the *Republic* are thereby introduced: Socrates is committed to an ethic of respect for persons as rational beings, which requires dealing with them as much as possible through truthful and reasoned instruction and persuasion, and as little as possible through force and violence. Plato is committed to the same ethic, but sees that people are not always ready to listen to reason. Thrasymachus, who appears later in Book I, is portrayed as unable to understand how Socrates could be moved by anything more admirable than a desire to prevail in verbal contests, having never developed beyond a love of victory and honor himself. How a person could care about truth and be moved by respect for sound reasoning and evidence is beyond him. Plato offers Thrasymachus as one illustration of the fact that reasonableness is a trait that comes in degrees and must be nurtured or *cultivated* in people. A society that is serious about respecting people as rational beings—beings who are potentially reasonable, and are better off to the extent they are reasonable and reasoned with instead of coerced or deceived—must be systematic in its efforts to nurture reasonableness. This requires government involvement to ensure that everyone receives an appropriate education. These same ideas animate Aristotle's *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*.

The passage in *NE* X.9 goes on to say that "nature" (i.e., traits with which one is born), habituation (training in doing the right things), and teaching must *all* be favorable in order for a person to become good, so there is little chance of becoming good if one does not grow up under good laws. We learn in Books VII and VIII of the *Politics* that those laws should, among other things, provide schooling that is public and "the same for all." Plainly, Aristotle's view is that although our own actions play a crucial role in forming our character, the factors that shape our character are largely beyond our control. If he didn't think this, he would have little reason to open Book VIII of the *Politics* with the suggestion that legislators should obviously be concerned above all with educating the young. This is a remarkable statement, especially considering the fact that *public* education was all but unknown in his world. It reflects a conviction that adults have a fundamental, collective duty—a duty falling on governments—to enable young people to develop into good and flourishing adults. The laws should regulate birth and early training in order to ensure the healthy development of the body and "irrational" psyche, all with an eye to the development of "reason and mind." Aristotle says this sequence of development is "natural," but this does not imply that favorable development will occur spontaneously. The fulfillment of a person's highest potential is something rare and difficult to achieve, in fact.

Aristotle distinguishes between the moral virtues and the intellectual virtues, and he associates this distinction with a division of the psyche or soul, which he identifies as the source and cause of growth and movement. Moral virtues, such as generosity and courage, are identified as states of the desiring aspect of the soul (a part of the irrational element). Intellectual virtues, such as contemplative wisdom (*sophia*) and practical wisdom (*phronêsis*), are identified as states of the rational element of the soul. Moral virtues are defined as dispositions to feel and be moved by our desires or emotions neither too weakly nor too strongly, but in a way that moves us to act as reason would dictate, and to take pleasure in doing so. Intellectual virtues are defined as capacities or powers of understanding, judgment, and reasoning that enable the rational soul to attain truth.

Having distinguished the moral and intellectual virtues in this way, Aristotle says the former mainly arise as a result of habit and the latter mainly arise as a result of teaching. The understanding of Aristotle's conception of moral development often comes to an abrupt halt with the associated idea that we become brave by repeatedly doing the right thing in the face of danger and become cowardly by repeatedly fleeing or turning to jelly in the face of danger. Yet, there are two very important further aspects to Aristotle's conception of moral virtue and its development. The first is that "habit" cannot mean thoughtless, unguided repetition. The conduct in question must be shaped in all its details toward what is desirable. This requires supervision to ensure that the learner does the right thing, instead of never moving beyond an initial paralysis (the "jelly in the face of danger" stage) or resistance (the "I don't *like* to share, so I'm not going to" stage), and coaching which leads her through progressive mastery of various nuances of what she is doing, calling her attention to aspects of it she will not have *perceived* or had any language to describe. Supervision and coaching enable learners to *progress* in their practice and habits.

