

Kazutaka Inamura. *Justice and Reciprocity in Aristotle's Political Philosophy*. Cambridge Classical Studies. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2015, 255p. \$ 103,00. ISBN 978-107-11094-6.

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1. *Introduction. The aim and structure of the work*

Kazutaka Inamura's book, the development of a PhD thesis, examines the political philosophy of Aristotle from a double perspective. One of them, which we could name 'historical', concerns the insights the philosopher provides on political problems such as the exercise of authority, civic virtue and friendship, economic arrangements, and so forth. The other perspective is more properly speaking 'philosophical', and consists in the attempt to distinguish Aristotle's integral philosophy from the selective vindication of Aristotelianism by some influential contemporary thinkers - in particular, the author has in mind defenders of communitarianism, civic republicans, and the theorists attached to the capabilities approach. Inamura contends that "the original offers more useful insights into the problems of political philosophy than these 'Aristotelian' theories do" (p.1) and that "although each of the three approaches I have identified captures some of the characteristics of Aristotle's political thought, they do not fully illuminate his interesting vision of politics" (p. 25). The author emphasizes the aristocratic penchant of Aristotle (a characteristic that no one who studies his Ethics can reasonably deny), as well as the importance of reciprocity in civic relations as two neglected aspects of his political philosophy through which one can build a constructive criticism of modern Aristotelians. Despite their indebtedness to Aristotle, such authors have not made the best use of his arguments concerning politics.

The emphasis on aristocracy and reciprocity accounts for the organization of the chapters in the book: after reading the general outlines of the work in chapter one, we

meet the aristocratic conception Aristotle has of a good life and a good polis in chapter two. In chapter three we see this conception playing an important role in his criticism of democracy and his defense of a mixed constitution comprising aristocratic elements (= the exercise of political office by the virtuous citizens) and democratic ones (= the wisdom of the multitude in jurisdiction and assessment). Reciprocity is the main subject in chapters 4, 5 and 6. It is the kernel of the democratic aspect of Aristotle's political philosophy – taking turns in jurisdiction and the assessment of political office, learning thereby both to rule and to be ruled, the multitude obtains a civic improvement of their virtues with the help of laws the universality of which disciplines their particular desires (chapter 4), and develops as well a communal friendship based on shared interests (chapter 5). Utility and virtue unite in chapter 6, where reciprocity in the political economy is the subject: it is an exercise of the virtue of justice (= commercial exchanges) and keeps citizens united to the extent that they need one another.

2. Inamura on the Political Philosophy of Aristotle

The study of Aristotle's aristocratic way of thinking in chapter II starts with the famously ambiguous remark in the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which affirms that the goodness of the polis is greater, more complete, finer and more divine than the goodness inhering in an individual man, but still fundamentally the same goodness. Since the same treatise teaches its audience that individual goodness is the virtuous life, it follows that the goodness of the polis must be some sort of virtuous activity. Therefore, the aristocratic conception characteristic of the moral philosophy of Aristotle also belongs to his political philosophy. However, it is by no means clear in which way individual and civic goodness is the same. Is this a whole-part relation, i.e., a good polis is composed of citizens who are themselves good men? Or is the goodness of a polis holistic instead, i.e., a goodness inhering in it as a whole entity, and thus independent of the qualities of each citizen particularly considered?

In order to attempt an answer to these difficulties, the author emphasizes that, in book III of the *Politics*, virtue itself instead of freedom or wealth is presented as the best criterion for the allotment of public office among citizens. Inamura defends that in the

passage 1280b40-81a8 (III.9) we have Aristotle's own conception of what is the purpose of political governance, namely, the happy life or the exercise of noble actions. It is, thus, the capacity of a citizen for acting virtuously that should determine the extent of his share in political authority. So, this is the aristocratic commitment of Aristotle – he answers in this passage the question left unanswered in *NE* V. 3 concerning the proper 'merit' (*axia*) for the distribution of power. To the extent that virtue is the criterion for the exercise of political authority, we understand one aspect of that obscure relation between the goodness of the polis and the goodness of the individual: in a sense, it is a whole-part relation, for even though a good polis is not necessarily composed only by virtuous citizens, its *governing body* must be composed by virtuous people.

