



## The Political Thoughts of Aristotle and Computer

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**Abstract:** It is notable that we are living in the age of computers and computer is a revolutionary weapon in the hands of man. Computer is not only handy in the sphere of scientific world but to me it is quite helpful in the realm of political science. The very topic of my conference presentation though primarily relates with the legendary figure of political history where so-called revolutionary machine computer had not been around, yet time of Aristotle is said to be sharper than computer. The principal significance of Aristotle, in the history of political theories, lies in the fact that he gave to politics the character of an independent science. He differs from his master, Plato, much more in the form and method than in the substance of his thought. Most of the ideas which seen characteristically Aristotelian are to be found in Plato.

**Key words:** platonic expression, phenomena, constitution, monarchic government, etc.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It is notable that we are living in the age of computers and computer is a revolutionary weapon in the hands of man. Computer is not only handy in the sphere of scientific world but to me it is quite helpful in the realm of political science. The very topic principally relates with the renowned figure of political history where so-called world-shattering machine computer had not been around, yet time of Aristotle is said to be sharper than computer.

Social networking is important, but what we've shown in political science is that the people who are using the Internet, be it Face book, Twitter or whatever else for political actions, are really the same people who are politically active offline anyway," said Patrick Miller, assistant professor of political science and the study's lead author. "There are not very many people who are political animals online but not in the real world." It's just another piece of confirmation to show that social media isn't the be-all and end-all. It is world-shattering in some aspects, but at the same time people brings to social media the way that they behave everywhere else. It's a reflection of how people conduct in various other settings, and so I think it's a serious reminder of the limits of social media, especially from people who try to bet a lot on it, whether it's in political promotions or a variety of other ways that people try to spread messages. Though there was not a computer age at the time of Aristotle

but he played even better in the field of politics than computer.

### 2. THE POLITICS

In his systematic work, the politics, Aristotle draws abundantly from the grate store of facts accumulated in the constitution. It is not exact, however, to say that the principles of the politics are strictly generalizations from these facts. To a less extent than Plato, but yet to a very great extant, Aristotle depends for the categories and broad outline of his philosophy upon the ideas that characterized contemporary Hellenic thought. The results of his study of other ages and other peoples are employed more in the correction and illustration than in the foundation of his political science.

Rejecting Plato's conception of a single universal abstract "good," Aristotle considers that "good" is relative to each species of being. What, he asks, is the science which treats of the highest "good" of man? His answer is: political science. For the good of man is the perfect development and activity of all the powers that are in him, and this result is impossible to the individual without the association of his fellows-that is, without them.

Therefore, the good of the individual is merged in that of the state. But the state he conceives as or self-sufficing-that is, as dependent in no more ultimate form of being for the realization of the good which is its end. Therefore the science of the state, politics, is the dominant, "architecnic" science, embracing within itself, as a part, that which treats of man as an individual. "For as man is the best of all animals when he has reached his full development, so he is worst of all when divorced from law and justice"

In his first book of the politics the philosopher sets forth the fundamental characteristics of the state. It is an association of human beings- and the highest form of human association. In the order of time it is preceded by the household and the village; in the order of thought it is prior to both. The household has its source in the association of male and female for the propagation of the race and the association of master and slave for the production of subsistence. The village has its source in the association of house- holds for the better satisfaction of their wants. The state springs from the union of are self-sufficing. It is the last

and the perfect association. Originating in the bare needs of living, it exists for the sake of complete life.

And because the individual can fulfill the end of his existence—can live a complete life—only in the state, Aristotle declares that man is by nature a political animal. This dogma leaves no room for such discussion as has figured in later political theory, of a “state of nature” in which the individual lives a life of blissful isolation from his kind. The being who cannot live in association with his fellows, or who has no need to do this, is Aristotle says, either on the one hand, a beast, or on the other, a god. There is no place in the philosophy of human phenomena for the consideration of such a being.

### 3. CONCEPTION OF THE STATE

This conception of the state in its essential character does not, however, preclude the investigation of less ultimate forms of association which prevail among men. Historically he was preceded by conditions in which the household, ruled by the patriarch, was the typical community. In this fact is to be found the explanation of the monarchic government of the earliest states; for the primitive king merely retained through custom the historical relation of the patriarch.

But Aristotle insists that this historical relation of household to state must not be allowed to distort our conception of their logical relation. It is one of his numerous charges against Plato that the latter represented the state to be merely a large household and the ruler of the state to be essentially the head of a family. Such a conception Aristotle holds to be false; state and household differ, not in degree but in kind. To prove this he enters upon an exhaustive analysis of the household, in the course of which are set forth the philosopher’s views upon many of the fundamental questions of economics.

The main argument is summarily as follows: the household consists of an individual holding dominion over wife, children and property, including slaves. The relation of the head of the household to these three elements is not one, but various. He rules the wife, not as absolute despot, but as constitutional adviser; he rules the children, not as absolute despot, but as the king, who looks to their good rather than his own; while property, both slaves and other, he rules in full despotism, for the exclusive advantage of himself. In this manifold relation of the head of the household to the household and state; for in the latter, according to Aristotle, the relation of the ruler to each of the citizens is precisely the same.