The second further crucial aspect of Aristotle's conception of moral development is that the moral virtues are a necessary step toward, and only completed by, the acquisition of the intellectual virtue of practical wisdom or good judgment. Aristotle asserts a *unity of virtue*

thesis, which holds there are interdependencies between the possession of good judgment and the possession of moral virtue. No moral virtue is a *true* virtue unless it is guided by good judgment, and no one can develop good judgment without first possessing natural or habituated forms of the moral virtues. Moral virtues are dispositions of desire, emotion, and perception that lead us to choose and do what it is reasonable for us to choose and do, all the while *perceiving* our choices and actions to be reasonable. Moral virtues thereby establish the ends we aim at, while good judgment enables us to achieve those ends. Moral virtues that are not guided by good judgment may serve us in familiar circumstances, but will not *reliably* guide us to the right or best act, and are thus not true virtues at all, or virtues without qualification. Were the 9/11 hijackers *courageous*? Were they *loyal* team players? Such questions make us squirm. The hijackers were courageous and loyal in one sense, but not without qualification. A true virtue is supposed to be good without qualification, but in that case it must be guided by good judgment which prevents the possessor of that virtue from doing something wrong. In the absence of good judgment, a merely habitual virtue may be described as "blind," as in "He was led astray by blind loyalty to an unscrupulous superior." The moral virtues are *completed* by good judgment.

The unity of virtue thesis also holds that in order to have good judgment one must possess all the moral virtues. The possession of good judgment is only possible if one perceives the world accurately in all its moral particularity, and according to Aristotle our perceptions are largely shaped by what we have experienced as normal, including what we have experienced as normal in our own conduct. The ways we have habitually acted and the ends we have habitually pursued will seem to us acceptable and good. An aspect of the formation of (habitual) moral virtues or vices is thus the habituation of corresponding perceptions, accurate or inaccurate. Since good judgment requires accurate perceptions, it also requires the possession of the moral virtues. As Aristotle conceives those virtues, they pertain to different spheres and aspects of conduct, such as the sharing or not of wealth, fidelity to significant others, self-restraint in the face of temptation, and courage in the face of danger or threats. A person who lacks any one virtue will be deficient in the perception of associated moral particulars and conception of what is acceptable, and to that extent would suffer impaired judgment.

By Aristotle's lights, good practical judgment subsumes particular cases, well perceived, under universal principles acquired through teaching. Perceiving the particulars well requires virtue, as we have seen, but also experience and discussion that enables one to benefit from the perceptions of others. Learning the universal principles begins with the acquisition of true ethical beliefs in the course of a sound moral upbringing. On that basis, one must then study political science as Aristotle understands it. In the course of that study, the true beliefs one begins from can be refined and formed into a systematic, interconnected whole—a "scientific" understanding of human affairs.

2. The Happiest Kind of Life and the Role of Virtue in Achieving It

The *Nicomachean Ethics* opens with the idea that if there is something people pursue for its own sake, and not for the sake of anything else, that would be the highest good they aim at. He argues that there is such a highest good for human beings in general, and that it is the

proper aim of politics and political science. People all conceive of this highest good as happiness, but have different ideas about what qualifies as a happy life. Is it a life which focuses on sensual pleasures as its highest aim? Is it a life focused on honor, conquest, or social status as its highest aim? To identify a specific kind of pleasure as the highest aim of a life is not, of course, to imply it is not a life without other forms of satisfaction. It is to identify an aim which will determine, in one's circumstances, the extent to which, and ways in which, one will experience other forms of satisfaction.

Aristotle employs a whole battery of arguments in Books I and X of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and Book VII of the *Politics* to show that the highest good and happiest life for human beings is a life devoted to intellectual inquiry or "contemplation" as its highest aim. The most intuitive of his reasons is that what is most satisfying is putting our greatest gifts, our intellectual capacities, to good use. As he says in *NE* I.7, the highest good for human beings is activity that exhibits virtue of the "best and most complete" kind, or in other words *sophia*, the wisdom that pertains to intellectual inquiry or "contemplation." Another argument compares the two strongest candidates for being the highest good: the life that takes contemplation as its highest end and the life that takes statesmanship or political leadership as its highest end. The contemplative life qualifies as the highest good for human beings, because it is not only desirable for itself (being intrinsically satisfying), but aims at nothing beyond itself. The political life cannot qualify as a highest good, because the activity of statesmanship aims at something beyond itself—power perhaps, or honor, or the happiness of some or all of the statesman's society. In aiming at something beyond itself it is not "complete" in itself, and the virtue it exhibits is not "complete." The political life may be a happy life for some, if it genuinely exhibits the virtue of practical wisdom—the second best and most complete human virtue—but it cannot constitute the best kind of life or highest good for a human being. Other arguments invoke the gods as a standard of perfection by which human beings and the quality of their lives are properly judged. The life of contemplation is said to be the most divine, in the sense of being the most like the life Aristotle imagines the gods to lead, as well as the most self-sufficient, and the one that most perfectly exercises the rational soul or intellect, the most "divine" element in our nature.

