

Aristotle's Unanswered Questions: Women and Slaves in *Politics* 1252a-1260b

HOLT N. PARKER
University of Cincinnati
holt.parker@uc.edu

Let me begin with three quotations. The first is from Stephen Clark's *Aristotle's Man* (1975: 206):

At one point, however, he appears to have a strong preference for a societal image dictated by almost metaphysical considerations... His attitude to women may seem a prime example of the dominance of the societal over self-image.

I.e., first metaphysics, then society.

The second is from W. W. Fortenbaugh's "Aristotle on Women and Slaves" (1977: 135 = 2006: 241):

Properly understood, Aristotle's view of slaves and women is neither the sophistry of a prejudiced Greek male enjoying a privileged position nor simply the product of a misguided biologist who assumes uncritically that nature's way is identical with the *status quo*. Rather it is also and even primarily a political application of what was unquestionably an important advance in philosophical psychology.

I.e., first psychology, then society.

The third is from Wolfgang Kullmann's "Equality in Aristotle's Political Thought" (1984: 35):

We see for instance that Aristotle's wrong conclusion that there are slaves by nature is conditioned not so much by conservative prejudice, but can rather be explained as a wrong generalization of remarkable biological insights.

I.e., first biology, then society.

I. Introduction

In this article I cannot aim at giving a complete analysis of all that has been written about Aristotle on slavery – the bibliography is vast – nor of all that has been written about Aristotle on women. Neither will I try to give a synthesis of Aristotle's "theory" of slavery¹ – for as we shall see he does not really have one – nor of Aristotle's various and varying theories about the female in animals and among humans. What I want to examine here is the intersection of the two.

I hope to do three things in this paper: one, show *why* Aristotle made his argument; two, *how* Aristotle made his argument. In general, scholars have concentrated on either the argument about slaves or that about women². What I want to point out is how inescapably each is fettered to the other. The unquestioned social inferiority of slaves is the analogical basis for the hierarchy of male over female (e.g. 1252a31). The unquestioned natural inferiority of women is the basis of the proof of the existence of the natural slave (1254b12-16). Finally, I want to draw attention to a series of rhetorical questions where Aristotle reveals the uncertain heart of his argument (1259b23-37). My purpose is to answer Aristotle's unanswered questions.

Aristotle's thoughts about slavery are far from clear³. His remarks are scattered and the most important ones tend to come in the form of single dense sentences, throwaway lines in the midst of quite different arguments, with vast implications, which Aristotle seldom draws out. One reason for the disjointed nature of Aristotle's *aperçus* on slaves in

1 — Garver 2011: 18: "Aristotle himself would be surprised to learn that he was justifying or even defending slavery".

2 — Deslauriers 2003: 221 n. 11. As Spelman 1994 points out the problem of the female slave is not one Aristotle (or most of his explicators) takes up. The slave is presumptively male throughout.

3 — DuBois 2003: 191: "In fact, there is no coherent, consistent justification for natural slavery in Aristotle's work. Natural slaves are intermittently deficient in reason, in deliberative powers, fuzzily indistinguishable from animals... The discussion of 'natural' slaves is scattered, relatively incoherent, and dispersed in Aristotle's reasoning about slaves and free men".

Book 1 is that he is not in fact particularly interested in them. Despite his opening observations on the minimal units of the polis (1252a24-34, 1253b1-11), his primary interest is to refute a particular notion of Plato's (not mentioned by name) that there is a single virtue of ruling⁴, which can be applied at different scales, or to different numbers from least to most: that of master (δεσποτικός), householder (οικονομικός), politician (πολιτικός) or king (βασιλικός)⁵. Instead, Aristotle fitfully argues that "there are different kinds of rule because there are different kinds of people" over whom men rule⁶.