### 4. THE PLATONIC REASONING

Thus, Plato says that if man does not know his own children, he will feel an equally high affection for all the children in

the state. But, answers Aristotle, the sense of personal possession is the whole basis of affection; therefore the result will be, not great love for all, but no love any. The platonic reasoning is fact, vitiated from the outset by an erroneous conception of the unity that is essential to the state. It is not a unity which consists in the obliteration of all diversities in individual. Such a conception is fatal to idea of the state, as identity in musical tones is fatal to the idea of harmony. The unity of the state is that which arises out of the proper organization of relations among individual who differ from one another as rulers and ruled.

### 5. THE POSITIVE PRESENTATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL RELATION

Aristotle proceeds to the positive presentation of constitutional relation. A state, objectively considered, is an assemblage of citizens. What is a citizen? This question is answered primarily on a basis of fact— and of purely Hellenic fact. The citizen, he says, is one who participates in the functions of juror and legislator, either or both. In other words, citizenship signifies merely the enjoyment of political rights, and a state is a group of persons exercising these rights. No part of the community not possessing such rights comes within the purview of political proper. But Aristotle raises the further question, who ought to be citizens? Especially, are mechanics and laborers fit for inclusion in this class? His answer is negative. The prime qualification for citizenship is capacity both to rule and to be ruled, and the cultivation of this twofold capacity is indispensable. But those who must labor in order to live are too dependent on the commands of others ever to develop about the capacity them to command. Freedom from concern about the necessities of life is indispensable to the proper performance of political duties. The working classes are, indeed, essential to the state’s existence; but this does not constitute them citizens. "Justice therefore demands that no one should do more ruling than being ruled, but that all should have their turn"

While in practice they have been admitted to citizenship in much state, this, Aristotle thinks, has been justified only by the regrettable lack of true material. The state, than which the philosopher must consider consists in a self-sufficing body of which the function of the state are number and Inter-relationship of the various organs of government, the methods throws which they are manned, and, particularly, the abode of the supreme or sovereign power. On this last point depends the difference between constitutions; for the governing body is sovereign, and makes the constitution what it is. Accordingly, where the people are the governing body, the constitution is a democracy; where the few govern, it is oligarchy. Aristotle employs this conception of the constitution in determining when the identity of a state changes. With logic that has not been confined to ancient times and European lands, Greek governments had sought to

repudiate debts on the ground that they had been contracted not by the state, but by the oligarchy or the tyrant. What, the philosopher asks, is the essence of the state, and when does it cease to be itself and become another? And he answers: the essence of the state is the constitution, and the state changes its identity when the constitution changes, e.g. democracy it become oligarchy or tyranny. But, he hastens to add, "It is quite another question whether the state should or should not fulfill engagements when it changes its constitution".

This very important conclusion is perplexing, especially as the politics contains no further discussion of the matter. From his identification of the state with its constitution the obvious inference would be that a democracy, for example, is not responsible for the engagements of a tyrant whom it has displaced. Either Aristotle here means by constitution something more than what he says in defining the term, or not wishing to commit himself to the approval of the repudiation of contracts, he deliberately evades the logical dilemma. From the nature of the state and of the constitution as defined above, the philosopher draws one conclusion as to the normal, or natural, organization of government.

Though the state arises from man's impulse to association with his kind, rather than from a deliberate search for mutual assistance, with his kind, rather than from a deliberate search for mutual assistance, yet the advantages springing from political organization have a great influence in the maintenance of the social bond. These advantages, then, should be common to all the citizens.

All alike should profit by the capacity of each in either ruling or being ruled. Hence the constitution should provide for the service in office of each of the citizens in his turn. Such at least should be the rule where the state is really a society of equal citizens. Quite different, the philosopher sententiously observes, is the actual practice; for, through selfish craving for the emoluments of public service, men seek for and cling to office as if their lives depended on it.

## 6. ESSENCE OF THE STATE

Conceiving the essence of the state to be expressed in the state to be expressed in the constitution, and the crucial feature of the constitution to be the supreme or sovereign authority, the question at once arises: on what rational principle is the abode of this sovereignty to be determined? Controversy is particularly keen, Aristotle notes, between those who favor the principle of more number and those who favor that of wealth and intelligence.

The former, advocating democracy, claim that all who are equal in respect to freedom should be recognized as equal in political power, and that, accordingly, and the sovereignty should rest in the general body of citizens. Against these the advocates of oligarchy contend that superiority in wealth or intelligence or birth should carry superiority in power, and that the supreme authority should therefore rest in the few.

Both these arguments, Aristotle declares, miss the precise criterion, which is to be found only after reaching a correct conception of the nature and end of the state.

The state is not an association for the acquisition of wealth or for the mere maintenance of life, or, like an international alliance, for the promotion of definite political and commercial interests of the contracting parties. The end of the state that certain persons shall have common dwelling-place, and shall refrain from mutual injury and shall be in habitual intercourse with one another.

