

**Recovering the Political Aristotle<sup>1</sup>**

Ronald Terchek  
and  
David Moore

Thomas Smith's recent account of Aristotle in this journal is puzzling to us in that it seems almost entirely to neglect the messy business of politics, focusing instead on "a radical conversion" (628) of disparate, inwardly-focused individuals into citizens who have attuned themselves to a harmonized conception of the good. Smith is led astray by his oversimplified readings of the common good and "overreaching," as well as his tendency to conflate the *Nicomachean Ethics* with the *Politics* and moral friendship with political friendship. These problems reduce Aristotle to being a purely ethical thinker rather than a nuanced political theorist who has much to tell about our attempts at good politics. By addressing these problems in Smith's reading, we find an Aristotle who tells us not that we must harmonize our thinking to some shared conception of the good, or be simply less "graspy," as Smith thinks. Rather, we find an Aristotle whose concern is with the constitution of the polis and the formation of crucial institutions and practices that support deliberative citizens and the public sphere. We also find that Smith's Aristotle is indifferent to the reasons why citizens, with all of their differences, can become good citizens and why the institutional arrangements of the good republic are essential to its survival and flourishing.

For his part, Smith tells us that we need to recognize that Aristotle wants to remove injustice and that "the cure of injustice is personal reorientation" (628). On Smith's reading of Aristotle, family and friends can serve as a foundation for such a reorientation (629). According to Smith, "the common good in the family and politics" are analogous (632). This we dispute.

We argue that Smith makes Aristotle's politics static and misses the disputes that mark Aristotle's democratic politics. Our reading focuses on matters that are essential to both

Aristotle's good politics and his good polity, matters that Smith ignores. One of the pieces missing from his interpretation of Aristotle is the economic security and autonomy of citizens in Aristotle's good polity, goods that Aristotle thinks provides them with stakes in their republic and its well-being. Because Aristotle's politics reflects the diversity of citizens and their possessions, any agreements about the common good and justice are matters of negotiation and always subject to revision in the good republic. Finally, we show that, although Smith wants to separate himself from liberalism, he unwittingly shows an affinity to a liberalism which emphasizes moral individualism and is indifferent to the institutional foundations that Aristotle thinks are so necessary to human flourishing and good citizenship.

### **The Common Good**

For Smith's Aristotle, injustice is what stands in the way of the common good, and this Aristotle is pessimistic that injustice can be easily overcome (Smith 626). Smith leads us through an account of this central problem (which we take up later) and of remedies that ask us to reorient our thinking in moderate, just ways (628). This move from an account of the common good, with injustice as its paramount obstacle, to Aristotelian solutions for overcoming the obstacle moves too quickly over Aristotle's more complicated understanding of the dilemmas of a politics which aims at some common advantage.<sup>2</sup> Smith's conception of the common good in Aristotle completely misses the ways in which Aristotle problematizes it. For Aristotle, something called "the common good" is at best a paradoxically unattainable goal rather than something requiring us to overcome one tenacious obstacle. The difficulty is not (just) correcting injustice, but as we will show, that justice, equality, and the ends of politics (happiness of citizens) necessarily resist the possibility of a common good in any city.

While Smith does not contend that Aristotle tells us what the common good is, he fails to explore how Aristotle's examination of the good life, happiness, the virtues, justice, and equality all point to necessarily conflicting conceptions of these goods when we move beyond the individual to the city. There is certainly no ideal form (*idos*) as there is in Plato (*NE* 1096a11-

7a14).<sup>3</sup> Instead, Aristotle begins each investigation in a manner similar to his treatment of happiness: “most people virtually agree...both the many and the cultivated call it happiness, and suppose that living well and doing well are the same as being happy. But they disagree about what happiness is...” (*NE* 1095a17-21). As in all of his investigations, Aristotle is not satisfied with allowing conventional belief to stand untested but instead subjects it to the scrutiny of reason in order to move us beyond our uncritical assumptions. What he finds, time and again, is not that convention is wholly wrong, but rather that “it is reasonable for each group to be not entirely in error, but correct on one point at least, or even on most points” (*NE* 1098b28-9). Aristotle does not provide us a way to entirely bridge the initial conflict of convention through reason and, as his critique of Platonic forms shows, does not believe it either possible or prudent in the realm of the study of human action and ends (*NE* 1096b30-5, 1097a8-14). As long as differences in perspective remain, the good remains politically contested.