Once one recognizes that Aristotle identifies only two kinds of lives as genuinely happy, the contemplative life being the happiest and the political life being happy "in a secondary degree," it is easy to understand his deepest argument for believing that only someone who possesses moral virtue can be happy. It is intrinsic to both of these kinds of lives that they involve the exercise of intellectual virtues which, according to the *unity of virtue* thesis, cannot be possessed by someone who lacks the moral virtues. The accurate perceptions associated with the moral virtues are required for both *phronêsis* and *sophia*, since both are concerned with truth, including truths about human affairs. Understanding this sheds light on Aristotle's idea in *Politics* VII that the training of the irrational psyche should aim at "reason and mind." It should prepare the way for the acquisition of the intellectual virtues, whose exercise is central to a happy life, by ensuring that a person's perceptions of what is good and appropriate are not corrupted by growing accustomed to doing bad or inappropriate things.

This argument for the dependence of happiness on virtue is "deep" in the sense that it hinges on claims about the human psyche. Aristotle's account of friendship seems to provide

an independent argument, relying on the idea that friendship is the most important of the "external goods" for a happy life, external goods beings ones which are not qualities of the person herself. Aristotle holds that the best kind of friendship is only possible for people who are virtuous, and it is only in such friendships that a person can reveal her true self. If intimate friendships are essential to a happy life, then one must be a good person in order to have a happy life.

3. The Nature of a Political Community

Aristotle's *Politics* begins with an account of the origin and growth of cities, and his famous claim that human beings are "political animals" (*politikon zôon*). What this means is not that people naturally engage in political activities, or are happier if they do, but that it is natural for them—for us—to *live in cities.* Greek *polises*, or city-states as they are often called, were politically autonomous urban centers surrounded by farmland. Aristotle describes the growth of social units from families, to villages, to polises, as consensual and mutually beneficial. The natural and proper aim of these social units is to enable everyone in them to live the best kind of life, so far as they are able, but only the polis is big enough to be self-sufficient for this purpose. One sense in which it is natural for people to live in a polis or city is thus that they *need* to in order to live the best kind of life of which they are capable. It is also natural in the sense that people are drawn together by mutual attraction or the pleasantness of living together instead of living alone, and the further sense that the capacity for language equips people to live as a *community* consciously organized in pursuit of the best kind of life. As Aristotle conceives it, a political society should be a mutually beneficial partnership to which everyone freely consents. Membership must be voluntary and citizens must all have a right to share in the society's collective governance. As a *partnership* in pursuit of the best kind of life, a political community must be socially unified, of one mind in its conception of the best kind of life, and egalitarian. A true political community is unified by friendship, and friendship requires at least a semblance of equality.

How might such a community be created? Certainly there were no such communities in Aristotle's world. Conflict, especially between the rich and the desperately poor, was common, and governments usually did not last long. Existing societies are not unified, Aristotle says. His concern, like Plato's, was how societies might become more peaceful, stable, and secure against factional conflict. In the *Republic*, Plato imagined a scheme for common rearing of children in which parents would not even know whose child was whose. He imagined that, in this way, rivalries between families might end and a stronger sense of civic community might emerge. In Book II of the *Politics*, Aristotle rejects this scheme. He agrees that a society needs to be unified by friendship in a way that provides security against factional conflict, but he thinks a more promising way to accomplish this is through civic institutions that nurture friendships bridging all social groups. The most important of these civic institutions is *common schools*—public day schools—in which a city's diverse children "grow up together" at least a few hours a day. It is through education that societies can be unified and made into a community, Aristotle advises.