But the nature of aristocracy itself, that is, being a government of the few (virtuous) *with a view to the good of the polis as a whole* (*Pol.* III. 7), implies that government by the virtuous citizens is the best form of government because it is the best way to promote the good lives of all citizens. In this way, aristocratic governance makes the polis as a whole good, a goodness that is holistic in nature. By pointing out the relation between the overall goodness of citizens and the virtue of the minority holding political authority, Inamura shows - against the criticism of Martha Nussbaum - that Aristotle builds a coherent picture of the goodness of the polis. The picture is complex enough to encompass a whole-part aspect corresponding to the virtue of the governing body as well as a holistic aspect corresponding to the improvement of the lives of everyone by the virtuous governing body.

The examination of the holistic aspect of the polis goodness gives rise to the other main point in chapter two, namely, the purpose of the analogy between individual and polis. For Inamura, the purpose of Aristotle is to defend a *moderate* holistic conception of the good polis in which its whole structure is an object of moral evaluation, without supposing therewith that the individual good of citizens is simply irrelevant. In order to prove this point, the author resorts to three arguments in book VII of the *Politics* - they indicate that polis goodness is conceived by Aristotle in accordance with individual goodness. First, *Pol.* VII. 1 affirms that a happy polis does not simply possess certain goods, but also does noble things, just like a happy man is someone who is virtuous and also possess the external goods enabling him to act virtuously. Hence, the polis as an

entity must possess virtue and practical wisdom in order to be happy. Second, the curious remark about contemplation being some sort of action in VII.3 extends to the polis the individual's ability to "act" by himself (i.e., to philosophize). The contemplative activity of the polis consists in promoting the good interaction of its own inhabitants instead of promoting relations – friendly or unfriendly – with other poleis. Relations between poleis would thus be analogous to human actions in the strict sense, which require, according to EN X.7, other people towards whom I act. Finally, the arguments about the proper size for a polis are based on the notion that, just like an individual man, the polis is endowed with its own task (*ergon*).

Inamura traces several criticisms by Aristotle of existing constitutions to his moderate holistic conception of the virtue of a polis. For instance, the fact that people engage in war for the sake of peace shows that the peaceful interaction of citizens rather than war is the true aim of a polis. Moreover, the very possibility of a polis living by itself in peace, without engaging in wars against rivals, shows that war cannot be the task of poleis. Besides, since war compels people to be just or temperate while it is more difficult to possess those virtues during peace, it follows that bringing about a polis life that is both peaceful and virtuous ought to be the main concern of the legislators. They ought to educate citizens for a non-warlike life distinguished by justice, temperance and philosophy. In this way, the laws of Sparta (and other poleis), aiming at the conquest and enslavement of rivals, is harshly criticized. By relating Aristotle's holistic notion of a good polis to his criticism of the Spartan constitution, Inamura successfully establishes the mistake of the interpretation according to which the superiority of the polis's good in relation to the individual good (affirmed in the beginning of the *NE*) implies that the individual good ought to be sacrificed to the good of the polis. If that was the case, Sparta could not be criticized for the warlike way of life it imposes on its citizens. Therefore, the extreme holistic nature of polis goodness that Karl Popper attributes to many philosophers cannot be correctly attributed to Aristotle.

Chapter three presents Aristotle's theory of the mixed constitution as the blueprint for a practically workable regime comprising elements of aristocracy, democracy and monarchy. The famous argument about the wisdom of the multitude is then interpreted by the author as *a democratic addition to aristocratic government*. This position is consistent

with the rejection of democracy in the strict sense, i.e., rule based on the mere status of freeborn, as a deviant form of constitution.