But what is the source of these different perspectives? While some difference clearly comes from the poor habituation<sup>4</sup> of some individuals, for Aristotle the sources of difference which resist better habituation, and thus a harmonizing overcoming of the disagreements over the good, derive from our material lives. Not only are some of us rich, some poor, and some middling, but for Aristotle, our occupations give us certain interests, certain capacities, and certain perspectives.<sup>5</sup>

Smith notices that the political community may be a site for conflict but believes that the solution to reducing the conflict (and thereby increasing the common good) is to inculcate the virtue of equity, which combines justice with the awareness of when unjust laws must be “straightened out” (633). The problem is that so long as the fundamental differences are unresolved, which Aristotle thinks they will be, there cannot be a collectively held sense of what that “straightening” should look like.

Looking more closely at justice in Aristotle, we find that in political associations the mean of the virtue of justice is proportionality based on desert (*NE* 1132b21-5a15), but that desert is an inherently contestable concept. Aristotle tells us that “while there is agreement that

justice in an unqualified sense is according to merit, there are differences, as was said before: some consider themselves to be equal generally if they are equal in some respect, while others claim to merit all things unequally if they are unequal in some respect” (P 1301b35-39). Finding neither of these arrangements wholly right nor wholly wrong, Aristotle’s good regime will attempt to see the legitimacy and limitations of both views and attempt to arrange politics so that these factions enter into constructive negotiation rather than risking intense civil conflict (P 1301b39-2a15 & 1318a27-b1). Aristotle further encourages regimes to foster the growth of the middle classes who, he thinks, are better able to see the merits and limitations of both positions (P 1295a33-6a21).

Smith’s neglect of these Aristotelian concerns seems to assume that a middle class society is already in place and that the constitutional arrangements for the regime are unimportant. For Smith’s Aristotle, a good politics rests on people reorienting themselves away from injustice, while at the same time refusing “to push their ‘just’ claims too far” (633). Certainly Aristotle stresses the importance of moderation in both the personal and political, and believes that politics can be improved to better habituate citizens to virtuous views and actions. However, Smith’s account suffers two critical problems: 1) it constructs Aristotle’s political thought without his *Politics*, and 2) it neglects Aristotle’s larger concern with moving politics and ethics away from mere belief to something more reasoned.

Taking up the first problem, in the *History of Animals*, Aristotle describes humans as one of many political animals, which like bees are both social (i.e., tend to live in some form of community) and work toward a common end in those communities. Social, but not political, animals (e.g., cattle) aim at their own ends and rarely sacrifice themselves for their community-mates. Aristotle tells us that humans pursue both common and individual ends, and he implies that political communities are about the common good (H 487b33-8a10).<sup>6</sup> This seems to correspond to Smith’s reading of political communities, but not with the account we get from Aristotle when we turn to the *Politics*. Here we find that “man is much more a political animal than any kind of bee or any herd animal...man alone among the animals has speech [*logos*]” (P

1253a8). Humans, then, pursue both individual *and* common ends in their communities, and the human form of political community distinguishes itself from animal communities by reasoned deliberation “rather than on simple devotion to the common good” (Yack 1993, 52).

So, when Aristotle turns to how to improve the regime in order to help its citizens live well, he does not concern himself with tutoring personal reorientation but rather focuses on what conditions will best support citizens in a reasoned, deliberative politics to settle their differences. In his explicit political theory (found in the *Politics*), he turns not to ethical solutions but rather to constitutional arrangements, concerns over power, and the material and educative conditions necessary for citizens to engage in better deliberative politics. Since political communities are characterized by inevitable conflict for Aristotle, attempts to arrive at agreements for the common advantage require much more than citizens changing their thinking; we must construct the institutions, citizen capacities, and citizens’ stakes (which we discuss later) in attending to politics in order to move beyond disagreement and unexamined belief.

