
ARISTOTLE'S POLITICS

Living Well and Living Together

EUGENE GARVER

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO AND LONDON

CHAPTER FIVE

Factions and the Paradox of Aristotelian Practical Science

Books V and VI continue the practical project of Book IV of showing how a constitution can be better than its citizens and its rulers. At the same time, these books seem to have much lower standards than the *Ethics* and the rest of the *Politics*. While someone who chooses life over the good life is vicious—the coward saving his skin, the self-indulgent gratifying appetites that prevent him from acting well, the miser, the boaster, etc.—Aristotle gives advice in the *Politics* and especially in Books V and VI about how to make the state stable and secure instead of how it can aim at a good life, and even in opposition to the good life. The democrat or oligarch who acts on Aristotle's counsels will forgo what he regards as the good life in favor of stability. Stability as the goal of politics seems to reject the identification of the end of the state with living well. Instead, the stable state is then only a necessary condition for human flourishing, much like the contemporary liberal state. There could be nothing noble about political activity under that understanding.¹

In spite of that apparent similarity between modern liberalism and Aristotle's project in Books V and VI, there is a striking difference. The democracies and oligarchies that are the main subjects of this project are regimes that aim not only at life rather than the good life, but at the advantage of the rulers rather than a common good. Even if the modern state limits its horizons to aiming at life, modern political ideology condemns rulers who aim only at their own benefit. Giving up our civil liberties in the name of security is one thing; abandoning them for the profit of defense contractors, quite another.

The emphasis on stability and preservation points to another difference between the *Ethics* and the *Politics*. The *Ethics* is about virtue, not virtue and vice. The vices are explored only as consequences of what we learn

about virtue or as ways of knowing about virtue. Vicious people fail to live up to the standards of virtue: there is no sense that anything other than vice itself could cause a person to prefer vice to virtue. But in the *Politics*, corrupt constitutions get at least equal time with correct constitutions. People want to live in bad states, especially bad forms of democracy and oligarchy, and especially to be rulers of such states.

Stability then becomes an end worth aiming at distinct from virtue and living well. In the *Ethics* Aristotle says that the good man, like Achilles in the *Iliad*, "will choose intense pleasure for a short time over slight pleasure for a long time; a year of living finely over many years of undistinguished life; and a single fine and great action over many small actions" (IX.8.1169a23–26). In the *Politics*, by contrast, stability is a measure of the excellence of a constitution. The constitution that chooses a brief but glorious existence over indefinite duration is not a good constitution (IV.1.1288b28–30, V.1.1302a2–4, V.7.1307a26–27, VI.5.1320a1–3).² The emergence of stability as a measure of excellence in politics but not in ethics would seem to make ethical and political thinking different, in spite of the fact that Aristotle maintains that they are the same (NE VI.8.1141b24).

I. ASYMMETRIES, EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL

Book V has a simple organization. "It is clear that if we know the causes by which constitutions are destroyed we also know the causes by which they are preserved; for opposites create opposites, and destruction is the opposite of security" (V.8.1307b26–29). Its first seven chapters present the causes by which constitutions are destroyed, and chapters 8 and 9 then show the causes by which they are preserved. Yet in important ways, the dictum is false: knowing the causes of constitutional change is not equivalent to knowing how constitutions are preserved. More radically, destruction and security are not the only alternatives facing someone in potentially revolutionary situations: constitutions could be reformed and improved as well as preserved and destroyed. The many ways in which knowledge of the causes of factions and knowledge of the methods of preservation are *not* equivalent supply the energy and interest that drives Book V's argument.³

Aristotle claims that knowing the causes of faction (*stasis*) will tell us how to resist them. His actual argument belies that assertion. But we don't have to look at the *Politics* to see that often knowing how something is caused does not tell us about what remedies there could be. Psychologists may discover that early childhood trauma has caused certain pathologies. Short of reversing time's arrow and stopping those traumas from happening

in the first place, there is no direct path from such a discovery to having any idea of how to heal such a person. The demolitions expert is not necessarily an architect, and the heckler who effectively disrupts a speaker's performance is not necessarily a persuasive speaker himself.

I don't think this is a simple error on Aristotle's part. There is a difference between a causal analysis, such as we find in the first seven chapters, and a first-person deliberative understanding that the *Politics* overall aims at and which Book V finally arrives at in chapters 8 and 9. Knowing how people decide and choose does not tell me how to choose and decide. Knowing what causes people to form factions doesn't necessarily tell the statesman how to prevent them from arising. Historical knowledge is not necessarily practical knowledge. As we will see, Aristotle illustrates this difference between analysis and deliberation, for example, in the sequence of causes of faction in the pivotal V.3, which moves from avoidable mistakes to inevitable or unforeseeable events.

The lack of equivalence between knowing how constitutions are destroyed and knowing how to preserve them has ties to another, morally troubling, asymmetry. Regardless of how just or deviant a given constitution is, Aristotle writes as though preserving it is good and destroying it is bad. The programmatic statement at the beginning of Book V presents preservation and destructions as alternatives, with the former always to be pursued:

What things bring about revolution [*metabolē*] in constitutions and how many and of what sort they are; what are the sources of destruction for each sort of constitution and into what sort of constitution a constitution is most particularly transformed; further, what are the sources of preservation both [for constitutions] in common and for each sort of constitution separately; and further, by what things each sort of constitution might most particularly be preserved—these matters must be investigated in conformity with what has been spoken of. (V.I.1301a20–25)⁴

The only practical task listed in that program is preservation. We are never invited to deliberate about whether to become a revolutionary. There is never an invitation that the people shall judge whether a government should be overthrown. How did stability become such an overriding value? Is this an intrusion of the author's own political conservatism rather than something that is integral to his method and thought?⁵

The first asymmetry was epistemological. Differences between knowing the causes of faction and knowing how to preserve constitutions drive the

argument. The second asymmetry is ethical. Its effect on the argument is less obvious, but it is especially troubling ethically. Since the seventeenth century we are used to thinking of warring factions as being in a state of nature. Each argues in the name of justice, but there is no justice available to settle the dispute, except maybe an appeal to heaven. People still have the language of justice but can only use it strategically. No privileges go to those in power just because they got there first. It seems that we should value stability exactly in proportion to how worth saving the given constitution is. This asymmetry is troubling because obligation and legitimacy are central to modern political philosophy, which is written from the perspective of the good, or at least the rational, person in a questionable regime, not from that of the statesman. Book V seems to eschew such moral considerations, which for us are the only moral considerations. There is no right of revolution. Nor is there a duty of absolute obedience to the ruler. That is, knowing that factions are bad does not imply for Aristotle, as it does, say, for Hobbes, that we should therefore always support the government in power. The lesson Aristotle draws from the idea that statesmen should always aim at stability is, as we will see, quite different.⁶

Aristotle's project confronts the opposite moral difficulty from that faced in the *Rhetoric*. There we learn that the power to uphold and to refute a given proposition is a single power. There is no art of refutation distinct from an art of demonstration, and no art of advancing reasons for a given proposition that knows anything not equally available to someone seeking to overthrow that claim.⁷ "The orator should have the power to convince about opposites, as in syllogisms . . . not that we should do both (for one ought not to convince people to do wrong), but that we will not miss the way things really are" (I.I.1355a29–32).

The trouble with the *Rhetoric* was that the moral injunction—one ought not to convince people to do wrong—seemed distinct from the art and power to convince about opposites, so distinct that it sounds like adventitious piety. In *Politics* V the moral difficulty comes from the fact that the science Aristotle teaches does *not* work equally both ways. While we have to know the causes of faction, we are never invited to join in one, while on the other side, stability becomes a value apart from all regard for the justice of the constitution to be defended. The *Rhetoric* claims that "true and better facts are by nature always more productive of good syllogisms and more persuasive" (I.I.1355a29). *Politics* V asserts an asymmetry on behalf of a much lower value—it's not easier to argue for the truth, but better to defend any constitution, regardless of how it measures up against absolute standards of justice. Defense is better than offense, regardless of the cause.

The relativism of stability seems ethically neutral, and so the project of preserving states ethically dubious, in a way that *justice* relative to a constitution is not. Justice may be a relative concept, but it isn't an arbitrary one. The goodness of the good citizen is not purely instrumental, like the goodness of a good slave. Stability seems to go beyond the relative to the arbitrary. Partial justice is still justice in a way that does not seem to have a parallel for stability. "All men grasp justice to some extent but they only go part of the way, and they do not state the whole of absolute justice" (III.9.1280a9-11). That idea seems repeated at the beginning of Book V: "We must first assume as a principle that many different constitutions have come into being because, though all agree about the just and the proportionately equal, they make a mistake [*hamartia*] about it" (V.1.1301a25-26). But there is a difference. Book V omits a normative consideration present in Book III. In III.9, democrats and oligarchs are doubly mistaken. They not only generalize about equality and inequality, thinking either that someone equal in some respect is simply equal, or that someone unequal in some respect is simply unequal, but in addition, "of the most authoritative consideration they say nothing" (1280a25). Like the democrats and oligarchs, Aristotle himself in Book V says nothing of justice according to merit and its connection to the end of the city, the good life.

Hence the conclusion of III.9 is absent from Book V: "Those who contribute most to a partnership [in living well] have a greater part in the city than those who are equal or greater in freedom and family but unequal in political virtue, or those who outdo them in wealth but are outdone in virtue" (1281a3-7). Book V is silent where Book III offered normative standards. We are left simply with errors causing factions which in turn cause revolutions. If particular constitutions and forms of justice are founded on error, modern remedies such as compromise and a *modus vivendi* make no sense: what would be the point of neutrality between a pair of errors? There are two kinds of justice, arithmetic and geometrical, democratic and oligarchic. Both kinds are partial, but there is no third kind of justice, true justice or justice according to merit, alongside those two, nor is there the indirect guidance we get from recognizing that neither form of justice is true justice. The solution to the problem of factions is not to abandon partial conceptions of justice in favor of complete justice. We need to understand why not.⁸

If we could tie stability to justice, that would help overcome the suspicion of relativism here. Unfortunately, while people's conceptions of justice may cause factions, justice itself plays little role in *Politics* V. Emphasizing stability makes us neglect justice.