Examining the typology of constitutions in the *Politics*, based on actual power-relations, Inamura contends that in Aristotle's political theory there is nothing like the modern notion of a constitution originating in the will of the people. Instead, we find that each constitution is based on the supremacy (*to kyrion*) of a certain kind of people, namely, those who actually govern the polis. That explains Aristotle's concern with wealth and poverty, the military organization of the polis, the kinds of free people who participate in office, etc. In this context, democracy meant democratic government, that is, free people dealing with public affairs. It bears no relation to the notion of democratic sovereignty characteristic of modern democracy, that is, people being allowed to choose those who will deal with public affairs in their place. In the *Politics*, election is rather an oligarchic or aristocratic way of choosing public officials, whereas the democratic way is drawing lots.

Therefore, modern democracy, according to Aristotle's typology, ought to be seen as some form of mixed constitution, for it comprises additional elements besides those of pure democracy. Inamura then describes the two varieties of mixed constitution for Aristotle. First, there is 'polity', the form of mixed constitution that is intermediary between democracy and oligarchy. It comes into being either by incorporating laws of both democratic and oligarchic nature, or by ascribing actual power to hoplites, who are not so wealthy as the cavalymen nor so poor as the light-armed soldiers or rowers in warships. Second, there is another mixed constitution that comprises elements of aristocracy and monarchy in addition to those of democracy and oligarchy. Resorting to some passages, 1294a19-25 in particular, Inamura defends that this most complete form of mixed constitution, where political authority is distributed according to virtue, wealth and freedom, is indeed *a form of aristocracy rather than a form of polity*, for the highest offices are here ascribed to virtuous citizens. And it is this aristocratic mixed constitution that most closely resembles modern democracies.

In accordance with the emphasis put on aristocracy, the interpretation of the "wisdom of the multitude" argument in *Pol.* III. 11 by Inamura diverges from Jeremy Waldron's view that this argument is a defense of deliberative democracy. It is not the

deliberative excellence of the multitude that justifies its inclusion in the political process, for such excellence would be the foundation of deliberative democracy and not of a mixed constitution. The multitude excels rather by cumulating a multiplicity of perceptive faculties for recognizing particular situations. According to 1281b34-38, once the multitude comes together, it aggregates “enough perception” (*hikanen aisthesin*) to act to the best advantage of the polis. The author contextualizes this remark in Aristotle’s theory of practical wisdom as presented in *NE VI*: practical wisdom being concerned with the perception of particulars, the variety of perceptions in the united multitude contributes significantly to good action, in spite of the imperfections of each member of the multitude with regard both to virtue and to practical wisdom. The advantage resulting from combining diverse perceptions would be the best explanation for the obscure remark of Aristotle in 1281a42-b10 to the effect that each member of the multitude “has a part of virtue and practical wisdom”, something difficult to reconcile with his thesis about the necessary connection between all virtues in the character of the practically wise man.

This interpretation of the wisdom of the multitude is compatible with the aristocratic penchant that the author sees in Aristotle’s mixed constitution: so, while it is best to let lawmaking to the virtuous minority, who will enact the best laws in exercising their practical wisdom, the people at large is able to perceive the particular situations which correspond to those laws. By the same token, it is better to ascribe administrative offices to people who possess knowledge or skill, but to leave the assessment of the exercise of such functions to the multitude in the assembly. In this way, the aristocratic commitment of Aristotle is reconciled with the necessity to include in the political process the non-virtuous majority of wealthy and simply free-born people.

Those practical issues connect Aristotle’s work to the end of chapter three, where we find a short and somewhat confusing sub-chapter about the influence of the Greek Philosopher over modern political thinkers like Montesquieu and J.S. Mill. The author proposes that the theory of mixed constitution discussed in *Pol. III* influences Montesquieu’s doctrine of the separation of powers and Mill’s thoughts about government, lamenting that contemporary discussions of democracy tend to neglect such an important theoretical heritage. Needless to say, such intricate and complex questions cannot be really discussed in 8 pages.