His real goal is to establish the different types of rule which he will examine in Book 3, and especially the despotic rule, which he will deem unjust (1155b16-20). Aristotle recognizes that there is a potential problem: by ruling out tyranny – the despotic constitution (δεσποτική) that looks only to the profit of the ruler (1279a21, 79b16; 1285b2, 25; 1295b14-22, 1333a3-6) – he might also as a accidental byproduct rule out mastership in the household (δεσποτική 1253b9, b19, 1255b31, 1259a37) and with it slavery⁷. Accordingly Aristotle needs to create a group of people over whom it *is* just to exert a master's rule (1287b36-88a2, 1324b32-41, 1333b38-34a2). Hence his invention of the slave by nature.

Aristotle is also only occasionally interested the role of and rule over women within the household⁸. At different points, in different arguments, the rule over a household generally is kingly (*Pol.* 1254b21, 1255b19), while rule of men over women is aristocratic (*EN* 1160b33, 1161a24, *EE* 1241b30), or political (*Pol.* 1259b1) seemingly with no important consequences (see below), while justice between husband and wife is not political but economic (οικονομικόν, *EN* 1134b17).

4 — Plato *Pol.* 258e-261a; cf. *Protag.* 318e5-19a5, Xen. *Mem.* 3.4.12, 3.6.14; see Goldschmidt 1973: 147.

5 — Arist. *Pol.* 1252a7-, 1253b18-20, 1255b15-20, 1324b32, 1325a27-31.

6 — Deslauriers 2006: 48. Cf. Schofield (1990: 17): "The issue which appears to dominate his mind right through the book is the question: how many forms of rule (ἀρχή) are there?". Heath 2008: 244: "The question of slavery arises in *Politics* 1, where it is incidental to his main concern, the diversity of political authority (*Pol.* 1.1, 1252a7-16); he therefore offers no more than a sketch of the theory, full of gaps and apparent inconsistencies. That is not unusual in Aristotle".

7 — Muller 1993: 191; Deslauriers 2003: 226 n. 20. At *EN* 1160b29-30, the master's rule over a slave is tyrannical because he practices it for his own benefit (τυραννική δὲ καὶ ἡ δεσπότου πρὸς δούλους· τὸ γὰρ τοῦ δεσπότου συμφέρον ἐν αὐτῇ πράττεται). Garnsey 1996: 115-19: "The inconsistency between the treatment of tyranny/slavery in *Ethics* and *Politics* is therefore clear. In the *Ethics* tyranny is found to be a good analogy for mastership. In the *Politics* this may work for legal slaves, but it does not for natural slaves. I infer that in composing these passages in the *Ethics*, Aristotle does not have natural slavery in his sights".

8 — E.g. 1328b2-14, where Aristotle forgets women and reproduction entirely in the list of the six things necessary to the self-sufficient state. For what interest Aristotle did have in the household, see Nagle 2006.

The main reason, however, that Aristotle's argumentation is so at variance with itself (and so differently interpreted by modern scholars) is that he does not proceed by observation and induction; instead he argues almost entirely by analogy and metaphor. These have been well examined by Garnsey 1996: 107, 110-14)⁹. The ones that will concern us most is that of soul to body, and whole to part.

II. *Why Aristotle Made His Argument*

Aristotle is more straightforward than his explicators and is admirably clear about what he is up to. Clarke, Fortenbaugh, and Kullmann's notions of how Aristotle's thought developed are incorrect in terms of Aristotle's own announced methods. For in fact Aristotle does not begin with abstract speculation about the nature of the universe or the parts of the soul or the classification of animals and then suddenly realize that these purely theoretic observations could also be applied to justify keeping women and slaves in their place¹⁰. Instead, Aristotle's method, clearly stated in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and elsewhere, has been called "saving the appearances" (Nussbaum 2001: 240)¹¹. Here is what Aristotle himself says (*EN* 1145b1-7):

δεῖ δ', ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων, τιθέντας τὰ φαινόμενα καὶ πρῶτον διαπορήσαντας οὕτω δεικνύναι μάλιστα μὲν πάντα τὰ ἔνδοξα περὶ ταῦτα τὰ πάθη, εἰ δὲ μή, τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ κυριώτατα· ἐὰν γὰρ λύηται τε τὰ δυσχερῆ καὶ καταλείπηται τὰ ἔνδοξα, δεδειγμένον ἂν εἴη ἱκανῶς¹².