II. FACTION AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

These asymmetries—that knowing how to preserve a constitution is not equivalent to knowing the causes of faction, and that preserving a constitution is always worthwhile—propel the argument of Book V. There are two differences between the programmatic plan of IV.1 and the first paragraph of V.1, which announces the subject for Book V. First, IV.1 does contemplate the possibility of reform: "To reform (*epanorthôsai*) a constitution is no less a task than to frame one from the beginning . . . The political expert should be able to assist existing regimes" (1289a3-7). Second, faction did not appear in IV.1. Stability is its subject instead. In one sense, the shift from preserving the constitution to focusing on factions seems innocent and obvious. Factions destroy constitutions, and so the statesman interested in stability must defeat factions. Aristotle makes the connection between factions and constitutional change more complex, and eventually discovers modes of constitutional change that have nothing to do with faction.

Once again: "We must first assume as a principle that many different constitutions have come into being because, though all agree about the just and the proportionately equal, they make a mistake about it" (V.1.1301a25-26). While plurality and particularity come from initial errors, these mistakes are not always fatal, and the causal analysis in V.1-4 shows that factions are caused as much by the emotions and actions of those outside the constitution as by errors internal to the constitution. Unlike Socrates, Aristotle never suggests that constitutions are unstable because they are imperfect. Instead, constitutions are unstable because of factions, while factions come into existence because constitutions are imperfect. Aristotle's argument is one step longer than Socrates's, with factions as an intermediate cause between imperfection and instability. That is how Aristotle makes his argument more ethical and practical. Preservation does not require perfection, only the suppression of faction.

Constitutional change is therefore a form of motion with an external cause, namely, faction. Aristotle differs from Plato on this count. But this external cause is not fully alien to the constitution. If it were, we would have to worry about the role of chance and ask, with Machiavelli in chapter 25 of *The Prince*, what the statesman can do to oppose fortune. Factions could come from outside agitators and foreign powers, or from unexpected changes in the proportions of rich and poor or other groups within the state, and not from any mistake in the constitution itself. Identifying constitutional change with faction avoids those Platonic and Machiavellian

extremes, which agree that only internal causes of constitutional change can be understood, and that external causes are fortuitous and irrational. Aristotle shows how the statesman can understand external causes, since they are external to the constitution yet responses to a mistake about equality within the constitution. His analysis gives the statesman an intelligible yet external cause of constitutional change.

When factions become intelligible, as opposed to fortuitous or irrational, the outsiders become, if not citizens, part of the constitution. These outsiders, with the possibility of faction and revolt, and their claims about justice and injustice, have a political voice that makes them different from outsiders such as resident aliens or Spartan helots, who might threaten the stability of a polis but who have no political standing. Constitutions define who is a citizen, but it does not follow that such definitions are beyond practical criticism. The constitution's defining who is a citizen looks like a performative utterance, in which saying something makes it so, but this act appeals to normative standards of justice, and so the constitution cannot simply define who is a citizen [III.2.1275b26–30]. Constitutions define citizens, and therefore all constitutions exclude some who might be citizens.⁹ Citizens as defined by the constitution deny that they have relations of justice to the excluded and worry that the outsiders might return the favor. Aristotle's analytic framework accurately reflects the very unstable position of these outsiders. Making factions intelligible is a first step to controlling them.¹⁰

A brief analogy to the *Poetics* might help place Aristotle's analysis. Just as Socrates claimed that all constitutional change comes from an error within the ruling class, someone might think that all tragic downfalls were due to errors on the part of the person who will suffer the tragedy. One's errors become one's fate. Imperfection causes instability and loss. Tragedy is, then, the unfolding of the inevitable consequences of a tragic flaw. Such an understanding is parallel to my Platonic analysis of revolution. On the other hand, what I just called the Machiavellian analysis of factions resembles those who think that tragedy comes from moral luck, from the contingencies of clashes between people, projects, or values, from unforeseeable consequences, among other things. Aristotle's analysis of tragedy, like his analysis of factions, mediates between these possibilities. Tragedy results from an error, but the error is not blameworthy, nor is the plot a predictable outcome of the error. Similarly, constitutions are unstable because of factions, while factions come into existence because constitutions are imperfect.

Determinism and chance both defeat Aristotelian tragedy. There is noth-

ing noble, and nothing of the proper magnitude for tragedy, in an agent facing either a deterministic or a fortuitous universe. Similarly, there is drama and even pathos in Aristotle's analysis of faction. In a situation where people act in the name of justice without fully understanding its connection to true merit, stability is a less likely outcome than continuous civil war. It is not helpful simply to assert that the better the constitution, the more stable, so that stability is acquired through making the constitution better. That assertion doesn't take stability as a serious problem in its own right, and doesn't take seriously the situation in which factions occur. That would be something like Socrates's claims that the better the person, the less others can harm him, which sounds too much like wishful thinking for Aristotle.

III. BOOK V.1–4: FACTION IN GENERAL

Chapters 1 through 4 of Book V concern the general causes of faction and constitutional change, as opposed to those specific to a particular kind of constitution. The argument within these chapters moves increasingly to causes of faction that have no counterpart in methods of preservation, eventually separating constitutional change from factions altogether, although those two were initially associated as effect and cause. Separating factions from constitutional change opens up the difference between knowing the causes of faction and knowing the causes of stability, between analysis and deliberation.

The first three chapters look at the four Aristotelian causes of faction. In chapter 1 we learn that factions have the same formal cause as the multiplicity and variety of constitutions themselves. He begins with lines 1 quoted above: "We must first assume as a principle that many different constitutions have come into being because, though all agree about the just and the proportionately equal, they make a mistake about it" (V.1.1301a25–26). Given that mistakes as the formal cause of factions, we will understand factions practically by grasping the other three causes, the material, final, and efficient causes:¹¹

And since we are considering what circumstances give rise to party factions (*staseis*) and revolutions (*metabolai*) in constitutions, we must first ascertain their origins and causes generally. They are, roughly speaking, three in number, which we must mark out each by itself in outline first. For we must understand (1) the disposition of those who form factions, and (2) for the sake of what, and thirdly, (3) what are the origins of political tumults and of factions against one another. (V.2.1302a16–21)

This delicate status of factions as an external cause intimately related to the constitutions converts this taxonomy into an argument. The three successive causes move increasingly away from the formal cause of errors about justice and closer to things within the statesman's power. Aristotle is not wrong to assert that knowledge of destruction is knowledge of preservation. But as we come to understand the claim, we see that it points beyond itself to causes of destruction that have no counterpart in preservation—that's the bad news, since that means there are things we can't do anything about—and modes of preservation that are not simply contraries of causes of faction, which will turn out to be ways of preserving the state that at the same time make it better. Those modes will be ways of improving the constitution. The other three causes are increasingly distant from the formal cause, as they should be for a phenomenon that is an external cause related to the constitution itself.

Thus Aristotle says that the dispositions, the first cause on the list, follow from the general cause. That is, the material cause is almost identical to the formal cause of partial conceptions of equality: "We must lay it down that the general cause of men being themselves somehow disposed towards change is mainly the one we have in fact already spoken of" (1302a22). The ends of faction, the next cause considered, are also generated by the different interpretations of justice, but they are much less abstract and formal than the material causes. Partisans of inequality and equality aim at honor and profit (1302a31–33). Democrats and oligarchs assert two partial interpretations of equality; democrats typically aim at wealth, oligarchs at honor, and therefore the ends of factions are honor and profit. (See too III.15.1286b15: "Oligarchies made wealth a thing of honor.") Aristotle gives content to the purely mathematical description of the two formal possibilities by tying them to these ends. Notice that these two aims are different from other characterizations of the differences between democratic and oligarchic justice, which has democracy aiming at freedom and oligarchy at wealth. That is, democratic and oligarchic constitutions aim at freedom and wealth, respectively, while democratic and oligarchic *factions* aim at wealth and honor, respectively.¹²

At this point the discussion of factions in Book V directly teaches us something about the account in Book I of people as political animals. Recall that "speech is for making clear what is beneficial or harmful, and hence also what is just or unjust" (I.2.1253a8–18). There are no factions concerning what is beneficial or harmful, not because people don't make mistakes about what profits them but because they don't connect the useful with merit, while justice always relates to merit and desert. People can quarrel

over anything, but citizens only form factions because of differences over justice.

The falsehood in the proof-text I quoted at the beginning—"It is clear that if we know the causes by which constitutions are destroyed we also know the causes by which they are preserved; for opposites create opposites, and destruction is the opposite of security" (V.8.1307b26–29)—starts to emerge with the efficient causes of faction. The variety of different efficient causes looks indefinite: the first few Aristotle mentions, we will see, follow from the analysis of the material and final cause, but as chapter 3 progresses, the causes he enumerates increasingly seem to emerge from historical examples, not Aristotle's own structure. As the kinds of cause become more historical, the connection between faction and constitutional change becomes more attenuated. These causes aren't tied to the particular constitution and its faults. He finally notes that there are kinds of constitutional change that don't come from faction at all, in spite of his earlier claiming that constitutional changes must occur through stasis (1301b6–7): "constitutions change even without faction" (3.1303a13, see too 6.1306b6ff, 8.1308a35ff).

A closer look at chapter 3 shows the dynamics of Aristotle's argument at work. Before going on to causes of constitutional change not related to faction, he first lists six efficient causes of constitutional change tied to faction, and the series exhibits a decreasing symmetry between cause and remedy. These causes of faction are less and less a response to a mistake by the rulers or the constitution.

1. "What sort of power insolence and profit have and how they are a cause is pretty clear" (1302b5–6). Good rulers can guard against insolence and profit, and so factions exist and succeed solely due to a culpable mistake by the ruler.
2. "It is also clear what honor is capable of and how it is a cause of faction. For both when men are themselves dishonored and when they see others honored, they form a faction" (1302b10–11). The simple connection present in the case of insolence and profit between cause and remedy disappears; even worse, by showing that the virtuous can be on either side of a revolt caused by honor, it invites questions about what *phronēsis* can do at all in these conditions. Factions "occur unjustly when certain men are either honored or dishonored contrary to their worth, but justly when according to their worth" (1302b12–14). The justice of a faction has no bearing on how the statesman should treat it.