4. The Theory of Constitutions

Aristotle goes on to elaborate an account of constitutions and the proper forms of political rule, distinguishing the true, just, or legitimate forms of constitution from those that are corrupt, unjust, or illegitimate. As one would expect, the former aim at the common good and operate on the basis of consent, while the latter aim only at the good of the rulers and rely on force. The former promote partnership in living well, hence mutual trust and good-will, while the latter may seek to divide and enfeeble the populace in order to prevent unified and effective resistance to its rule. The laws of just regimes are worthy of respect; they respect rights and help everyone to live in accordance with the best element in themselves. Just regimes are indeed based upon a *rule of law*, which no one is at liberty to flaunt. Unjust regimes are by contrast "lawless" or "unconstitutional," and the unjust requirements they announce as laws have no claim to being obeyed.

Within each of these categories, constitutions might involve rule by one person, by a few people, or by many people. Thus, there are six basic forms of constitution. The just ones are: kingship, aristocracy or rule by a few who are genuinely the best (the *aristoi*), and polity or constitutional rule. The unjust ones are: tyranny, oligarchy or rule by a wealthy few, and democracy or rule by the poor. It may surprise a modern audience that Aristotle counts democracy as corrupt, but in the ancient Greek world, rule by the *demos* or poor and rule by the oligarchs or rich were both forms of unconstitutional rule, or systems in which one class imposed rule on the other in the interest of the rulers and without constitutional limits on the power of the rulers to harm the ruled.

Of the just forms of constitution, polity is the best that can be attained by most societies, and it is for that reason the goal toward which the reform of actual societies should aim. It is on the one hand a "mixed" constitution, and on the other hand a "middle" constitution. To say that it is the former is to say that its institutions of government provide forms of direct participation for citizens of all social classes. Aristotle regarded this as just, inasmuch as all citizens have a right to participate. More precisely, he thought that citizens have rights of participation proportional to how virtuous or practically wise they are, and he held that polities should operate on that basis, allowing people of ordinary virtue to deliberate with others on juries and in legislative assemblies, and selecting citizens of more outstanding good judgment for offices or roles in which the judgment of one person carried more weight. A "mixed" constitution also contributes to constitutional stability by making it possible for members of all social classes to protect their interests by working within the system. To say a polity is a "middle" constitution is to say that it is socially and politically dominated by a large middle class. This is beneficial because moderation of wealth is conducive to living well, avoiding both the hazards of poverty and the seductions of great wealth, and a large middle class serves as a bulwark against destructive political polarization and loss of belief in equal citizenship, impartial justice, and a common good. Political reforms to move existing constitutions closer to polity should protect rights, ensure political accountability and wide-spread political participation, restrain inequalities of wealth, and institute public education. Contemporary democracies are polities or constitutional systems, but rather oligarchic ones by Aristotle's standards. He considered voting an oligarchic political institution, because wealthy people can exercise undue influence on the outcomes of elections.

Kingship is Aristotle's theoretically ideal system, but he dismisses it as "unattainable." Because he praises the superior collective wisdom of the many, and asserts a universal right of citizens to participate in governance to the extent they have a share of practical wisdom, he could only approve of a monarch whose wisdom so far eclipses that of ordinary human beings that their collected wisdom could add *nothing* to his. Such a king would be a *god* among men. If we could ever be confident we were in such good hands, we could all spend more time enjoying the pleasures of intellectual contemplation. What could be better? Since there are no gods (or goddesses) among men, the best constitution that is actually *possible* is something else, namely the ideal form of aristocracy described in Book VII.

5. Politics VII: The Best Possible City

An ordinary aristocracy is a legitimate form of constitution, but it involves rule by only the few best people. In Book VII of the *Politics*, Aristotle imagines a constitution in which *all* of the citizens rule *and they all possess the true virtue required to live the best kind of life.* This would be an ideal aristocracy, and Aristotle presents it as the best form of political society that human beings could actually create. It would be a classless society in which all of the citizens are voluntary partners in living the best kind of life. It would satisfy Aristotle's conception of a true political community.