The state embraces within itself associations for all these and other purposes, but such association is based on friendship and look merely to loving together. On the other hand, the state has for its end living well-living happily and nobly: it is an association not for mere life, but for noble actions. From this point of view, the greater share in political power should belong to those who contribute most to be the criterion, rather than freedom or birth or wealth. Must sovereign power, then, be ascribed to the mass of the people, or to some limited class, or to some individual? Primarily, Aristotle answers, to the mass the people. For the aggregate virtue of the whole people exceeds that of any particular part. The same answer indeed would follow from a rigid application of the principle of wealth; for the whole is wealthier than any of its parts. But popular sovereignty, as thus conceived, is subject to an important qualification.

## 7. HELLENIC POLITICS

In the controversies of Hellenic politics over oligarchy and democracy the underlying thought was that the people, a few in any given community constituted in fact two states, each existing or censing to exist as the one or the other faction gained control. This idea had much justification in the facts of the conflict. Democratic triumph in most cases meant the actual physical expulsion of the oligarchs from the community; while oligarchic triumph meant the exclusion of the mass of the people from all political right and hence from the state, in the sense in which Aristotle defined it. The unsatisfactory character of Aristotle's discussion as to the identity of the regard sovereignty as inhering in the dominant faction of the community.

But more commonly he conceives the sovereign power rather as the highest authority in the administrative hierarchy, or as that part of the administrative organization which deals with the most important questions of policy. In other words, he thinks of the sovereign as subordinate to the state, and of the state as existing apart from any particular possessor of the chief governmental power. The latter conception of sovereignty is that which the philosopher employs in deciding that the people as a whole must be sovereign.

This does not imply that either the people as a whole or every individual alike is best adapted to administer all the offices of the state; but that the greatest and most fundamental questions must be finally passed upon by the

whole people. In practice this would mean, he ex. Plains, that the function of the popular body should be chiefly the election and censure of the officers of administration. For such function the people as a whole is eminently fitted. It may, indeed, be argued that statesmen of eminent wisdom and expedience would give a better judgment than the mass—that the few, rather than the many, are the logical sovereign in this sense. But Aristotle rejects this contention. The verdict of the general public is valid in politics, just as it is musical contest and in banquets; not the musician and the cook, but they who hear the music and eat the dinner are best qualified to render judgment. "So it is clear that the search for what is just is a search for the mean; for the law is the mean."

## 8. THE SOVEREIGNTY

The sovereignty of the whole people, therefore, subject to the qualification that it be manifested in the election of magistrates and in holding them to account for their conduct in office, is the primary solution of the problem as to the location of ultimate power in the state. This solution presumes, however, that the citizens are on the whole not far from the same general level of Virtue. Suppose, on the whole, whose virtue overwhelmingly exceeds that of all the rest, whether taken individually or collectively. The platonic expression of them is generally suggestion or allusion or illustration; while in Aristotle they appear as definite, clean-cut dogmas, bearing an unmistakable relation to the general system of scientific doctrine. This contrast is rooted in the respective intellectual peculiarities of the two philosophers. Plato is imaginative and synthetic; Aristotle is matter-of fact and analytic. Ideas present themselves to Plato more through metaphor and analogy; to Aristotle more through the processes of exact logic. Plato is more impressed by the unity pervading phenomena; Aristotle, by the diversity. The creation of an independent science of political by Aristotle was accomplished by the disentanglement of political from ethical conceptions. In Plato's thought the two were completely blended. The separation effected by Aristotle was not so much the conclusion of a deliberate logical process as the unconscious outcome of the analytic method which he applied with such rigor to the solution of ethical problems. In approaching the consideration of the constitution which shall most faithfully embody the true principles of political science, Aristotle first examines critically those systems, whether actual or theoretical, which have attained general reputation for excellence. From the standpoint and with the method adopted by Aristotle, it is a matter of no great difficulty to exhibit many weaknesses in the platonic theories. But probably the most significant feature of the critique is the attack on the philosophic supports of communism. Aristotle concedes that unity is of fundamental importance in any conception of the state, but the means advocated by Plato That Aristotle, while not like Plato an idealist, nevertheless was often determined in his philosophy by an ideal, will appear clearly enough in what is

to follow. In ethics and politics, accordingly, while Plato, working deductively from his philosophic conceptions of virtue and the good blended inextricably the two bodies of doctrine, Aristotle, proceeding by extensive observation and minute analysis of objective facts, marked out for each science an independent field. The foundation of his political theory was laid by Aristotle in a detailed study of practically all the existing government systems, both Hellenic and barbarian. It is more interesting that without computer in that time Aristotle played a crucial role in political life of Greece.

## 9. CONCLUSION

In a nutshell it can be said the very paper though largely throws lights on the Aristotle's politics his thoughts on politics, state etc. rather than on computer. But it can't be denied that computer plays a pivot role today's political life. We are living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and Indian government is led by PM. Narendra Modi but still computer serves a decisive role in commanding major things. At the end of my paper I, Gurpal Singh would like to thank all the present literary persons who offered their quality time to listen my paper.

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