This leads us to the second problematic consequence of Smith’s reading of the common good in Aristotle. By neglecting the necessary conflict built into politics and the political arrangements that as a result are necessary to develop agreement about collective ends, Smith’s Aristotle lacks the capacity to rise above unexamined belief. Aristotle constructs all of his investigations into human affairs by posing what is conventionally held, and then using reason to move us beyond belief and convention. Practical reason (*phronesis*) is about reasoning deliberation (*NE* 1141b23-2b35), which is neither epistemology nor belief (*NE* 1142a32-b16), and requires the development of *nous* (*NE* 1141a2-8), the faculty of rational intuition about first principles, which in ancient Greek society connoted being sensible or having common sense. Practical reason cannot be taught through traditional schooling, but rather is developed through self-governance in one’s household affairs and through participation in political deliberation in institutions arranged so that belief and convention are challenged (*NE* 1141b23-2a30).

Smith’s account of developing the good in citizens looks to the family and education, but this leaves out the political role in developing good politics. Moral training in the family and a

liberal education are two (among many) preconditions to arriving at good politics, but they cannot by themselves deliver it. What is missing is that it is in participating in governing that citizens not only develop laws which habituate, but also the critical, reasoning, reflexive capacities to resist or alter the nature of those habits. It is these capacities which enable citizens to resist a passive acceptance of convention and belief so as to develop good political practices. The common advantage is not something we develop prior to politics, but rather it flows from politics, or more precisely, it comes from acting politically.<sup>7</sup> By underestimating ((neglecting)) the conflictual nature of politics and the resulting need for constructing good deliberative practices in Aristotle, Smith's conception of Aristotelian politics lacks the capacity to rise above convention and belief to attend to what the good might be and how it might be developed politically. In this regard, it is antithetical to Aristotle's entire project.

### **Multiple Needs, Necessity, and Stakes**

In his discussion of the common good, Smith introduces us to citizens<sup>8</sup> with the disposition to grasp for more and more (Smith, 626). Smith's treatment of individual goods captures the side of Aristotle that warns about the dangers that follow a lack of moderation but ignores the many positive features Aristotle attaches to such goods. Such a portrait of humanity misconstrues Aristotle's view of what it means to be human. Aristotle holds that part of our humanity comes from caring about ourselves in the right ways. This does not mean leaving the world but living in it in ways that lead to our happiness. We see some of this in Aristotle's critique of Socrates' views regarding shared property and families for the philosopher kings in *The Republic*. On Aristotle's account, Socrates takes the natural attachments of human beings to be forces of gravity which pull individuals to the earth, denying them the chance to become wise and virtuous (*P II*, 1-5).

**#5 wants rewrite.** Some of what Socrates takes as impediments to human flourishing, Aristotle finds are a natural part of the human condition. Part of our humanity comes from the right kind of tangible attachments because they contribute to our happiness.

Aristotle provides us with an inventory of some of the components of happiness, identifying friendships, good children, economic security, a satisfying old age, health, reputation, and virtue (*R* I.5.4; also see *NE* bk. 1). His listing shows that a variety of goods are essential to the good life, something Smith seems to have forgotten in his effort to make overcoming the one obstacle that must be overcome if we are to become just.<sup>9</sup> As Stephen Salkever shows, attending to these multiple needs in the right way is part of what makes us human (1990, 137-39, 153). One who fails to attend to her multiple needs is defective in some significant ways. We have needs that revolve around our households, work, friends, politics, and the like, and we cannot, on Aristotle's account, understand ourselves apart from each of these needs. The multiple needs of different individuals will be distinctive and vary from person to person. On this account, Aristotle holds that by making one good or need dominate the rest we undermine our happiness.