Complementing the study of the aristocratic commitment of Aristotle, chapters 4, 5 and 6 examine three conceptions belonging to his political philosophy that the author believes to represent its democratic aspect: civic virtue, civic friendship and commutative justice. The aggregate of these notions would be “the conceptual framework Aristotle uses to analyze and cultivate the ideal of equality among citizens” (p. 106). The kernel of this conceptual framework is reciprocal equality, the second guiding notion of Inamura’s thesis (besides the aristocratic commitment). By taking turns in the exercise of political authority, that is, governing and being governed, citizens learn how to care about the good of their equals, developing thereby civic virtues and civic relations of friendship.

Civic virtue, the subject matter of chapter 4, is described as encompassing both the capacity for being actively engaged in politics and the passive capacity for being governed. Many interpreters emphasize the first capacity while tending to neglect the last one. Inamura, however, points to Aristotle’s remark that equality between citizens does require that people take turns in political authority, as well as to the educational value the philosopher ascribes to being governed as a way of learning how to govern. Civic virtue is, then, an offshoot of reciprocal equality: goodness in acting is directly related to understanding how it is to be acted upon. Unlike despotic rule, in which the master permanently rules the slave with a view to his own benefit, political rule is exercised with a view to the benefit of ruler *and ruled*. Therefore, the experience of being ruled by other citizens will provide one with insights about how to consider the benefit of the ruled when it comes for himself the occasion of ruling others.

In order to assess the importance of political activity for the moral development of citizens, the author resorts to passages in *Pol.* I about the different degrees of virtue and rationality between the members of the household and to the famous passage in *Pol.* III about the government of laws. Ordinary citizens, says Aristotle, need the constraints of laws to act with full rationality, for only the generality of laws detaches them from their peculiar desires. Inamura suggests that reciprocal governance, taking turns in jurisdiction and public deliberation, is thereby an essential element of the moral education of citizens through the laws. There is a contrast here with the predicament of the patriarch who rules a family: he rules wife, offspring and slaves according to nothing but his own deliberation, without the laws to counterbalance the influence of his own desires. For the

author, a consequence of the absence of laws in the domestic association is that most patriarchs become virtuous men only in the polis, and not in the household. This is undoubtedly an interesting conception of the goodness ordinary men are able to achieve according to Aristotelian ethics, but it does not fit smoothly with the philosopher's remarks in 1129b25-1130a8 and 1134b8-18 about how much easier it is to act virtuously in general and justly in particular towards family members than it is to do so towards strangers¹.

The study of civic friendship in chapter 5 puts the author at odds with two opposing views about the importance of this kind of friendship for Aristotle's political philosophy. One (J. Cooper) puts great emphasis on civic friendship as a link of goodwill between fellow-citizens, arguing that such a situation is possible because civic friendship does not require the intimacy that is typical of private friendship. The opposing view (J. Annas), in its turn, downplays civic friendship as a relevant notion in the *Politics*. It states that friendship necessarily requires intimacy and not simply goodwill, and it is impossible that such close relations hold between large numbers of fellow-citizens.

In order to avoid either ascribing to civic friendship the intimate nature of virtue-friendship or reducing it to goodwill, the author proposes that Aristotle tends to see it as a sort of advantage-friendship. Several passages in the *NE* and the *Eudemian Ethics* support the thesis. According to *EE* 7.10, for example, civic friendship results from the lack of self-sufficiency of people, who unite with a view to mutual help through their different abilities. The exchanges of goods, for example, would be an activity in which civic friendship flourishes. Therefore, civic friendship goes beyond goodwill: it requires relationships of reciprocity between people who are mutually aware of their relation. Another passage, *NE* 9. 6, defines "concord" (*homonoia*) as civic friendship, and affirms that it is the agreement concerning matters of common interest, like the right way to choose public officials or the expediency of an alliance with Sparta. Agreement on such issues is reached through the alternate exercise of political office, and so the author defends that citizens exercising political authority in turns, caring each one about the

¹ Compare Inamura's thesis with Jackson, 1879, p. 71, Stewart, 1892, p. 393-9 and p.489-91 as well as Gauthier & Jolif, 2002, pp. 342 and 389-91.

interests he shares with his fellow citizens, develop a reciprocal relation in which civic friendship flourishes.