9 — Lloyd 1996: 189: "For his own, clearly contested, position the arguments he adduces (such as they are) consist first of a battery of proportional analogies. Master to slave is analogous to soul to body, to old to young, and especially to male to female (1254b4ff., 13ff., cf. 1332b35ff.). Yet, as so often, the argument is not merely one by analogy, for all these paired relationships exemplify and are instances of the generic distinction to be found, he says (1254a28ff.), in every composite whole constituted of parts whether continuous or discrete, namely that between what rules and what is ruled".

10 — Connell (2000: 424 n. 52): "The academic controversy which started with Horowitz (1976) has now led to a general consensus that much of Aristotle's biological investigations into reproduction and sex difference can be separated to some extent from his political aims and attitudes (see, for example, Tress, 1992; Lennox, 1985; Deslauriers, 1998; Mayhew, 1999)". I believe this consensus (if such it is) is fundamentally mistaken. For a detailed re-examination of various forms of the thesis that Aristotle's biology provided the model for the rest of his philosophy, see Graham 1986.

11 — So too at *Top.* 100b21-23 *Phys.* 211a6-11, *Anima* 403b20-24; Ross 1936: 580. See Owen 1961 on *phainomena* as *endoxa* (vs. a more Baconian or "scientific" approach) and Nussbaum's contention (2002) that Aristotle's two definitions are not sharply divided. See also Pritzl 1994. McLeod (1995) is right to insist that a review of *endoxa* is not Aristotle's *only* method, but in attributing such a view to Nussbaum, Barnes, and Irvin, he builds straw-people.

12 — Aristotle's Greek is highly compressed. I try throughout to provide translations of thudding literalness, occasionally supplying other people's translations to show the flow of the argument or to capture a nuance.

As in the previous topics¹³, we must set down the appearances (*phainomena*), first working through the contradictions, in order to demonstrate the truth of all the usual beliefs (*ta endoxa*) about these emotions; or if not all, at least the greatest number and the most authoritative. For once the difficult cases are resolved and the usual beliefs remain, the truth has been sufficiently demonstrated¹⁴.

No better illustration of this method of procedure can be found than his discussion of slaves and wives. There is a phenomenon: slaves and women appear to be fully human and rational. There is a contradiction: if so, it would be wrong to rule over them absolutely. There is a solution: slaves and women are not in fact fully human or rational (*Pol.* 1259b22-60a4). Thus the appearances are saved¹⁵.

Fritz and Kapp correctly summarize Aristotle's own declared methodology at the start of the *Politics* (1950: 50 = 1977: 124):

The best way, we are told, of speculating about the state is to look at things as they grow (πράγματα... φυόμενα). Since individual human beings are not self-sufficient, there will, of necessity, be associations from the very beginning. Genetically, then, the associations between male and female on the one hand, and between master and slave on the other hand, come first; both associations are based on natural differentiation and, at least in the first case, on purely natural instinct.

That is, Aristotle *begins* with the current status and his *purpose* is to defend it¹⁶. The current power structure is founded on nature and is thus

13 — Aristotle is now discussing self-control, etc., and their opposites.

14 — Cf. his programmatic statement at *EN* 1098b25-29. This is the method outlined in *Physics* 211a7-11 (and cf. 192b11-112, 194b33-35, 196a15-16, 199a1, etc.), where there is no conflict between starting from first principles and starting from phenomena and the *endoxa*. So too the opening to *Topica* (100a18-20).