For this reason, we find Smith's common good is far too static for Aristotle, and his call for a "radical conversion" (628) too problematic for Aristotle. Aristotle recognizes that the best politics is fluid and negotiable, reflecting the changing conditions of the members of society. He reaches for a cosmic harmony that is always on the horizon, but as an aspiration rather than a solution to impose on everyone. His political cosmos appears in public, that is common, space where discrete citizens work out their differences politically. Aristotle's cosmological politics provides a structured space where politics holds the parts together within a whole that is changing. However, all of this disintegrates if one part imposes its conception of justice and dominates all of the other parts.

Aristotle looks at both the whole and the parts. Although he tells us that "whole must of necessity be prior to the part" (*P* 1253a20), he argues that neither stands independently of one another.<sup>10</sup> To degrade the parts is, for Aristotle, to degrade the whole; the whole then can no longer be said to seek what is to the common advantage. For him, it is necessary to consider both the integrity of the polity and the integrity of its many households with all of their complexity, and he finds a good politics will challenge the efforts of some to dominate the rest. This is something that Smith misses.

Aristotle's political cosmos not only reflects the different needs, ideas, strengths, opportunities, and vulnerabilities that reside in each particular community. It also rests on the ability of all citizens to secure their basic needs. To achieve this, Aristotle has his citizens in the good state own their own property which enables them to attend to the biological needs of their household.<sup>11</sup> Property figures prominently in Aristotle because of what it does and is not an end in itself. For him, property ownership is an essential characteristic for autonomous citizens who do not have to please others to meet their needs.<sup>12</sup> This material foundation allows citizens to move beyond satisfying basic needs in order to attend to their multiple needs, including politics and the common advantage.<sup>13</sup> It is not, then, as Smith believes, that simply overreaching impedes attending to the common advantage. The inability to attend to one's material needs and security limits a citizen's horizon to self-referenced material concerns just as much as overreaching does.<sup>14</sup>

There is another reason why property ownership is important to Aristotle: he sees it providing citizens with a tangible stake in their republic. He wants citizens to see that their own good depends not only on their own efforts and perseverance but also that their good is intimately tied to the good of the republic. When this occurs, citizens have a stake not only in their own property but in their republic as well. For Aristotle, the stakes of citizens must be more than procedural or cognitive; they must be substantive.<sup>15</sup>

Aristotle finds that private property ownership as a citizen stake fosters a connection between the unavoidable concerns people have about themselves with a concern about their republic. They recognize that their ability to meet the multiple needs of their households depends not only on their own labor but also on the protections and security provided by their republic. For Aristotle, the good of the whole is entangled with the good of each citizen and does not stand in opposition to it when citizens experience the goodness of their republic in their everyday lives. For Aristotle, a stake is not a gift but an essential requirement for full citizenship. To deprive citizens of their stakes is in effect to strip them of their citizenship. For this reason, Aristotle finds that private property, or whatever assures the autonomy of each

citizen, does not stand apart from the political but is related to it.<sup>16</sup>

### **Friendship and Politics**

Like his account of the common good and overreaching, Smith's account of the relationship of politics and friendship suffers from not giving us full reading of Aristotle's more complex view on friendship. Smith focuses on what friends have and think in common, to the neglect of a more political side of Aristotle's friendship. Smith makes the mistake of conflating true (or moral) friendship with political friendship, and develops a reading of Aristotelian friendship to inform an Aristotelian politics drawn from the *Nicomachean Ethics* to the exclusion of his *Politics*. These lead to serious problems with how to develop friendship and concord (*homonoia*) in the regime.