There seems to be something uneven between the two faculties Inamura ascribes to reciprocal equality - originating civic virtue, on the one hand, and civic friendship, on the other. I believe the crux of the difficulty lies in the fact that the alternate exercise of office does not provide necessarily a context for reciprocal *relationships*, since people who are entirely unknown to each other may very well take turns in the exercise of political authority. That is, they share the common predicament of being fellow citizens, but that is not a relationship between them. Although this does not seem to be a problem for the development of civic virtue (according to the explanation of it by Inamura), it does seem an obstacle to the development of civic friendship: for utility-friendship is a relationship, even if not an intimate one. In this sense, commercial exchange, unlike reciprocal governance, does indeed engage the exchanging parties in a mutually aware relation to one another. So, given the nature of political activity, it seems to me that civic friendship could indeed be reduced to a goodwill directed at people we may even not know.

The last chapter of the book deals with Aristotle's theories of political economy, another domain within which reciprocal equality operates. Inamura does not try to articulate those theories as part of an attempt to study the structure of a market economy (as economists, classic or Marxist, tend to do), defending rather that they belong to Aristotle's moral and political thought. The criticism of retail trade in *Pol.* I. 9, for instance, is based on its inadequacy, as a profit-making activity, for simply providing the necessary livelihood of a household or a polis. By the same token, the explanation of commutative justice, as exposed in *NE* 5. 5, is not a theory on the principles of price-setting of products in a market economy (for example, the relationship between the demand for and the supply of the product). It is rather an attempt to describe how giving and repayment between citizens ought to be *if they intend to maintain their relationship*.

Therefore, Aristotle does not develop a scientific account of exchanges but takes exchanges as an example of reciprocal human relationship. Just like the civic virtue developed in the alternate exercise of political authority, and the civic friendship flourishing through shared interests, commercial exchanges aim at that common benefit

the advancement of which keeps citizens associated. In this way, the author reaches a clear distinction between the reciprocal equality characteristic of commutative justice and the equality existing in corrective and distributive justice. While reciprocal equality gives rise to and maintains the voluntary relations of commutative justice, corrective justice intervenes only if someone refuses to fulfill the agreement. While distributive justice is concerned with the allocation of political office to those who meet the requirements for its exercise, reciprocal equality is concerned with the way they exercise political office, namely with regard to the benefit of other citizens.

The same concern with civic bond animates, for Inamura, Aristotle's remarks on the distribution of property: instead of carrying out the demagogic policy of distributing the lands and the money of the wealthy to the poor, the philosopher defends the distribution of extra resources in order to help the poor to acquire land property or to start business. Such a policy would attenuate the gap between wealthy and poor, avoiding thereby political problems like the loss of civic friendship, faction, etc. In sum, equality of property is by no means a major aim of politics, but alleviating economic disparities is important for favoring the reciprocal equality that keeps citizens united through civic activities and friendship.

At the end of the book, in summarizing the several aspects of the political thought of Aristotle hitherto exposed, the author contends that the two guiding notions of reciprocal equality and aristocratic mixed constitution make it possible for us to realize imperfections in contemporary democratic theories. Their excessive focus on popular rule is particularly emphasized (insights number 1 and 3, p. 219-21). The liberal brand, fearing populism (and oblivious to the fact that modern democracies are actually mixed constitutions comprising aristocratic, oligarchic and monarchic elements), narrows its focus to the respect for human rights. It thus neglects the inherent tendency of modern democracies to degenerate into oligarchic or monarchic government. The defenders of popular sovereignty, on the other hand, ignoring the role of reciprocity in the development of civic virtues and civic friendship, adopt what Inamura calls "the ideology of 'no-rule'" – they conceive democracy as simple majority rule and lose thereby sight of the ethical and political perspective that makes the democratic system workable.