3. "Men form a faction because of superiority when someone [either one person or more than one] is greater in power than accords with the city and the power of the governing class" (1302b15-17). This is a common enough cause of faction that it has generated its own characteristic remedy, ostracism, but Aristotle criticizes that countermeasure. "It is better to see to it from the beginning that no men become so pre-eminent than to supply a remedy later" (1302b19-20). It looks as though preeminence is an avoidable mistake, although Aristotle doesn't tell us how to insure that no one becomes pre-eminent.
4. "Men form a faction because of fear: both those who have committed an injustice, fearing that they will be punished, and those who are about to suffer an injustice, wishing to act first before they suffer it" (1302b21-23). Fear can be well motivated or not. Since justice is irrelevant to whether fear makes people want to overthrow a constitution, this cause begs for a treatment that relies purely on appearance, disregarding actual merit. What matters is whether people feel insulted. However, driving a wedge between appearance and merit separates the cause from the remedy as well. Not only, then, is there a difference between stability and excellence, but a difference between the arts of appearance that lead to stability, and the real virtues of the good constitution.
5. "Men also form a faction because of contempt" (1302b25). Contempt resembles the first cause, insolence and profit, in coming from a mistake made by the rulers. But contempt looks like an inevitable consequence of the mistake of forming a democracy or oligarchy in the first place and so an unavoidable feature of those forms of government. Aristotle's initial claim that the causes of instability were the causes of particularity (V.1.1301a25-26) looks vindicated: *all* constitutions have insiders and outsiders, and contempt seems a necessary by-product of having some people within the constitution and others outside. If there is a remedy, it won't have anything to do with the cause itself. Governments have to make the excluded feel nonexcluded, at least to the extent of not being objects of contempt. As with fear, appearance becomes important, making justice and virtue more irrelevant.
6. "Changes of constitution also arise because of disproportionate growth" (1302b33). "A city is composed of parts, the growth of one of which often escapes notice . . . and this often happens because of

chance" (1303a1-3). The statesman seems doomed because nothing could be more of a cause without a cure than this.

These causes cast into doubt the symmetry that knowing why men form factions will tell us what to do about them. It is increasingly unclear whether the mistakes that generate particular forms of constitution are avoidable or inevitable errors. The more irrelevant the justice of the insurgent's complaints, the less clear the connection between the constitution's mistake and its instability.

Things get even worse when Aristotle next turns to constitutional change without faction. Electioneering and belittlement, "small differences," and racial and territorial differences are sources of constitutional change that need not occur through factions at all, or in which factions arise without connection to any original error in the constitution or the rulers. These are clearly causes that are external to Aristotle's own treatment of constitutional change. Once there are sources of constitutional change outside of faction, the causes truly become indefinite. Whether or not they have anything to do with factions, they have nothing to do with the constitution revolted against. Aristotle's idea of factions as an external cause intimately related to the constitutions themselves has disappeared.

The partial and growing independence of the four causes in V.1-3 is significant. It is another consequence of the fact that *poleis* are neither natural nor artificial. Among natural things, formal, final, and moving causes are identical, and matter is correlative to form. In the arts, the four causes are fully independent of each other. The four causes of faction lie between those options, since faction is an external phenomenon tied to the internal nature of the constitution. We can deduce the material cause from the formal, as in nature, and can get at least partway toward understanding the final cause from those two, as honor and profit, the two final causes, have at least a correlation with the two forms of equality, arithmetic and geometrical. The moving cause is more independent, and the variety of possible moving causes that Aristotle presents cannot be read off from the formal cause that led to multiple constitutions in the first place. The moving cause must be more independent: since factions destroy states, the moving cause must be in some way extrinsic to the ruling principle of the constitution.

Faction is the practical subject for understanding constitutional change in almost the same way that virtue is the practical subject for understanding happiness in the *Ethics*. Virtue isn't all there is to happiness, but it is all that we can *practically* know about it. Happiness is virtuous activity

in a complete life, but we can't do anything about the fortune that might interfere with leading a complete life. Similarly, factions aren't all there is to the destruction of regimes, but they are the substance of practical knowledge of preservation. In the two cases, virtue and factions not only are the only factors for happiness or preservation that can be an object of practical knowledge. In addition, knowing them must also be enough to act successfully. Should fortune dominate over virtue as the cause of happiness, we would leave Aristotle's world behind. We'd not only have a new kind of tragedy, but also a new kind of ethics in which the virtuous person confronts massive irrational or unjust forces, the ethics of the Stoics or of Machiavelli. Should these last causes of constitutional change apart from factions become dominant, we might have the consolations of history, but Aristotelian practical science would be impossible.

IV. BOOK V.4: A FIFTH CAUSE?

Chapter V.4 makes things even worse. Understanding why constitutions are overthrown becomes less and less useful for knowing how to preserve states the more we doubt that factions are the sole cause of constitutional change. The statesman in V.4 faces contingencies of history that lie beyond practical knowledge. Chapter 4 begins: "Factions arise, then, not concerning small things, but from small things; men form factions only concerning great things" (1303b17-18).¹³ The causes of V.4 are occasions in which potential causes become actual causes. The disproportion between insignificant occasion and large effect, and the importance of causes that have nothing to do with faction and disputes about equality, grow out of the last few moving causes in V.3. None of the things that occasion revolution in V.4 relates to the first two causes, the material and final cause, outlined in V.2. The occasions listed in this chapter are ways in which potential moving causes become actual moving causes.¹⁴

If we only consider the potential moving causes of V.3, revolution looks inevitable, but turning to these occasions of constitutional change presented in this chapter makes it seem avoidable. His standard four causes are not sufficient for Aristotle's purposes here, even though the four causes are supposed to be exhaustive. We think we know when we know the cause (*Post. An.* II.11.94a20, *Ph.* II.3.194b18-20, *Met.* I.3.983a25-26); there are, therefore, limits to what we can know about factions. This chapter offers the possibility of action, not just understanding. As the relation between factions and constitutional change becomes attenuated, the declared sym-

metry between knowing the causes of factions and knowing how to keep constitutions stable disappears.

The asymmetry between knowing the causes of constitutional change and knowing how constitutions are preserved can be brought out by a comparison to the treatment of the passions in *Rhetoric* II.2-11. While each presents a trio of causes, there of emotion and here of faction, the *Rhetoric* contains nothing parallel to V.4. Once the orator knows the "state of mind" of someone with a certain emotion, "against whom" the emotion is usually felt, and "for what sort of reasons," he knows enough to cause the emotion in an audience. The definition of each emotion, plus these three causes, is enough to constitute practical knowledge of persuasion. But the statesman isn't trying to cause faction, as the orator causes emotion, but to prevent it. What is enough for the art of rhetoric is only the beginning for a science of politics.

In the *Rhetoric*, the three causes of emotion are all the rhetorician needs to know, and all there is to know. The end of the art of rhetoric is finding the available means of persuasion, doing all that is within the speaker's power to convince, and not persuasion itself. Having the three causes of a given emotion within one's power does not guarantee that one can cause the emotion. The statesman in V.4 learns something not knowable to the rhetorician—how the potential causes within the power of the rhetorician or the insurgent politician sometimes lead to the rhetorical victory or the constitutional overthrow they aim at, and sometimes do not. The rhetorician knows that his best efforts won't always succeed, but cannot know why; more precisely, he cannot do anything to cross the gap between exercising the power of finding the available means of persuasion and successfully persuading. *Politics* V is not interested in causing factions but in understanding how they occur and how to prevent them. The occasions listed in V.4 are not causes like the three causes already analyzed; they are explanations of why those causes sometimes cause factions and constitutional change and sometimes do not. This has no counterpart in the *Rhetoric*. *Politics* V.4 is both more and less practical than the *Rhetoric*, more in finding this additional, occasional, cause, and less in aiming at understanding factions, not creating them.

Before moving to look at what happens later in *Politics* V, another analogy to the *Rhetoric* will drive a further wedge between knowing how constitutions are changed and how to maintain them. Recall my proof-text: "It is clear that if we know the causes by which constitutions are destroyed we also know the causes by which they are preserved; for opposites create opposites, and destruction is the opposite of security" (1307b26-29). The

practical meaning of "opposites create opposites" contains ambiguities that Aristotle's treatment of the emotions helps to uncover. Immediately after treating the first emotion, anger, Aristotle turns to a discussion of calm. The speaker needs to know how to provoke anger and how to remove it and counter the provocations of others. The orator who knows how to cause anger in others knows how to create calm, too. Anger and calm are opposites: calm is the privation of anger.

An audience might become angry because the clever speaker knows how to get them angry, or they might grow angry on their own account without anyone manipulating them. Even if anger is spontaneous, removing the anger can be a deliberate act by the rhetorician. Similarly, not all factions come from culpable or avoidable errors, since we saw that there are just factions. However, while the people engaged in faction can be seen as responding to situations without deliberation, removing those causes is a deliberative enterprise for the statesman.¹⁵ The statesman's knowledge can extend to things people engaging in factions do without knowing. By knowing how anger comes about, the rhetorician knows how to create calm. If everything the politician could do to preserve the state stood to the causes of faction as anger stands to calm, there would be no difficulty in accepting the dictum of symmetry.

But neither the *Rhetoric* in its treatment of the emotions nor *Politics* V can stay with that simplicity for long. Aristotle turns from anger and calm to love and hate. Hate is not the absence of love, and we don't cause hatred by removing love, or cause love by removing hate. Knowing how to provoke hatred does not follow from knowing how to cause love, and knowing how to make others love me does not follow from knowing how to provoke hatred. We don't always know the methods of stability by knowing the causes of faction.

V. BOOK V.5-7: FACTION AND PARTICULAR CONSTITUTIONS

If the argument of chapters 1-4 shows that there are ways in which we can understand factions without any corresponding practical implications, the argument of chapters 8 and 9 present a different asymmetry that is grounds for optimism. They find methods of preservation that do more than remove the causes and effects of faction so these two chapters are the real climax of Book V. But before turning from the causes of faction in V.1-4 to the causes of stability in V.8-9, Aristotle in chapters 5-7 considers the causes of faction peculiar to particular constitutions. We learn in these chapters

that the particular kind of constitution plays little role in causing factions. The only additional problem facing polities and aristocracies is that they are mixtures, polity of democracy and oligarchy, and aristocracy "of those two and virtue, but especially of the two" (V.7.1307a9), and therefore can be undone by being a bad mixture.