Smith focuses almost exclusively on the "being of the same mind" aspects of Aristotelian friendship (629-31) to the exclusion of a more political conception of true friendship and concord. True friends deliberate on the good life and correct each other's errors of reasoning (*NE* 1172a10-14). As we know from Aristotle's discussion of the intellectual virtues, we deliberate over that which can be otherwise (*NE* 1140a31-b12), rather than over those beliefs we already share (*NE* 1142a31-b35). True friendship is thus like politics in that we both share and disagree, and we deliberate over our disagreements with the aim of improving ourselves and our relationship. Aristotle tells us that because we are political by nature we have a need for friendship (*NE* 1169b18-22), implying that we have an ingrained need to deliberate on the good life, the pleasant and unpleasant, the advantageous and the harmful. If we only agreed, friendships would remain incomplete. As an external good, true friendship is pursued for its own sake, and should not, as Smith does, be reduced to a means to the common good. As political animals, we need to engage in politics and friendship (i.e., figuring out how to live well together despite our differences) to be fully human.

This said, we must not carry the analogy between true friendship and politics as far as Smith does. Where Smith wants to make political friendship into true (or moral) friendship, Aristotle wants to draw sharp distinctions between the two. Aristotle clearly states, "Certainly it

is possible to be friend of many in a fellow-citizen's way, and still to be a truly decent person, not ingratiating; but it is impossible to be many people's friend for their virtue and for themselves. We have reason to be satisfied if we can find even a few such friends" (*NE* 1171a18-20). If true friendship is impossible other than among *very* small groups, then what kind of friendship is political friendship? Aristotle clearly considers it to be a friendship of utility rather than a true friendship. He tells us "[political] friendship...is constituted in the fullest degree on the principle of utility, for it seems to be the individual's lack of self-sufficiency that makes these unions permanent" (*EE* 1242a6-7).<sup>17</sup> Political friendship, then, "looks to equality and to the object, as buyers and sellers do" (*EE* 1242b33).

While this conception of political friendship stands in sharp contrast to the harmonious, other-regarding citizen-friends that Smith develops from his reading, on closer inspection, it is not incompatible with Aristotle's conception from the *Nicomachean Ethics* of *homonoia* among citizens from which Smith builds his case. There, Aristotle tells us that "concord [*homonoia*], then, is apparently political friendship, as it is said to be; for it is concerned with advantage and with what affects life [as a whole]" (*NE* 1167b2-4). Because it is concerned with advantage, it is a friendship of utility. Aristotle goes on to tell us that *homonoia* is about agreeing about what is advantageous (*NE* 1167a24-8) and having "the same thing in mind for the same person" (*NE* 1167a35). This does not mean that citizens lose their self-regarding interests, however. As we see in the discussion in the *Politics*, the few and the many come to agreement through deliberation, in which both sides must address the concerns of those with whom they are in conflict in order to reach a compromise that is mutually advantageous to a majority forged from the ranks of both factions (*P* 1291b29-2a37). On this account, *homonoia* is a political negotiation of interests which is supported by institutional arrangements rather than by a moral agreement or the harmonization of interests.<sup>18</sup>

By conflating true with political friendship, Smith overemphasizes the harmonious, moral nature of political friendship and misses the complex dynamics of Aristotle's conception of it. As Bernard Yack so elegantly explains, friendship (*philia*) for Aristotle is a generic term used "to

describe a much broader range of relationships than we are accustomed to using the word ‘friendship’ to describe” (1993, 35). Instead, it describes “all expressions of human sympathy and mutual concern” (1993, 35), and is more akin to “friendly relations” that we have “with a much larger and broader range of individuals than those with whom we have the intimate and noninstrumental ties that we ordinarily associate with friendship” (1993, 35 n. 29). Political friendships, being friendships of utility among equals, are something analogous to business relations where we have a “friendly feeling” toward the partner in a mutually beneficial exchange, as well as a sense of holding each other to an obligation of receiving “what is due” (*EE* 1242a6-13).