3. *Inamura on contemporary 'Aristotelians'*

The second point of the book, the opposition between Aristotle's integral thought and the supposed selective Aristotelianism of some contemporary thinkers, seems to me less fortunate than the historical analysis of Aristotle's work. I call it *second* because it really is minor in importance when compared to that historical analysis: even though Inamura opens the book with a long sub-chapter putting Aristotle and the modern thinkers side by side, the work undoubtedly privileges the examination of the political philosophy developed by the ancient thinker; the so-called modern Aristotelians being the object of sporadic comparisons to the original.

Of course, this way of organizing the content of the book can be explained by the author's understanding that the contemporary thinkers are selective in resorting to Aristotle. The *partial* interest of these thinkers would, thus, justify a procedure of *punctuating* about them when the content of their works somehow approaches the thought of the great classic. However, the criticism Inamura addresses to those contemporary authors, i.e., that "they do not fully illuminate his interesting view of politics" (p. 25), seems to me pointless, for the works of Hannah Arendt, Martha Nussbaum and Alasdair Macintyre - my remarks will concentrate on these - *do not aim at fully illuminating Aristotle's view of politics*. Such an objective characterizes works belonging to the secondary literature dedicated to Aristotle, like Inamura's own book and much of the work done in the departments of classical studies around the world. But the capabilities approach, for instance, is an original political theory that Nussbaum justifies on the basis of a eudemonic conception of ethics; in this context, resorting to Aristotle will be inevitably restricted to shared commitments, points of divergence being either set aside or criticized. By the same token, Macintyre relates his own work to Aristotle considered as the initiator of a tradition², that is, of a sustained theoretical development that must go beyond the aims of its originators. Sometimes he even affirms that "I will be turning Aristotle against Aristotle"³, and that opens the way for his development of eudemonism towards human relations involving vulnerable people.

² See in particular chapter 12 of Macintyre (1984).

³ Macintyre, 1999, p. 8.

As a matter of fact, Inamura's contention that Aristotle's thought, in its original formulation, provides more useful insights about our political problems than some modern authors, remains quite obscure throughout the book. One such example of obscurity is the comparison of Nussbaum's capabilities approach with the concern with poverty and demagoguery in the *Politics*. In the beginning of chapter 6 we read about the incompatibility between the social-democratic policies (like land division and institutional support for families) aiming at the universal development of human functional capabilities in Nussbaum's good society, on the one hand, and Aristotle's lack of esteem for the poor as political agents, on the other. In the last sub-chapter (6. 5), however, where Inamura resorts to the text of 1320a29-b1 in order to explain Aristotle's position against demagogic policies, we see that Aristotle is actually concerned with poverty to the extent that it endangers civic stability and friendship; avoiding those dangers requires policies that attenuate poverty, like helping the poor citizens to acquire land property or to start their own businesses. If I understand this passage, it seems that, even though one cannot simply affirm that Aristotle was a social-democrat, one can legitimately see in this passage a justification for social-democratic policies like those defended in the capabilities approach⁴.

Inamura is right in pointing out that Aristotle's concern with poverty is not a matter of distributive justice. That is, he was not a socialist *avant la lettre*. Poverty is a problem for Aristotle primarily because it endangers civic friendship, perverts the constitution towards extreme oligarchy and extreme democracy, and thus opens the way for tyranny. One could say, however, that *Pol.* VI contains a set of advices for preserving oligarchic and democratic regimes, so that the strictly civic justification for the policies of distribution we find there ought not to be taken as Aristotle's whole view on the matter.

⁴ The commentary to the same passage of the *Politics* by Newman, for instance, puts Aristotle proposal as concerned both with the civic institutions and with the economic conditions of citizens: "Aristotle's advice is – use all the surplus revenue in giving the poorer citizens either simultaneously or by successive sections a start in farming or trade, relieve the rich of all useless liturgies, and make them contribute pay for such meetings of the assembly and *dicasteries* as are absolutely necessary. The result of this will be that the pauper demos living by attendance at frequent meetings of the assembly and *dicasteries* will be replaced by a better-to-do demos occupied in farming and trade, and therefore content with a few meetings of the assembly and *dicasteries*. It is when the assembly meets frequently that it claims all authority for itself and exalts itself above the magistrates and above the law" (Newman, 1902, p. 533-4).