If the purpose of *Politics* V overall is to encourage statesmen to transform democracies and oligarchies into their correct counterparts, polity and aristocracy, then showing that for the purposes of confronting factions, polity and aristocracy aren't much different from democracy and oligarchy helps to smooth the way toward that transformation. Chapter 7 treats both aristocracies and polities as variants of oligarchy and democracy, with no special problems at all. Since aristocracies mix democracy, oligarchy, and virtue, "some are less and some are more enduring" (7.1304a16). Polities and aristocracies have no moral exemption from faction and the distinction between correct and corrupt constitutions is not in play here. When Aristotle talks about the measures statesmen can take to improve the constitution, it is unclear whether the reformed democracy or oligarchy becomes a polity or aristocracy or simply a better democracy or oligarchy, unclear because those distinctions do not exist for the statesman of Book V. In chapter 3 I noted the ambiguity in the relation of constitution to polis: was the constitution the substantial form of the polis or a quality of it? Here it looks like a revolution is a change in substance, while reform is a change of quality in a substance that stays the same. The statesman and other citizens will think that the improvement leads to a better democracy or oligarchy; only an outsider would make the distinction between these and polity and aristocracy.¹⁶

Aristotle takes that partial truth grasped by democrats and oligarchs and makes it into a complete truth, as methods of preservation become methods of converting corrupt into correct constitutions. Once again I see a parallel to the *Rhetoric*. Rhetoric is a faculty for arguing both sides of any question, but still is oriented to truth. The *Rhetoric* shows how finding arguments, even in aid of a bad or losing cause, can be a noble activity. Political wisdom encounters a situation in which both sides grasp partial truths about justice. It is the task of political wisdom to preserve existing constitutions. *Politics* V shows how preserving the constitution can be a noble activity.

If factions and constitutional change were caused by internal defects, each constitution would have its own way of passing away, and when a given constitution passed away, it would pass into a specifiable new constitutional form, which is just what happens in *Republic* VIII.¹⁷ But, as I argued before, factions are an external cause of constitutional change derived from

the constitution. Constitutions are unstable because of factions, while factions come into existence because constitutions are imperfect. Aristotle's argument, recall, was one step longer than Socrates's, with factions as an intermediate cause between imperfection and instability. Factions are outside the constitution, but the reasons for faction mostly come from the nature of the constitution and its characteristic mistakes. Therefore, it is an important discovery that the causes of faction do not vary with changes in the constitution. The methods of stability will mostly be methods that apply to all constitutions, both oligarchic and democratic. [Where the differences between aristocracy and oligarchy and between polity and democracy are mostly effaced, this is not so far monarchy and tyranny. They find stability through contrary means [V.10.1312b18–19; but see V.11.1314a32].]

VI. BOOK V.8–9: PRESERVATION (AND IMPROVEMENT?)

The argument of chapters 8 and 9 shows us that knowledge of preservation can outrun the causes of faction. While chapter 8 is mostly responsive to the causes of faction in the way predicted by my proof-text, the remedies of chapter 9 offer the statesman ways of making the constitution secure that are more than responses to or anticipations of factional threats. Then preservation can be more than fighting against faction. Both preservation and the knowledge of preservation can be things worth having in their own right, and not just necessities compelled by the need to fight against factions. Once preservation is more than preventing faction, Aristotle could have good reason to make preservation always preferable to constitutional change, regardless of the quality of the given constitution. Preservation will include reform, while revolution in his eyes cannot.

The trouble with that formulation is that it isn't easy to tell when a change is a reform, and when a revolution; we are brought back again to asking whether a constitutional change is a change in quality or in substance? The difference seems to be that reforms are carried out by the rulers, and revolutions by insurgents. Book III distinguished the virtues of the ruler and of other citizens as the difference between *phronēsis* and true opinion (III.4.1277b25–29). Only the ruler, operating with *phronēsis*, can improve a constitution without destroying it. It isn't the quality of the constitution that makes preserving it a good, but the quality of the activity of preservation that makes preserving the constitution a good. Preserving an imperfect constitution isn't good because that constitution is good but because preserving it is good. This might sound like throwing good money after bad, or acting courageously and heroically while engaged in an unjust war, so we

will have to be careful and precise on this crucial point, as Aristotle himself is not, neither here nor in the *Ethics*, where he lists courage as a virtue without limiting it to a just war. The ethical virtue doesn't seem to look to the justice of its cause, and the statesman's duty to preserve the constitution similarly seems indifferent to the justice of the constitution he is given in the best on a hypothesis. If making it better means making it more stable, then it is only by accident that reforming a constitution would move it from a corrupt to a correct one, unless someone can show that a more stable constitution is always a better one.

As I said at the beginning, the power and direction of Aristotle's argument comes from the asymmetry between causes of destruction and of stability. One nice example of the asymmetry comes right after he tells the statesman to be on guard against minor violations of the law, the first way to preserve the constitution. "The next point is that we must not put faith in the sophisms strung together for the sake of tricking the multitude" (V.8.1307b40).¹⁸ Factions succeed by deception as well as force (IV.4.1304b5–7), but deception will not work to counter factions. Destruction and preservation are not practical opposites, because some of the means that work for destruction are inappropriate for preservation. The statesman must master the arts of appearance—hubris and contempt are at least partly in the eye of the beholder—so that moderation and friendship must be seen as signs of strength, but those appearances must not be deceptive appearances. The statesman foregoes the use of sophisms in order to use true arts of appearance. Just as Aristotle's rhetorician will not do just anything to win, and discovers in the *Rhetoric* limitations to the kinds of means of persuasion he can artfully employ, so the statesman in Book V learns that only certain means will preserve the state. The statesman will then act moderately and with restraint, not out of exiguous moral considerations, but in order to preserve the state, avoiding means that might look useful but which in fact backfire. The statesman needs practical wisdom and not cleverness.¹⁹

Since those outside the constitution revolt if injustice is done to them, the obvious remedy is not to commit injustice. But Aristotle goes further, and the third means of preserving the constitution—after guarding against minor violations of the law and avoiding sophisms—recommends bringing outsiders into the constitution. The remedy goes deeper than the cause of faction. The statesman might not want to do so, but he learns that bringing outsiders into the constitution strengthens it. In addition, people within the constitution should be treated democratically, whatever the constitution. "For what democracies seek to extend to the multitude, namely, equality, is not only just for those who are similar but also beneficial" (1308a10–12).

The democratic *ēthos* is essential to preserving *all* constitutions, since *philia*, friendship, and *homonoia*, consensus, come most naturally to a democracy. As usual, Aristotle fails to trumpet his important discoveries. The democratic *ēthos* is not unique to democracy, although of course many people, democrats and their opponents, wrongly think so.²⁰ That these remedies have no corresponding cause of factions should tell us that something important is going on.

The need for a democratic *ēthos* and for *philia* within all stable constitutions explains an odd feature of the definition of *polis*, *constitution*, and *citizen* in Book III. Aristotle defines *citizen* by saying that "the citizen proper (*haplōs*) is distinguished by having a share in giving judgment and exercising office. . . . We take a citizen to be one who shares in 'indefinite' offices" (III.1.1275a22–32). He then comments that this definition applies best in a democracy. He does not take a hint from that observation and go on to reason that democracy must therefore be the most natural form of constitution. But here in Book V a milder privileging of democracy does come. The route to stability is not for all constitutions to become more democratic, but for the *ēthos* of each constitution to include this democratic feature.

Finding means of preserving the constitution that are more than simply defeating the causes of instability makes all the difference. If the particular conception of justice in a given constitution causes faction, and faction in turn causes constitutional change, then stability would be reduced to preventing and fighting off factions. We would be in Machiavelli's world, in which stability is nothing but an episodic series of responses to crises. But in Aristotle's two-step analysis, constitutions are unstable because of factions, while factions come into existence because constitutions are imperfect. Just because each of those connections is not necessary and so can be severed—particular conceptions of justice need not lead to factions, and factions are neither a necessary nor a sufficient cause of constitutional change—stability can be more than the temporary duration of a constitution between revolutions. Therefore what the statesman does and knows can be more than the pragmatic knowledge of how to respond to factions.

Chapters 1–4 showed that some of our knowledge of how constitutions change has no counterpart in how they are preserved. Chapters 8 and 9 showed that we can know things about preservation without counterpart in destruction. It therefore makes sense that chapters 8 and 9 should be far more prescriptive than the rest of Book V. These chapters, unlike chapters 1–7, set up a pattern for deliberation. These asymmetries between knowledge of constitutional change and of constitutional preservation put

us in a position to understand the normative asymmetry between destruction and preservation that makes stability such an overriding good.

VII. PRESERVING THE CONSTITUTION AND THE ARTS OF APPEARANCE

In my analysis of Book III, I characterized the difference between Aristotle's activity in the *Politics* and the activity of the statesman as a difference between dialectic and rhetoric. *Politics* III presents reasonable arguments for different conclusions regarding justice, but which conclusion would be the most appropriate in any particular circumstances requires weighing those probable arguments. Arguments carry different weight in different circumstances, and are more or less probable in different situations. Book V shows another way in which the statesman must act rhetorically, while the political philosopher presents either dialectical arguments, as in Book III, or political philosophy, in Book IV. The statesman must master the arts of appearance. He cannot appear to commit injustices. In particular, as I've already mentioned, the statesman must make it appear that the moderation he exercises in preserving the constitution is a sign of strength and wisdom rather than weakness. It is easy to interpret moderation as weakness, and the statesman must make the state secure by changing that interpretation. The ending of VI.3 can be taken as a theme for the entire argument, then:

Concerning equality and justice, even though it is very difficult to find the truth about these matters, it is still easier to hit on it than it is to persuade those who are capable of aggrandizing themselves. The inferior always seek equality and justice; those who dominate them take no thought for it. (1318b2–5)

To persuade the powerful to act with equality and justice is to persuade them that moderation is a virtue. Moderation as a virtue pervades the *Politics*; in Book V it takes the form of choosing a stable and moderate democracy or oligarchy over a constitution that would be more purely democratic or oligarchic and therefore an extreme democracy or oligarchy. "Many of the things that are held to be democratic destroy democracies, and many that are held to be oligarchic destroy oligarchies. But those who think that this is the only kind of virtue push the constitution to extremes" (V.9.1309b19–24). Living democratically means doing as one likes; living oligarchically means organizing one's life around wealth and honor. But *ruling* democratically or oligarchically means aiming at the preservation of the democratic or oligarchic

constitution, and subordinating—not suppressing—one's other goals, of freedom, wealth, or honor. "Isn't democracy's insatiable desire for what it defines as the good also what destroys it?" (*Republic* VIII 562b).