For Aristotle, political friendship presents both the possibility of bitter conflict,<sup>19</sup> and because of this, also the seemingly paradoxical possibility of developing bonds with both our fellow citizens and the institutions of our political community. Because factional conflict arises from small disputes (*P* 1303b17), it is in political friendship itself that we find the very seeds (in the hurt and recrimination of betrayal) that can grow into intense conflict and the collapse of the regime. However, in these conflicts among citizens, there are also the seeds of civil bonds and the nurturance of political friendship itself. As we seek to enlist the aid of our fellow citizens to enforce the justice we feel is due us,<sup>20</sup> citizens engage in the activity of deliberating with each other over what justice is, which in turn develops practical reason (*NE* 1141b23-2a30) and the virtue of justice in the citizenry.

Seeing political friendship as true or moral friendship, where we think good thoughts about each other and rely on moral character (*Smith* 629-31), is one of the most dangerous beliefs we can bring into the political community according to Aristotle. Aristotle seems to be speaking directly to Smith, when he warns us that

When, therefore, [political friendship] is based on a definite agreement, this is [political] and legal friendship; but when they trust each other for repayment, it tends to be moral friendship, that of comrades. Hence this is the kind of friendship in which recriminations most occur, the reason being that it is contrary to nature; for friendship based on utility and friendship based on

goodness are different, but these people wish to have it both ways at once—they associate together for the sake of utility but make it out to be a moral friendship as between good men, and so represent it as not merely legal, pretending that it is a matter of trust (*EE* 1242b35-43a2).<sup>21</sup>

Aristotle's discussions of friendship always point out that the greater the feeling of intimacy between partners, the greater the potential for recriminations. For a political community to be stable, which Aristotle frequently raises as a basis for good politics, it is imperative that we base relations among citizens on institutional and legal arrangements rather than on presumptions of another's morality and upon an intimacy which does not exist among citizens *qua* citizens.

This is not to say that Smith's concern with improving the quality of political friendships is not both laudable and in line with the spirit of Aristotle's thinking, for it is dangerous not to attend to the conditions of the political friendliness of citizens. Inequality breeds recriminations in any friendship (e.g., *NE* 1161a30-b10 & 1163a24-35), just as Smith's confusing political friendship with true friendship does. Providing a solid material foundation for citizens may reduce accusations, since "most men pursue what is fine only when they have a good margin in hand" (*EE* 1243a37).

### **Liberalism, Aristotle, and Smith**

Smith offers his account of Aristotle's common good as an alternative to liberalism (625). Smith works with a not uncommon assumption that liberalism is a unified theory, but as John Gray has cogently shown in *Liberalisms*, not all liberals are of the same stripe. Ironically, Smith's conception of the common good features a strand of liberalism which emphasizes moral individualism,<sup>22</sup> something which is alien to Aristotle's political thinking.

Most recent scholarship that examines the canonical texts of pre-twentieth century liberalism has emphasized a moral content to this literature.<sup>23</sup> It finds that the very freedom canonical liberals prize is not only necessary for a fully flourishing life but that it can also lead to the opposite as well. Free men and women can mistake their liberty to mean they should pursue

anything they wish. To counteract this prospect, liberals such as John Locke seek to get individuals to surmount their passions in ways that will lead to their moral development, as Locke discusses in his *Thoughts Concerning Education* and *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. What is arresting in these accounts is how little attention is devoted to the material or economic conditions of individuals. Rather, Locke makes individuals morally responsible for their choices and their character. To assist individuals in this moral quest, Locke and many liberals for some time afterwards turn to religion learned in a church one has freely chosen or to a moral education.

In Smith's "reorientation" (628) and Locke's moral individualism, we find ourselves focusing on how individuals personally cultivate virtue and thus change themselves. The latter wants us to deny ourselves (1968, par. 33), and the former wants us to forego grasping. In each case, the effort focuses on individual dispositions. With Locke and Smith, we move away from Aristotle's concerns about politics and the multiple needs and stakes of citizens. And we see little attention paid to institutional arrangements. Locke's moral individualism is unconcerned about the security or well-being of citizens, and it turns out that Smith does not vary much from this version of liberalism.<sup>24</sup>

Contrary to Aristotle but similar to liberals such as Locke, Smith ignores the social constructedness of individual identity and interests. We find that the focus of Smith's attention is on abstracted individuals: how they overgrasp and how they need to reorient themselves.<sup>25</sup> With Smith as well as with Lockean liberals, we find no concern that citizens have stakes in their republic. For his part, Aristotle takes account of the social and political aspects of persons and focuses on their institutional arrangements, something missing in Smith.