Actually, the conception that a polis where citizens tend to belong to the middle class (as a result of social policies) provides better opportunity for their eudemonic development, seems to be consistent with Aristotle's ethics. After all, he derides the poor precisely because they are unable to achieve a happy life (see *EE* 1215a25-b1). But even if we stick to the explicit justification for social policies in the *Politics*, the affirmation of Aristotle's superiority remains unsubstantiated: we are faced with two different sets of reasons for the distribution of resources, the Aristotelian and the social-democratic, but the author does not explain why one is better than the other.

Another doubtful instance of the superiority of Aristotle's insights for our understanding of a democratic society is the last of the four insights appearing in the conclusion of the book (p. 219-22). Recognizing the difficulty in applying to the modern democratic state the theory of political participation we find in the *Politics*, the author affirms that this theory sheds light rather on the relevance of the civic participation in local communities. This is of course true, but I do not see why Aristotle's treatment of this subject is necessarily more useful for us than that of some modern theorists. Such a judgment could be challenged in two respects. First, Aristotle does not recognize any human association that is larger than the polis, so that his treatment of local politics does not (and cannot) explain how it is part of the larger horizon of the politics in a Federation or Nation-State. Hannah Arendt provides precisely one such explanation in her *On Revolution*, especially in its last chapter, where the local communities are examined against the background of the whole edifice of the American Federation (to the extent that this edifice encompasses the representative institutions, local and federal, as well as the judicial authority, the populism Inamura ascribes to the conception of democracy of contemporary Aristotelians – insight 1 (p. 219) - certainly does not hold of Arendt).

Second, the author is not entirely clear as to which local communities existing in modern states does Aristotle's theories shed light on. The local community that is the object of study by Aristotle, the ancient polis, no longer exists and does not clearly correspond either to the modern State (much larger and powerful than the Greek poleis) or to modern cities (far less independent than the Greek poleis). Inamura refers to the integration of people into deliberative and judicial process on the local level, and that rightly suggests the jury system operating in many different places as an institution of

self-governance on which Aristotle's theories can shed good light on. Still, by simply affirming the superiority of Aristotle in regard to his modern followers, the author seems oblivious of a relevant role displayed by those thinkers: examining forms of human associations to which Aristotle paid few or no attention at all.

Macintyre, for instance, in his *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (a work Inamura does not cite), emphasizes local associations like fishing or mining communities (p.142-6), where he believes that virtues related to human vulnerability flourish in relations involving dependent and independent people. Dependent people, for example a disabled person or someone whose face is severely disfigured, gain the opportunity to interact with the independent agents and show them their distinctive qualities that otherwise would escape notice. Independent agents, in their turn, can improve their own practical reason by correcting the mistaken belief that they had nothing to learn from the disabled ones. This kind of relationship is of course not civic, like civic friendship; it seems closer to the relations existing between members of the "village" (*kome*), about which Aristotle unfortunately speaks with great brevity.

Therefore, rather than the attempt to illuminate all aspects of Aristotle's thought, modern Aristotelians seem to be concerned with exploring aspects of political reality that either were neglected by Aristotle or simply did not exist in his own lifetime. A substantive evaluation of their achievements would require the thorough examination of their work as a whole – for instance, Macintyre's conception of *the tradition of classic moral and political philosophy* as being vaster and richer than Aristotle's own contribution to it, important as this contribution is; or yet the defense of the *classical political experience* by Hannah Arendt against the whole tradition of political philosophy, including the classical philosophers. And that is precisely what we do not find in the present book: the examination of the so-called modern Aristotelians does not develop into a comprehensive study of equal importance when compared to the study dedicated to the work of Aristotle.

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