"One should not think it slavery to live in harmony with the constitution, but safety" (V.9.1310a34–36, see *Met.* I.2.982b25–26, XII.10.1075a18–23). Living in harmony with the constitution feels like a restraint to someone who wants to do as he would like. Such a person experiences living in harmony with any constitution as slavery. But even democratic constitutions demand doing something other than whatever one likes. "To be educated relative to the constitution is not to do the things enjoyed by oligarchs or proponents of democracy, but rather to do the things that will enable the rulers, respectively, to govern in an oligarchic or democratic way" (V.9.1310a19–22).²¹ This is Book V's definition of the good life, the end of politics and the state, and these definitions are appropriate when the aim of the statesman is the stability of the state. Acting politically is a good life of justice and friendship. The ruler who aims at life alone aims at domination or living as he likes, while the good life is a political life of mutuality and reciprocity. In stable poleis, citizens act as political animals. Making man's political nature dominate other aspects of human nature is the key to stability and the reason preserving a constitution is a noble activity.

"The most important of all the things that have been mentioned for the endurance of constitutions, which all men now make light of, is to be educated in harmony with the constitution" (V.9.1310a12–14). Education in harmony with a constitution is education in moderation, in becoming a moderate democrat or oligarch. This education orients the citizen toward ruling democratically or oligarchically, instead of living democratically or oligarchically, and therefore education in harmony with the constitution means becoming a fully politicized being. Stability and moderation are ways in which people become political animals in difficult circumstances. "All men now make light of" such education because they prefer living democratically or oligarchically to ruling democratically or oligarchically. Even if man is by nature a political animal, living politically is demanding, and people will resist fulfilling their nature. Constitutions become stable when rulers fully realize their nature as political animals. In Book V at least, one cannot often live politically except by living democratically or oligarchically. One can certainly never live politically except by living under some particular constitution. If the *Ethics* is about how to be happy, the *Politics* is about how to be a political animal. Being a political animal is as much a full-time job as being virtuous is, and as difficult.

The distinctions Aristotle drew in Book III between correct and deviant

constitutions become more determinate in the specific inquiry of Book V. Rule of law, as opposed to rule of men, is the domination of ruling according to the constitution over living according to the ends of the constitution. Ruling for the good of the whole, as opposed to ruling for the rulers' own benefit, becomes rule according to the constitutional *ēthos*. Even more radically, the distinction from Book III (and Book I) between living and living well is now made determinate as the distinction between living and ruling according to the constitution.

In the same way, the taxonomy of six constitutions functions differently in Book V. Book III presents a clear distinction between three correct constitutions—monarchy, aristocracy, and polity—and three corresponding deviant ones—tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy. I've already explored the complications of Book IV. All six constitutions appear again in Book V, but they play different roles in the argument. Aristotle does not say that his more stable democracies and oligarchies will really be polities and aristocracies without knowing it, as though the statesman hides his political wisdom and induces the masses to act for their own good. Instead, as the treatment of polities and aristocracies in V 7—and indeed the treatment of monarchy and tyranny in V 10–11—show, the correct/deviant distinction is not at work in the politics of *stasis* and stability of Book V. Constitutions become stable by becoming constitutions first of all, and democracies or oligarchies secondarily. People live in democracies and oligarchies, not under constitutions in general, but by ruling moderately and in accordance with the constitutional *ēthos*, they realize their nature as political animals, not democratic or oligarchic animals. When rulers and other citizens act by the constitutional *ēthos*, they will transform all constitutions into polities, the name Aristotle uses both for the general name for constitution in general and for the correct counterpart of democracy.

Others have drawn parallels between *Politics* V and Machiavelli, but I want to offer a different parallel between the two than the usual imputations of amorality. *The Prince* has to make vice attractive by showing how it takes skill and will, while virtue is easy and cheap. Machiavelli presumes, reasonably, that his audience thinks the opposite. Vice, they think, is backsliding to the default position; virtue takes constant attention and dedication. He shows instead that virtue consists in taking the easy way out, keeping one's hands and conscience clean, winning a victory in the narrow internal court of judgment instead of risking oneself in trying to win out in reality. Vice takes constant work, risking failure, risking one's soul. Therefore vice is admirable, while we should pity the virtuous. In a similar way, *Politics* V cannot make moderation and antidespotic action

heroic, but Aristotle can make them prudent and desirable. Being a political animal will not be the second-best solution for those too weak to make it as tyrants, as Glaucon asserts in *Republic* II. Being a political animal, and therefore moderate in the appropriate sense, is a way of living well. Hence the difficult teaching of the lines: "Many of the things that are held to be democratic destroy democracies, and many that are held to be oligarchic destroy oligarchies. But those who think that this is the only kind of virtue push the constitution to extremes" [V.9.1309b19–24].

I nominate another analogy to Aristotle's project besides Machiavelli. Jackie Robinson, the first black athlete to play major league baseball, needed a heroic sort of courage to restrain himself from retaliating, to absorb insults and not respond to injustices. Besides courage, though, he needed to be able to make clear that his not retaliating was an act of courage and self-restraint, not of cowardice or weakness—here is the art of appearance in action. In order to be a successful baseball player, he had to convince people that it took more courage to refrain from responding to insults than to fight back.

Both ruler and ruled in *Politics* V have to master the arts of appearance. Thinking of moderation and stability as noble goals is the ethical solution to the problem of faction, the solution through character and *ēthos*. Rulers make the state stable through moderation, but that strategy will work only if the people see it as a sign of strength, not weakness, and so become moderate themselves. Nonrulers make the state stable through moderating their own demands and desires. Even though they are nonrulers, they will be citizens first, and aim at citizenship and not necessarily at rule. Nonrulers, like rulers, are understandably reluctant to moderate their demands, because any such restraint on their part looks similarly self-defeating—the squeaky wheel gets greased. Proof that the statesman has mastered the arts of appearance is that his moderation makes citizens moderate.

Philia and *homonoia* between ruler and ruled consist in being able to see moderation as virtue, not weakness. I suspect that Jackie Robinson was able to have his restraint seen as courage because of his evident great physical ability that made people think that fighting back would be easy, and therefore he must be choosing not to. The task for rulers and ruled in the *Politics* is even more daunting.

In the *Ethics*, Aristotle shows that *thumos*, the spirited and restless part of the soul, is satisfied not in *pleonexia*, never-ending acquisition, but in virtuous and even intellectual activity. In the *Politics*, in a similar way, he shows that the aspirations for equality and inequality are satisfied by justice according to merit, and not the more partial forms of justice that aim at equality or inequality while forgetting about merit. We learn that the

freedom that democrats aim at can best be achieved through constitutional rule, and the democratic *ēthos* must be redefined so that alternating ruling and being ruled is not thought a compromise, but as something better. It permits better actions than either never ruling but being a free rider, or always ruling and in that way getting what one likes. (Aristotle thinks that the latter is the serious political problem, at least for his audience, while we have to take the former more seriously today.) The honor that oligarchs seek can be best achieved through constitutional rule too, so that the oligarchic *ēthos* must be redefined to desire meriting political honors and not just getting them. As democracy and oligarchy are transformed into forms of political activity worth doing for their own sake, they are at the same time transformed into more stable constitutions. They are stable precisely because they are constituted by activity worth doing for its own sake. Regarding political activity as instrumental towards some further goal, such as freedom or wealth, makes the constitution unstable. This is a fundamental and nontrivial conclusion on Aristotle's part.

Aristotle must show his audience the satisfactions of moderation and constitutionalism, but equally the convinced Aristotelian statesman then has to convince his fellow-citizens of the same. In Book IV the challenge was to see the appeal of the middle class: not simply that they avoid the characteristic vices of excess wealth and poverty but that they have political virtues that make for a good state. Similarly here, the attractions of moderation have to go beyond stability as the absence of stasis. Moderation and stability have to be worth pursuing for their own sake. They have to be noble. And, to make things harder, it's not enough that these new activities of moderation and stability be virtuous; they have to be seen as virtuous.

VIII. STOPPING FACTIONS VERSUS PRESERVING THE CONSTITUTION

Before discussing the rhetorical dimensions of the project of Book V as arts of appearance, I want to point to a serious philosophical problem. The asymmetries between knowing the causes of destruction and knowing how to preserve constitutions come from the fact that factions are unlimited in the means they choose to overthrow the constitution, and so amenable to a causal analysis, while, as we saw, the statesman is limited to means that improve the constitution through fortifying the constitutional *ēthos*, even sometimes at the expense of doing as one likes. The bar against deception is only the most obvious limitation. Insurgents and those who want to keep power have different ends. "The aim of the tyrant is the pleasant, that of a

king, the noble" (V.10.1311a5), but "the ends [of the assailants] are also the same for tyrannies and kingships as for constitutions."

Since V.10 is at pains to insist that "the things that happen within kingships and tyrannies are much the same as those we have described as happening within constitutions" (1310a41), I assert the generalization on Aristotle's behalf: good constitutions aim at the noble, deviant constitutions aim at the advantage of the rulers, but *all* insurgents—even those who justly revolt because of dishonor—aim at honor or profit (V.2.1302a31–33). They might have high-minded motives, but in the narrow sense of a final cause, only honor and profit, not virtue, can be the ends of revolutionaries. Those who aim at overthrowing a constitution, no matter how good they are, and no matter how bad the constitution is, *must* aim at these lower ends, even if the whole point of overthrowing the constitution is to establish a better one. To succeed in overthrowing the constitution, they have to deliberate toward the ends of honor or profit. We therefore have a paradox that goes to the heart of Aristotle's thought. States can be good or bad. People can engage in faction justly or unjustly. And yet insurgents always have low motives, while defending the constitution can at least possibly be a noble activity. Its nobility does not depend on the quality of the constitution it defends, but the quality of actions it employs to defend whenever constitution it is given.

Making stability into a political end and a mark of a good constitution is still odd, though. Duration can measure motions, but not activities. One motion could be better than another if it lasts longer. Since activities are complete at every instant, how long they last is not part of their nature or value. And yet instability can be a sign that a regime is a bad one; the longer a constitution lasts, the better it must be. "For a constitution to be structured simply in all respects according to either sort of equality is bad. This is evident from what happens. For none of these sorts of constitutions is enduring" (V.1.1302a2–4; see too VI.5.1320a1–3). The statesman's job in Book V is defined in IV.1 as "considering both how some given constitution could be brought into existence originally and also in what way having been brought into existence it could be preserved for the longest time" (IV.1.1288b28–30). When the preservation or stability of the constitution is an activity, duration will be an excellence of this activity. "It is only equality according to worth that having one's own that is enduring" (V.7.1307a26–27).

As it aims at self-preservation, a state can call on individuals to risk their lives for the sake of the continuing existence of the state and constitution. The virtuous man prefers a short, glorious life (NE IX.8.1169b18–29),

but the polis has no higher values in the face of which it could sacrifice its continuing existence. The state never risks its existence in order to let someone act virtuously, although the purpose of the state is that its citizens lead good lives. It never sacrifices its own life for the sake of this end.