We find something else disturbing in Smith's discussion of liberalism. **The problems he finds in modern life are tied by Smith**<sup>26</sup> liberalism and its penchant for neutrality and individual ends (625). This simplifies matters too much, not only ignoring Aristotle's view of the complexity of politics but also the many ways that the common advantage can be subverted. To have a chance at meeting the challenges that face us means rejecting a one-

dimensional explanation that hides too much to be helpful.

### **Conclusions**

What we end up with in Smith's account of Aristotle is a political minimalism which overlooks the themes of power, conflict, and possible reconciliation that are at the heart of Aristotle's politics. Whatever else we may say about Aristotle, it cannot be that he wants people to pretend that power is irrelevant in politics, that conflict is always avoidable, or that ethics can stand in the place of politics.

Contemporary political discourse often takes on a minimalist dimension, and we are often told that to make things better, citizens must change their outlook, regardless of who they are and what they have. Political minimalism seeks to settle problems that had once been considered collective in nature individually, or it ignores them. It also largely ignores power and the inequalities that reside in any society. This political minimalism animates Smith's account of Aristotle's "common good," a rendition that relies on ethics and not on politics and that avoids the hard stuff of political disagreement in favor of making friendship the foundation for civic thinking. However admirable such dispositions appear on the surface, they ignore the dangers that Aristotle sees attending any kind of political arrangement, namely that some will attempt to use public power for their private advantage. To challenge this inevitability, Aristotle teaches us to be attentive to politics and to the constitutional arrangements that assure the political presence of all citizens and not just a few. And he reminds us that citizens do not stand apart from their multiple needs and that they require stakes to tie their good to the good of the republic.

Smith presents us with a story about how we can do without power and politics and how the troubles that pursue us can be solved if only we think the right thoughts. Whatever else such a line of reasoning may be, it is not Aristotle's, who in *The Politics* shows a persistent attentiveness to a world of inequality and power and who asks how individuals can learn to share a time and place in ways that respect the integrity of each and that enable moral flourishing. For us, what is at the heart of Aristotle's politics is a quest to protect the integrity and autonomy of

each citizen in a political cosmos that can also challenge the centrifugal forces that reside in any society.

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## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> *American Political Science Review*, forthcoming.

<sup>2</sup> We are using this term to better characterize Aristotle's concern with the good of the whole, despite necessary conflict, so as to distinguish it from Smith's use of the term "common good" with its flavor of homogenization. For a significantly different view of what might be considered the common good that departs from Smith's view and that is congenial to our presentation of a common advantage, see Nussbaum (1990, 209).

<sup>3</sup> To remain consistent with Smith's style, references to Aristotle's works will be incorporated into the text with the Bekker pagination preceded by an abbreviated reference to the work according to the following scheme: *Eudemian Ethics* (EE), *History of Animals* (H), *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE), *Politics* (P), and *Rhetoric* (R). We are using the translations listed in our references, and of the two editions of the NE listed, we use the Irwin translation (1985).

<sup>4</sup> We use this term for lack of a better alternative, although "habituate" has an unfortunate connotation of passivity. Included in the habituation to the good life, as Aristotle conceives it, is the desire to be political, to listen and engage each other.

<sup>5</sup> For the role of occupations, see Aristotle's discussion of the different types of democracy (P 1290a30-92a39). Stephen Salkever finds that Aristotle not only sees diverse individuals comprising the polis but also holds that each individual has a complex, unique set of needs. For Salkever's Aristotle, "competing needs or interests" cannot be distilled into some common brew called the common good. Rather, their integrity is best protected with a democratic politics that refuses to make one judgment dominate the rest and recognizes that "moral and political problems" are characterized by "their indefiniteness" (Salkever 1990, 138).