Book VII describes how, in very favorable circumstances, such a society might be created. It will be a classless society of equals, so far as the citizens are concerned, and their number shall be large enough for self-sufficiency, but not so large as to interfere with assigning offices according to merit. They should be both intelligent and courageous, and thus fit for self-rule. Since the citizens will be partners in living the best kind of life, they must have leisure from productive activities so they can acquire the highest virtue and make activity in accordance with it the dominating concern of their lives. Those who engage in productive activity, namely artisans, traders, and farmers, are necessary to the political society but not part of it. They may be resident aliens at best, but not citizens, though dealings with them must still be based on mutual benefit. (Aristotle would presumably want the proportion of citizens in the polis to be as large as possible, and the proportion of resident aliens and slaves to be as small as possible. How any amount of slavery could be acceptable is a question to which he has no good answer.) Citizens will share in ruling and being ruled, serving in their youth as soldiers and in their old age as priests. Land holdings will be divided among the citizens, assuring the moderation of wealth conducive to equal citizenship and a life of virtue, while reserving some for public needs. Three institutions are mentioned as conducive to virtue and the social unity necessary to a true community: common meals or dining clubs, common religious observances, and common schools. In the closing chapters of Book VII, we come to matters of childbirth, childcare and the training of habits, and schooling, where (as we have seen) everything should aim at the proper development of the rational element of the psyche—the "best part" in human nature, the flourishing of which is intrinsic to living the best kind of life. Since this "ideal aristocracy" is to be a society of virtuous equals living in partnership in pursuit of the best kind of life, the education must arguably be public and the same for all. Every citizen must receive an education in virtue, and should receive it in the context of common schools in which all citizen children are educated together.

6. Education

Two ideas dominate the opening of Book VIII of the *Politics.* One is that education is a prerequisite for the practice of virtue, and is thus a matter of public concern. The foregoing makes this easy enough to understand: The proper aim of politics is to enable citizens to live the best kind of life. In order to live such a life, a person must be virtuous. The development of virtue depends on a variety of things beyond a person's control. To educate someone is to train and teach him so that he acquires the moral and intellectual virtues, develops the good judgment needed for prudent self-governance and participation in political rule, and learns to take pleasure in the excellent activities with which a good life will be occupied. It makes perfect sense that Aristotle says in VIII.5 that the main concern of education is to cultivate good judgment and delight in good dispositions and admirable actions. He says elsewhere that to be educated is to be able to form a sound judgment of an investigation or exposition, a person of "universal education" being one who is able to do this in all or nearly all domains of knowledge.

Note well that education is a preparation for leisure "spent in intellectual activity," according to Aristotle. It is not a preparation for work, as is so often now assumed. Greek education in *gymnastikē* (athletics) and *musikē* (music, poetry, and narratives—the "Arts of the Muses") was from the beginning a preparation for leisure. The knightly warriors of Athens who originally received it spent their daytime leisure in athletic contests and their nighttime leisure at drinking parties where they entertained each other with music and recitations. The subsequent democratization of Athens and invention of group lessons altered this "old education," in part by introducing the commercially useful arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Leisure was, in any case, not equated with mere *amusement.* It was contrasted with *productive labor* in such a way that public service—even military service—was generally considered a use of leisure, or time not spent in satisfying material needs. For Aristotle, leisure provided the opportunity to flourish as a human being or to pursue what is intrinsically, not just instrumentally, good.

Education should include "necessary" practical arts, according to Aristotle, but it should focus on what is "liberal" or conducive to spending one's leisure in activities that express the best in human nature or best and most complete virtue. Aristotle's lengthy discussion of music emphasizes its capacity to shape character and judgment. Yet, he notes that even music becomes illiberal or "mechanical," if it is pursued in order to entertain others (making it an activity that is not complete in itself) and is pursued in such a way that it interferes with the development and exercise of virtue. He is not specific about what counts as "necessary" practical arts, but he probably has in mind what is necessary to meeting one's material needs and exercising virtues that involve the use of external goods. His model is probably a landowner of moderate means who needs to read, write, draw, and use arithmetic to prudently manage his farm.

The second dominating idea at the opening of *Politics* VIII, is that citizens should be molded "to suit the form of government" or constitution. The character of citizens matters to *preserving* constitutions and also to their *quality.* The better the character of the citizens, the better the constitution, Aristotle says. This is somewhat puzzling. Everything surveyed in this Afterword appears to suggest that constitutions should be made to suit the needs of the

citizen, not the other way around. Moreover, in *Politics* III.4, Aristotle says that it is only in the best constitution that the virtues expected of a citizen fully coincide with the virtues of a human being as such. Only the best kind of society fully enables the development of independent good judgment and encourages the universal expression of that judgment in public and private life. Since the proper aim of *any* political society is to enable citizens to develop and exercise the best and most complete human virtue, it is not clear how it could be legitimate for any government to educate citizens to have any virtues that deviate from these. What are we to make of all this?