IX. THE REVOLT OF THE JUST

The focus on stability raises two more questions, one of which I've already been talking about. First, this focus, as we've seen, makes it more difficult for virtue to play any role. "The greatest division perhaps is virtue and vice, then wealth and poverty, and so on, one being greater than another" (V.3.1303b15–17). Although virtue versus vice might be the greatest division, it's not one that characterizes faction or is a consideration for either ruler or ruled. Second, the same focus on moderation and stability seems to deny any role in politics for philosophy and the kind of arguments Aristotle supplies in the *Politics*. Philosophy either appears as an outside, imperial and neutral judge, in which case politics itself is no longer an activity, or the philosopher is an advocate no different from any other partisan, and philosophy becomes rhetoric.²² In this section I will look more carefully at the role of virtue in politics, and then in the final section at the place of philosophy.

Book V's concerns with the politics of faction, then, are a particularly crucial place to see at work Aristotle's radical thesis that one can act virtuously only by acting as a citizen. More radically, trying to overthrow the constitution can never be the action of a citizen acting as a citizen. Those theses are especially hard to swallow—and have especially severe consequences—in situations of stasis and constitutional change. Aristotle's project in Books IV–VI is to show how an intelligent statesman can make the constitution better than the moral material he has to work with in the citizens. A role for citizens who are better than their constitution would interfere with this project.

Identifying a good man living in a bad state requires moral standards independent of the given constitution. Relying on such standards would prohibit the development of a fully political conception of the good life proper to Book V. Instead, the statesman should concentrate fully on stability and should not be distracted by his own conception of the good life, or anyone else's. Even if he has a better understanding of the good life than that embodied in the constitution, he is not better off acting on that conception. Deliberation must be concerned with what is best to do in a given situation, not what is best in abstraction. Compare these two remarks:

Those who excel in virtue would form a faction with the most justice of anyone (though they do this least of all), for it is most reasonable to regard as unequal without qualification these alone. (V.1.1301a40)

Those who excel in virtue do not cause faction, generally speaking; for they are few against many. (V.4.1304b4–5)

The first gives no explanation for why there is no party of virtue. It only says that the virtuous would be justified if they did form a faction. The second offers an explanation, but it has nothing to do with their being virtuous, only being outnumbered. Aristotle gives no *principled* reason why there should be no party of virtue.²³

For Aristotle to succeed at demonstrating the unlikely truth that stability and progress come about through the development of the constitutional *ēthos* of mutuality, he has to marginalize the very limited role that more direct moral considerations play in destroying and preserving constitutions, even partially effacing the difference between monarchy and tyranny, which otherwise are the constitutions at the greatest distance from each other. Consider, for just one example, the parenthesis: "Men are stirred up against one another by profit and by honor—not in order to acquire them for themselves . . . but because they see others aggrandizing themselves (whether justly or unjustly) with respect to these things" (V.2.1302a36–38). The power of the politics of envy and righteous indignation is independent of the validity of the accusations. It doesn't matter whether others are getting ahead justly. *Politics* V has its own moral purpose: to show how people's political nature can be fulfilled through an orientation to stability and moderation. To explore how the moral qualities of particular actors within political struggles affect their behavior would distract from his own moral project. There is no room for philosopher-kings here. More importantly, taking those moral qualities into account would distract from the moral project of the statesman who aims at improving the state through stabilizing the constitution.

Constitutional stability and a constitution that aims at the good life through aiming at stability is its own ethical project. Aristotle has removed one relation between ethics and politics in order to establish another. The world of faction is a world in which democrats and oligarchs struggle against each other, and the virtuous must line up with one party or the other. There isn't anywhere else to go in such a situation. Declarations that one is not a democrat or an oligarch but acting for virtue alone would, probably rightly, be regarded as deceptive partisanship. Disinterested virtue may have its place in the more limited justice of the judge in the law courts, but the good

citizen and the good statesman are by definition partisans, and partisans who act in the name of impartial justice are no less partisans for that. The virtuous play no distinctive role in this sort of politics.

By refusing to recognize any special role for antecedent virtue or for justice as proportion to merit, Aristotle clears the way for his own kind of moral politics. In one sense, Aristotle lowers his ambitions to the best life one can have starting with the material the statesman is given: what counts here as living well might, by other standards and in other contexts, fall short of the best life. In another way, though, to show that a life of loyalty to a given constitution is a good life is a thoroughly ambitious project, one that makes moderation noble. This form of statesmanship persuades its followers and opponents that moderation is a political virtue and that the *ēthos* of acting politically should dominate the *ēthos* of any particular constitution.

Therefore the difference between the *Politics* and our own interests is more than simply perspectival. It isn't just that Aristotle is interested in the statesman's point of view while modern political theory, centering on obligation, takes the part of the citizen, the good or at least rational person compelled to do things he'd rather not do and even that he thinks are wrong or foolish. Aristotle's political philosophy has connections to the political wisdom of the statesman because the statesman's activities are intelligible, while those of the outsider, virtuous or not, are not knowable. The more knowable something is, the better it is. The causes of preservation are more knowable than the causes of destruction. Therefore preservation is a better activity than destruction. The activity of preserving a democracy or oligarchy—maybe even the monarchies and tyrannies discussed in the final chapters of Book V—can be a better activity than overthrowing these constitutions, regardless of how good the constitution itself is. The end product of destruction might be a better state than the result of preservation, but the activity is inferior. Book V is about that activity.

The rebel might, however, reply, so what? Isn't it simply moral fastidiousness always to do the best activity instead of aim at the best result? Aristotle must show that the difference in the quality of activity justifies the lack of a level playing field between insurgents and the defenders of the constitution. I don't think it is only readers coming to the *Politics* with our modern prejudices who should find this asymmetry, this categorical preference for virtuous action over good consequences, morally hard to swallow.

This predicament is familiar to readers of the *Rhetoric* and the *Ethics*. Aristotle's consistent lack of worry about the problem reveals an enormous gap between his thinking and ours. The *Rhetoric* argues for the superiority of persuasion through reasoning over other causes of persuasion. Rational

persuasion is better than persuasion by any possible means because rational persuasion can aim at, and deliberate toward, a rational object, the internal end, finding the available means of persuasion. Aristotle doesn't assert that the rational rhetorician will necessarily or even probably win over his sophistic competitors, although he must believe that the rational rhetorician will win with sufficient regularity that its superiority isn't a matter of aristocratic disdain for consequences.

And similarly in the *Ethics*. Acting virtuously has good consequences, yet people who aim at making money will make more than the virtuous person, and professionals and people with nothing to lose sometimes make better soldiers (III.9.1117b17–20, see III.8.1116b13–15). He appeals to a sort of theodicy to maintain that happiness comes more from virtue than luck (e.g. I.9.1099b20–24; see *Top.* III.3.118b8–10, *Pol.* VII.13.1332a32, 1323b24–29, *EE* I.3.1215a13–19). In no case does Aristotle have anything to say about the person who faces an obvious dilemma. Given my opponent's sophistic tricks, if I stick to argument alone I will surely lose. How do I choose between the end of arguing as I should and the end of winning? If I act courageously against this superior force, my city will experience a glorious defeat. If I get up in the middle of the night and poison their food, I won't be courageous, but the city will be saved. Which good should I choose?

In the same way, *Politics* V has nothing to say about the virtuous person unjustly harmed by the rulers. This inquiry is about how to preserve constitutions, and if our sympathies today are sometimes with the righteous outsider, Aristotle has nothing to offer. He doesn't notice moral dilemmas because he's after bigger game. Looking to the larger project of constructing a political science makes Aristotle turn away from questions about deliberation in difficult circumstances. Aristotelian practical knowledge has a price.

The orator will uphold whatever position he is assigned. Such a person can't limit his trade to noble causes. However, in the process of defending the given cause, he will restrict himself to making arguments, not corrupting the audience through emotional appeals, bribes, or sophistical tricks. Rhetoric, then, develops its own ethics of argument, appreciating the value of rational argument over other means of victory. Such an ethical development is possible only if the speaker ignores antecedent morality, which would only be a distraction, both for himself, in making ethical choices, and for the audience, who must see external moral claims as irrational appeals to authority.²⁴

Similarly, the statesman will defend the constitution he is given against faction. However, in the process of defending the given constitution, he will

restrict himself to those means of stability that do more than counter the causes of faction. He will concentrate on those means that make the state stable by embodying the constitutional *ēthos*, ruling democratically or oligarchically rather than living democratically or oligarchically. The person of political wisdom chooses the right means for achieving stability. The right means are those that improve the state. There are no restrictions on the causes that may lead to the formation of factions or to their being successful—like the sophist, insurgents can do anything. But preserving the state requires more restricted means. They are limited to the constitutional *ēthos*. While Aristotle does recommend some institutional devices that will achieve stability, the fundamental means of preserving constitutions is ethical, not institutional.

Should this satisfy my rebel who accused Aristotle of moral fastidiousness in promoting the best activity, even when opposed to a better result? Perhaps not. Aristotle's practical works are as little designed to overthrow that approach to practice as his theoretical works are meant to refute the skeptic. But at least we now can see that Aristotelian practical knowledge stands and falls with that correlation of goodness, knowability, and being. Since I can only know about being happy through acting virtuously, and not through being lucky, I should prefer to be happy through acting virtuously. This is a huge inference; if it is licit, it accounts for our paradox. I need to be ready to look a gift horse in the mouth. Since I can only know how to find the available means of persuasion, and not how to persuade, I should aim at finding the available means of persuasion. The more knowable something is, the more worth doing.