<sup>6</sup> We are drawing from Bernard Yack's nuanced description of Aristotle's political community (Yack 1993, 51-87; 51-3).

<sup>7</sup> Jill Frank has a similar account of how Aristotle's conception of excellence (*areté*) in the polis draws on a reflexive contrast between habit (*hexis*) to "being-at-work" (*energeia*) and action (*praxis*) (Frank 1998, 795).

<sup>8</sup> **FOLLOWING DELETED: "without needs but"**

<sup>9</sup> **In his discussion of the household (631-33), Smith ignores Aristotle's concern about the material well-being of its members.**

<sup>10</sup> Salkever finds that Aristotle's universe is "composed of interdependent parts which are themselves wholes" (1990, 51). When one part seeks to disturb the harmony of the whole and uses its power to serve its interests, it destroys any conception of common advantage and denies the other parts their integrity.

<sup>11</sup> But it turns out that what is important to Aristotle is not property but autonomy.

<sup>12</sup> **Footnote moved from deleted material.** For Aristotle, a citizen cannot be someone who is used by another for the latter's purposes. This is what a slave is (See P 1253b33-35).

<sup>13</sup> This is why Aristotle wants to eliminate destitution. We "should see to it that the multitude is not overly poor; for this is the reason for democracy being depraved. Measures must therefore be devised so that there will be

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abundance over time. Since this is advantageous also for the well off, what ought to be done is to accumulate what is left over of the revenues and distribute accumulated [sums] to the poor. This should particularly be done if one could accumulate enough for the acquisition of a plot of land, or failing this, for a start in trade or farming” (*P* 1320a33-40).

<sup>14</sup> In this light, John Pocock finds that Aristotle’s citizen has a “household of his own to govern so that he may not be another man’s servant, so that he may be capable of attaining good in his own person, and so that he may apprehend the relation between his own good and that of the polis” (1975, 203).

<sup>15</sup> For an extended discussion of stakes in Aristotle, see Terchek (1997), ch. 2 and for a general discussion of stakes in contemporary society, see Ackerman and Alstott, (1999).

<sup>16</sup> **Deleted material.** Even if Smith were correct about teaching people not to overgrasp, such a strategy cannot work if citizens are without stakes in their republic.

<sup>17</sup> Rackham uses the term “civic friendship.” We have substituted “political” to keep it consistent with the rest of our discussion. Aristotle is using *politik* to describe this friendship (*EE* 1242a1-9).

<sup>18</sup> We all may agree to submit to the decision because we recognize the process as being fair, such that there are no consistent winners and losers, where each of us had a fair chance of entering the deliberation and swaying our fellow citizens to our cause.

<sup>19</sup> Friendships of utility, as political friendships are, are by their nature prone to complaints and disputes (*NE* 1162b5-21).

<sup>20</sup> See Yack (1993, 42) for a more thorough discussion.

<sup>21</sup> See footnote 12.

<sup>22</sup> See Terchek (1997), ch. 4 on Locke as a moral individualist.

<sup>23</sup> For some of the literature showing the moral content in major writers in the liberal cannon, see Dunn (1969) and Colman (1983) on Locke; Raphael (1985) on Smith; and Semmel (1984) and Ryan (1974) on Mill.

<sup>24</sup> Smith holds that “Aristotle’s is an ethics of being not having” (630). This makes Aristotle into something he is not. Being, as in being virtuous and philosophical, is obviously central to Aristotle, but he also thinks that being happy is essential, and Aristotle’s happy person also *has* certain things.

<sup>25</sup> As we pointed out earlier, this contradicts Aristotle, who clearly states that “most men pursue what is fine only when they have a good margin in hand” (*EE* 1243a37).

<sup>26</sup> **Deleted material:** He writes as if the ills that have befallen us can be traced to