First it is important to realize that Aristotle says a great deal in the middle books of the *Politics* about the measures that actual regimes should take to preserve themselves. He identifies injustice as the most important general cause of political instability, and his advice to governments has the effect of encouraging reforms that will make them both more just and longer lasting. To the extent that defective regimes adopt his proposed reforms, they will become more like a polity, which is the best form of constitution most societies could ever enact. Public education is introduced in this context as the most valuable of the reforms that can be adopted. Like other reforms, it will not leave a deficient system as it is, but will instead both stabilize and improve it. Indeed, Aristotle says quite explicitly in *Politics* V.9 that the education that "suits" a constitution is not the kind of education preferred by the rulers of an unjust system. It is education that will create a more balanced and moderate ("mixed" and "middle") system that better serves the interests of all citizens. A critic might object at this point that education should not support anything less than an ideal system. Aristotle's implicit answer is that the best course in human affairs is to proceed through incremental reform transacted through public consultation and shared governance. Education that prepares everyone to employ independent good judgment in shared governance is progress.

Second, it must be recognized that in order for constitutions to "suit the needs of the citizen," citizens must have certain desirable qualities. This is inescapable. A constitution is not simply a blueprint for a form of government, but a functioning political system whose actual patterns are heavily determined by the characteristics of the people involved. Molding the constitution in such a way as to enable citizens to live the best kind of life requires measures to ensure that citizens are prepared to treat each other with mutual respect and friendly regard for each other's well-being. It requires that citizens have fellow citizens who will in a variety of ways allow them the satisfaction of fulfilling their human potential.

7. The Enduring Relevance of Aristotle's Philosophy of Education

Understood within the larger context of his philosophy of human affairs, Aristotle's philosophy of education offers valuable starting points for addressing several topics of enduring interest. One must surely count among these his conception of what is good for human beings, his account of the virtues and their development, his ideas about the relationships between virtue, law, and education, and his defense of public education.

If we set aside Aristotle's idea that there is one best life for human beings, there is still much to be said for his idea that what is most satisfying in life is experiencing the development and self-directed employment of our abilities. This is evident in the contemporary debate between psychologists about the relative merits of eudaimonistic and hedonistic

theories of happiness. The eudaimonists identify the satisfaction of psychological needs to experience *competence, self-determination*, and *good relationships* with others as basic to happiness. Some contemporary philosophers of education are similarly influenced by Aristotle in arguing that education should aim to enable people to live flourishing and self-determining lives, in part by enabling them to engage in a variety of satisfying forms of human endeavor. Others could be considered Aristotelian to the extent that they emphasize the educational development of reasoned judgment through initiation into diverse forms of human inquiry.

Aristotle's account of the virtues has been fundamental to a major movement in moral theory and related scholarship on moral development in recent decades. Suffice it to say that his ideas about the development of reason and their importance for how we understand the relationships between goodness, law, and education are important, but relatively neglected. If reasonableness is a human quality that needs assistance to develop, and an ethic of respect for people as rational beings requires dealing with people as much as possible through truthful and reasoned instruction and persuasion and as little as possible through force and violence, then the foundations of law and government rest more crucially on adequate education for everyone than we generally realize. The legitimacy of a government and a rule of law will rest on prior, conscientious education which prepares everyone to voluntarily accept the reasonable expectations of law on the basis of their independent good judgment. This is not an easy educational mission to accomplish, but justice seems to require it.

These ideas about the foundations of a rule of law lurk in the background of Aristotle's defense of education that is public and the same for all. In the foreground are concerns about equity in enabling all the members of a society to live well, the need for civic education to promote intelligent cooperation in the enterprise of shared governance, and the value of schooling different kinds of children together so they may learn to know and respect each other as equals. These are still important concerns, and wealth and poverty matter to all of them today, just as they did in Aristotle's world. His was not a multicultural world in the way ours is, but the patterns of conflict to be resolved are not so different. Before we go any farther in allowing children to be educated apart from each other in their separate worlds, we would do well to take Aristotle's defense of public education seriously.