I think we can do a little better still in the political case than in either rhetoric or ethics. At V.7, Aristotle finds one difference between factions in aristocracies and polities and those already analyzed from democracy and oligarchy. Justice according to virtue can make these states more unstable than democracy and oligarchy, because it gives outsiders yet another reason to revolt. Aristotle lists three causes of faction unique to aristocracies. The first reason aristocracies fall is because "there are a number of men who are swollen with pride on the ground of being equal in virtue" (1306b27). Such men destabilize aristocracy more than democracy or oligarchy. The second is differences between rich and poor. All states contain such a difference, but in an aristocracy it is easier for the poor to make arguments from desert as well as need, since merit is supposed to be the principle of justice (1307a2). The poor man has nothing to complain about when told that justice is proportional to wealth, but anyone might feel injured by being excluded on the basis of virtue. Finally, "if someone is great and capable of

being still greater, he may stir up faction in order to rule alone" (1307a3-4). Virtue can be a cause of instability, especially in constitutions that promise justice proportioned to virtue. In all these respects, aristocracy's commitment to justice as proportion to merit makes things worse.²⁵

Earlier I mentioned the possibility that while the art of politics might be limited to preserving the state, the virtuous man might be able to judge that in a given case, he should overthrow the constitution. While the art of medicine is an art of healing, the physician can kill or cure; similarly, while the art of politics aims at preserving the constitution, any particular politician might choose to preserve or to overthrow one. Here, finally, we are in a position to see that that suggestion won't work. As the *Ethics* says: "In *technē* voluntary error [*ho hekōn hamartia*] is not so bad as involuntary, whereas in the sphere of *phronēsis* it is worse, as it is in the sphere of the virtues" (VI.5.1140b22-24; see *EE* VIII.1.1246a37-b8, *Met.* V.29.1025a6-13, *Poet.* 25.1461b9-12). To override stability, the end of politics, in the name of virtue is equivalent to a voluntary error, and a voluntary error in "the sphere of the virtues" is a self-destructive idea. If "it is with the same *phronēsis* that one should try to see both which laws are best and which are appropriate for each of the constitutions" (IV.1.1289a12), and if successful political life requires cooperation as well as a division of labor between the lawgiver and others acting with political wisdom, then the wise politician is not like the physician who might either kill or cure. There is never a conflict between the good man and the good citizen, and there is no higher law that tells an individual to reject the demands of his polis and its constitution. Aristotelian practical knowledge prevents us from doing some things that we would like to do, such as overthrow an imperfect constitution in the hopes of establishing a better one. By so doing, it also prevents the self-righteousness that often accompanies attempts to institute the rule of the just or the party of virtue. Finally, though, this orientation to practice allows us to do better things we couldn't do otherwise. Engaging in the moral project of *Politics* V is one of those better things.

My maxim that there is no party of virtue brings together a couple of the themes I see running throughout the *Politics*. The virtuous have no desire to rule over unwilling subjects, while ruling over unwilling subjects is the point of democratic and oligarchic factions. The virtuous have no desire to rule in such conditions because there's nothing in it for them. They will only rule when they can rule and be ruled in turn, exactly the opposite situation from stasis.

Therefore there is a gap, as I noted in chapter 3, between deserving the larger share in a constitution, because of merit, and deserving to rule. It isn't

necessarily or always best, either for the virtuous or for the community, for the virtuous to rule. People involved in stasis see no gap, but that is because they want to rule in order to profit from it. Only someone with a desire to rule for its own sake could see the gap between being virtuous and deserving to rule and will attempt to supply a connection.

The question of why the virtuous should rule is the Aristotelian variation of Plato's philosopher reluctantly returning to the cave and not finding himself welcome. On analogy to the *Republic*, we need to ask why the virtuous should want to rule, or at least agree to do so, in any but the best of circumstances, and why they should be any good at it. The good man wants to rule in order to realize his nature as a political animal, who is someone who alternately rules and is ruled among equals. But then we have to ask to what extent being a political animal can be realized in the contentious and unstable world of factions, where ruling and being ruled in turn is the last thing on anyone's mind. Especially in the circumstances faced by the statesman in Book V, in addition to wanting to rule, why should either the virtuous person or the rest of the polis think that the virtuous person knows how to rule? The returning philosopher in the cave isn't very good at identifying shadows. Why should the virtuous person know what rulers should do under conditions of stasis? Machiavelli teaches that the successful ruler in such conditions—which he thinks is the human condition—must know how to be bad.

The asymmetry in *Politics* V, that statesmanship consists only in preserving, and never in changing, the constitution, has a counterpart in *Ethics* V's discussion of equity. Justice is itself asymmetrical: the just person will not always stand on her rights and take all she is entitled to; sometimes she will act justly by demanding less than she might (V.9.1136b20-21), while the unjust person seeks more than her share, never less (V.1.1129b1-5). This asymmetry lacks the morally problematic look of *Politics* V's prescriptions that we always act to preserve and strengthen the constitution, never to overthrow it, but the same one-sidedness is actually at work in both cases. And this asymmetry of justice carries over into the more specific actions of equity, in the following way.

The equitable person acts justly. He will correct the errors that come from the need for the law to state generalities. But those corrections only go in one direction. "The legislator falls short, and has made an error by making an unqualified rule [*hē paraleipei ho nomothetēs kai hamarten haplōs eipōn*]" (V.10.1137b21-22). An equitable decision only loosens the law, never tightens it. The equitable decision can say: the law dictates that this person should be found guilty, but had the lawmakers seen this particular case,

they would have found him innocent. The equitable person acts justly and carries out the spirit of the laws. There is nothing equivalent on the other side. If the law dictates that this person should be found innocent, the equitable person can never override the law and find him guilty. That would not be acting lawfully or justly. It would be making a new law, not justly carrying out an existing one.²⁶ Later appeals to natural law might cut both ways, but equity does not.

There is a partnership, *homonoia*, between the lawmaker and the equitable judge, a partnership possible only if equity is one-sided. The statesman can institute good laws only by assuming that good men living under them will always try to uphold them and never overthrow them. The intelligent and virtuous lawmaker will recognize that his need to state the law in general terms will sometimes result in injustice in the particular. He will not object to the equitable judge acting in those cases. Knowing that in a good state the judges will be equitable, he can do his own job better, confident that they will do what he would have wanted to do. He can state the proper generalities of the law without worrying about having to specify every possibility because the law will be literally applied. In this way, the authors of the written U.S. Constitution could state some propositions in general form, using abstractions such as due process and equal protection, confident that judges and politicians will act equitably in obeying the Constitution. Someone writing a constitution who distrusted those who will execute the laws would have to write a different, and less just, document. Lawmakers who saw judges as competitors would be less successful as lawmakers.²⁷

In the same way, the constitution and the person making it more stable are partners in a common activity. The statesman supporting the existing constitution is not a competitor to the constitution, while those engaged in faction, no matter how virtuous they suppose themselves to be, cannot be partners with the constitution. Such partnership is the friendship Aristotle mentions in V.9 when he lists the "three things that those who are to hold the supreme offices ought to have: first, *friendliness toward the established constitution* (*philian pros tēn kathestōsan politeian*); next, great ability in the tasks of the office; and thirdly, virtue and justice—in each constitution the kind pertaining to that constitution" (V.9.1309a33–36). Trying to overthrow the constitution cannot be an act of friendship, and therefore cannot be an act of virtue. The good constitution will then leave room for the statesman, as the good lawmaker left room for the equitable judge.

X. POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE POLIS?

In the last section I argued that virtue has no special role to play in the politics of factions. While true justice is proportion to merit, and the function of the state is to promote virtue, the statesman aims at stability, and the virtuous do not aim at remaking the state according to their own, better, understanding of politics. But it is worth asking the same questions about the authority of philosophy, whether philosophy knows something that the statesman needs to know.

The role of philosophy, like the role of virtue, faces the epistemological and ethical asymmetry I began with. Either the philosopher is a partisan, upholding one conception of justice as opposed to others, or a neutral judge, standing outside, and imposing his conception of justice on the others. Neither suits Aristotle's purposes.

Constitutions are unstable because the position of those excluded from the constitution is unstable; they are not citizens, since they do not participate in constitutional office, but they are citizens, as opposed to aliens, metics, slaves, and other noncitizen categories. While for purposes of governance someone excluded from citizenship is not a part of the state, for purposes of understanding factions, people who fail the test of a particular constitution but who could be citizens in other poleis still are citizens. There may be natural masters and slaves, but there are no natural citizens or noncitizens.²⁸ Those excluded from ruling still are citizens in the sense that they have to be persuaded, not commanded. Greeks show how civilized they are by distinguishing political from despotic rule, and consequently between political and despotic kinds of persuasion. While *Ethics* V.6.1134b10–17 says that we can only have full relations of justice and injustice among fellow citizens, *Politics* V.8 shows that we have to have relations of justice toward the free men who are not citizens under a particular constitution. This is not a shift from a more idealistic to a more realistic view, but a new challenge to political wisdom and to the uses of philosophy.

One should see that not only some aristocracies but even some oligarchies last, not because the constitutions are stable, but because those occupying the offices treat well those outside the regime as well as those in the governing body—those who do not have a share, but not acting unjustly toward them and by bringing into the constitution those among them who have the mark of leaders, not acting unjustly toward the ambitious

by depriving them of prerogatives or toward the many with regard to profit. [*Pol.* V.8.1308a3-9]

The partial definitions of democracy and oligarchy put those whom they exclude into a practically unstable position, not quite out of the state and not quite in it, either, citizens by one standard and not by another. Faction is the rational response to such an ambiguous position.

Once the democrats and oligarchs in power realize the unstable status of the excluded, they have to rethink how to treat the opposition. While the distinction between correct and corrupt constitutions disappears from Book V, recognizing that one's constitution is one among many possibilities can make any constitution better. When I know that my democratic or oligarchic justice is only partial justice, I will extend relations of justice to noncitizens.

The great lesson philosophy has for political wisdom is that the statesman should not imitate the philosopher. The political science of Book III constructs the strongest scientific connections between terms: necessary connections. The strongest corresponding practical connection is a performative utterance. Science succeeds when its opposition is silenced. There are no counterarguments against necessary connections. Performative utterances, in which saying makes it so, similarly admit no rejoinders. But praxis fails when it tries to silence the opposition. Necessary connections become coercive. Tyranny, we learn at the end of Book V, is unstable. The statesman is better off with a logically weaker connection between constitution, city, and citizen, not a definition of constitution in which saying makes it so, but a persuasive and circumstantial definition of constitution that establishes probable, and desirable, connections between constitution, city, and citizen. Logically weaker connections can be ethically stronger. "Erotic necessities are probably better than geometrical necessities at persuading and compelling most people" [*Republic* V.458d]. Aristotle repeats Plato's point, but as usual, toning down the passion.²⁹ The politician who tries to rely on philosophical authority or succeed by definitional fiat lives by logos alone. The statesman should instead make Aristotle's thesis, that constitutions define citizens, into an ethical proposition: constitutions define citizens not by fiat but by education which shapes the character.

It sounds odd to prefer a weaker argument, but there is an important sense in which we should. Politicians should not think that they can profit from the necessary connections of the philosopher because outsiders have to be persuaded that they will not be injured by being excluded, and that

others should rule. "People governed in this way are necessarily governed well; the offices will always be in the hands of the best, while the people being willing and not envious of the respectable" [VI.4.1318b33-36].

Philosophical arguments become practical by becoming ethical. Aristotle contrasts Socratic dialogues with mathematical reasoning, the latter having no *ēthos* [*Rh.* III.15.1417a19-21]. The *Politics* lays out arguments without *ēthos*, which the statesman then converts into ethical arguments. This, I suggest, is the way to understand Aristotle's claims that ethics and politics are practical sciences, ways of knowing that aim at action, without reducing practical discourse to rhetorical exhortation. That the *Politics* presents logoi to which the statesman's *ēthos* makes them into practical reasoning seems to me a more fruitful and accurate understanding of their relation than the idea that the statesman must "apply" the truths of the *Politics*.

In three respects, philosophy stands to the activity of the statesman as dialectical stands to rhetorical reasoning. First, the statesman has to weigh the probabilities of the likely arguments the philosopher presents. Thus we saw in Book III where Aristotle presented arguments for and against different constitutions, ranging from arguments for full democracy to those for an absolute king. All these arguments are plausible in the abstract, and the statesman has to decide their likelihood and probability in particular circumstances. Second, as we saw especially in this chapter, the philosopher only has to state the truth, while the statesman has to convince other citizens, and so has to not only be wise and good but appear to be wise and good. Finally, the statesman must convert the philosopher's logical arguments into ethical arguments, reasonings that require character as well as intelligence.

XI. PHILOSOPHY AND PHRONĒSIS: LOGOS AND ĒTHOS

Therefore I want to end this chapter by exploring this difference between ethical and logical argument, and so between what the philosopher knows and what the statesman knows. Thinking that some connection among ideas is necessary removes the need to create, develop, and fortify the relationship between people. Justice then makes friendship unnecessary. Philosophy makes bad rhetoric—certainty is unpersuasive—because it makes us think our job is done once we have made connections among ideas. When people refuse to accept putatively necessary relationships, the temptation is then to use compulsion, to force people to be free. Necessary connections

remove the need for engaging the *ēthos* and passions of the parties being related. We should be glad that attempts to depopulate the moral world by replacing people with ideas fail.

In the face of constitutional change, the interdependence between constitution, city, and citizen that was a scientific virtue in Book III becomes a vicious circle. Noncitizens have no reason to accept the claims of the constitution, since those claims are partisan. *Anything* said in such a context is partisan, regardless of the truth or honesty, the virtue or the wisdom, of the speaker. In disputes between factions, both sides uphold competing conceptions of justice. In the context of factions, claims to justice as proportion to merit cannot exist as anything other than a partisan statement, which is why Aristotle does not promote a party of virtue. Using performative definitions to imitate Aristotle is an attempt to escape the world of partisanship into a pure realm of truth and justice. Demonstrative necessities become the pretext for silence and coercion. That is almost a definition of self-righteousness.

The crucial issue, then, is how the statesman can convert logical truths into ethical ones. Since practical argument will be more sensitive to circumstances, a single logical truth can be embodied in several different ethical arguments. How the necessary connections of Book III become practical truths depends on the *ēthos* of the particular constitution (IV.11.1295a40–b1, VII.8.1328a41–b2). *Ethos* gives meaning to abstract propositions; it determines which of the logically possible implications of a given proposition can be affirmed. In this case, an ethical argument must begin with the constitution that defines who is a citizen, and, via the democratic or oligarchic *ēthos*, leads to the conclusion that rulers must treat noncitizens well. That seems like a long distance to travel.

The philosopher offers two discoveries to statesmen about the relations between their respective activities. First, philosophy is incomplete. Except in rare circumstances—exemplified by the role of nature in *Politics* I and again in VII and VIII—philosophical truths cannot be directly instantiated; except in such circumstances it is an ethical and practical mistake to try. The incompleteness of philosophy creates an opportunity for autonomous decisions by the statesman. Deliberation concerns things that are up to us.

Second, the statesman has to learn the harder truth that the lack of constraint by philosophy or science does not mean the freedom to do as one likes, as democrats like to believe, or that might makes right, as oligarchs tend to think. The indeterminate nature of philosophical truth is an opportunity for practical deliberation about what is best in the circumstances. Philosophical truths are incomplete, but true nevertheless; they cannot be

ignored but have to be incorporated into the statesman's character. "Man, as a principle of action, is a union of desire and intellect" (NE VI.2.1139b4–5). Practical philosophy is incomplete without *ēthos*.

The function of philosophy is to provide *logoi* that are made determinate through a particular *ēthos*. "Decision requires both understanding and thought and also a state of character; for acting well or badly requires both thought and character" (NE VI.2.1139a35). Practical wisdom acknowledges that the constitution defines who is a citizen, but it sees that thesis as raising the question of how citizenship *should* be defined. When we leave the realm of necessity we don't enter that of the arbitrary but the field of deliberation. This is the field of the probable, and it takes *ēthos* to judge probabilities. The constitution defines who is a citizen, and therefore the *ēthos* of the particular constitution will lead from the general principles of Book III to decisions about what to do. The particular *ēthos* of a particular constitution will lead from general principles to determinate decisions. It goes where philosophy cannot.

All deliberation is guided by a conception of what is best. The best, though, we learned at the beginning of IV.1, is ambiguous. The meaning of best appropriate for Book V is "best on a hypothesis" (IV.1.1288b17–33). The statesman who finds himself in a democracy or an oligarchy aims at the best by aiming at preserving the given constitution. Democratic and oligarchic constitutions are best maintained through an education in harmony with the constitution (V.9.1310a12–14). The ruler with a constitutional *ēthos* will treat outsiders well, not out of sympathy or interest, but because mutuality and friendship are part of his character, his *ēthos* as a ruler within this constitution.

The ethical and practical argument of Book V draws on another feature of the reasoning in Book III. The definition of citizen in Book III applies best in a democracy. There is no implication there, or elsewhere, that we should therefore prefer democracy. But we learn at V.8.1308a15 that *all* constitutions contain a *dēmos*, a people, within the rulers, who should treat each other equally and democratically. Even without the indefinite offices that Aristotle says define the constitution most properly in a democracy, there is an element of democratic *ēthos* in every constitution. Since factions arise not only from the people excluded from the constitution, but, especially in oligarchies, from within the ruling class (V.6.1305b11–37, 1306a13–20), preservation is as much a matter of how best to treat fellow citizens as how to treat the outsiders as equals.

Rulers treat fellow rulers democratically. Although they can't extend that courtesy to those excluded from the constitution, they still can treat

these outsiders politically. While the strategy with regard to slavery is to maximize the distance between masters and slaves, the statesman aiming at security and trying to dampen the threat of factions should behave in the opposite way. Treating outsiders politically means, minimally, refraining from injustice. Injustice is only possible toward fellow members of a community. Therefore, however the constitution defines citizenship, and however justice is limited to fellow citizens, the constitution should never define our relations to noncitizens despotically. The statesman will maintain his constitution's distinction between citizens and noncitizens, but will not identify that distinction as a line between people one must treat justly and those outside the law whom one can treat despotically. Restricting justice in the full sense to the relations among fellow citizens does not preclude, but indeed implies, the application of justice in a looser sense to the other free people in the polis. The constitution may be restrictive, but the moderate *ēthos* of its rulers makes them extend friendship more widely.

Book V contains no answer to who should be a citizen apart from the partisan claims of democrats and oligarchs. The crux of the ethical argument comes in the discovery in V.9 that the best means of preserving states improve them. From the beginning of Book V we knew that the best means of preserving states makes them more stable and long-lasting. But I have only gradually argued for a connection between the stable constitution and the good constitution, because that connection is far from evident. In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle rejects the uses of *ēthos* defined outside the argument, one's reputation, or the trappings of character—for a modern example, the need of contemporary politicians to surround themselves with a multiracial backdrop—to make room for an *ēthos* developed by the argument itself (I.2.1356a8–13). An ethical argument is a better argument. Similarly, *Politics* V rejects antecedent distinctions of better and worse—some states are better than others, some revolts more justified—in order to develop the goodness of a constitution that comes from choosing the right methods of achieving stability. Insisting on the distinctions of Book III between correct and corrupt constitutions, between aiming at life and the good life, would only impede the ethical project of Book V.

This, then, is an ethical argument not only because the character of those making and receiving the argument is involved—the extreme democrats and oligarchs who see their position as the opportunity for despotism reveal their *ēthos* too—but in the more restricted and normative sense that such an argument engages *phronēsis*. The *phronimos* abandons what are here external standards of value in order to develop forms of political good-

ness within ethical activities of the statesman. He knows that the considerations of Book III are not by themselves a complete guide to action and that he must also rely on ethical considerations. Just as the statesman discovers democratic equality within any constitution, so he discovers justice as proportion to merit within the operations of stability.

Aristotle investigates the circumstances under which noncitizens will be satisfied with the rule of others, since that is how constitutions are preserved. For most people, he thinks, not being treated unjustly is good enough, and they are happy to avoid heavy burdens of active citizenship, especially if they can't make a profit from being in office (see too IV.13.1297b6–10). Instead of relying on definitional fiat, the statesman gets rid of faction by aiming at the good life, the good life under the flag of preservation.

Aristotle's own argument in *Politics* V embodies no *ēthos*. It has to be judged by scientific, not ethical, standards. The statesman using it takes those logoi and thinks through them ethically, deliberates about how they can lead to decisions and actions. He has to figure out what they mean in particular circumstances. The statesman will know how to mollify outsiders, making them less disposed to engage in faction, prevent the injustices against which factions react, and remove the occasions of faction that give them hope of success. That is the practical use of philosophy.

The *Politics* begins and ends with practical situations in which argument is unnecessary, the household of Book I and the ideal state of Books VII and VIII.³⁰ Slaves must be made to obey. If words work better than force, by all means the master should use words. But commands are not arguments, and there is no talking back. Wives, children and slaves who dispute the head of household's claim to rule should be punished and put in their place. At the other extreme, in the perfect state, since claims to rule based on freedom, wealth, and virtue coincide, there are no disputes about justice. Slaves may be necessary, as Book I argues, but can never be parts of the state. In the ideal state of Books VII and VIII, mechanics and laborers are similarly necessary conditions that are not parts of the state, while other states include such people as citizens. Under those constitutions, part of the virtue of political wisdom consists in the power of persuasion.