15 — Schofield 1990 (esp. 8-9) following Goldschmidt (1973), argues that Aristotle is not following the endoxic method in *Politics*, but rather a new method which "might be more resistant to ideology... inasmuch as it involves an immediate appeal to reason (A 5, 1254 a 20) and to first principles". The problem is that Aristotle's "first principles" are the existence of slaves by nature and the inferiority of women (1252a26-b1, 1253b4-11; Irwin 1989: 358). These he takes as axiomatic (1253b11-12). He offers no proofs, and maintains them in the teeth of his own (incidental) counterexamples. Aristotle explicitly says that he is proceeding κατὰ τὴν ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ μέθοδον "according to my normal method" (1252a17; cf. 1256a2). Saunders (1995: xi) points out that Book 2 of *Pol.* serves as the usual survey of opinions and constitutions. See Millett 2007: 192-93. As an example of how thoroughly slavery was ingrained into Aristotle's mind (and the minds all his fellows), see *Cat.* 6b28-6b36, where master/slave is the first thing to spring to mind as an example of a reciprocal function, as basic as double/half and larger/smaller.

16 — So Lear 1988: 1993: "It is all too easy for us to read Aristotle as uncritically accepting the institution of slavery. It is tempting to think that in critical reflection one must somehow *step outside* one's beliefs and subject them to critical survey. Yet Aristotle self-consciously refuses to take any such step". Aristotle is not uncritically accepting the institution of slavery, he is critically accepting it. Lear continues (1988: 196): "However, such an approach also has its pitfalls. The main danger is that one will be insufficiently critical. In commending the ethical life by pointing to the ethical life that is

logically and genetically superior to the arguments he makes in its favor. Method controls result. Aristotle begins not by reasoning abstractly or trying to imagine an ideal city in the manner of Plato but by describing the society he actually sees around him. He ignores contrary examples, even when he has supplied them himself (we will see an example from Hesiod in a moment). He looks at other societies only in order to reject them as defective. This is the meaning of the passage about barbarians (1252b5-7), much misunderstood despite Aristotle's clear statement¹⁷:

ἐν δὲ τοῖς βαρβάροις τὸ θῆλυ καὶ τὸ δοῦλον τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει τάξιν.
αἴτιον δ' ὅτι τὸ φύσει ἄρχον οὐκ ἔχουσιν, ἀλλὰ γίνεται ἡ κοινωνία
αὐτῶν δούλης καὶ δούλου.

But among the barbarians, female and slave have the same rank. The reason for this is that they do not have a natural ruling principle but their union is one of a female slave with a male slave.

He is not blaming barbarians for mistreatment of their women, in contrast to the kindness of the Greeks. On the contrary, barbarians are insufficiently hierarchical for Aristotle. There is no distinction between slave and female because *all* barbarians – even the men – are by nature slaves¹⁸. Note here how he softens up his audience at the start by making a blunt statement of something he will try to prove later on. Small wonder then, if he ends up justifying the status quo: that is what he explicitly set out to do.

III. How Aristotle Makes his Argument

Aristotle has three basic moves, one philosophical, one teleological, and one rhetorical.

The basic philosophical move in the *Politics* is the denial of the Platonic doctrine of the Unity of Virtue. In order to maintain the inferiority of women and slaves (maintain in both senses), he must break Plato's unitary virtue up into three separate types of virtue: virtue for a man, virtue for a woman, and (even though it traps him in contradictions) virtue for a slave¹⁹.

actually lived, there is the danger that one will end up defending the status quo. For if one does not step outside the society in which one lives, how can one subject any aspect of it to criticism? There is, of course, a danger that one will be living so deeply in the midst of a social injustice that one will lack the perspective to see it as an injustice".

17 — For such a misreading, Nichols 1992: 19, Frank 2004: 101 = 2005: 30.

18 — Gigon 1965: 249-50.

19 — This is in keeping with his practice throughout. The *Politics* opens with the need to divide Plato's fusion of powers (Plato *Pol.* 258e-261a) back into their distinct powers: political, royal, domestic, despotic: 1251a7-17.

The teleological move is the next step: having split up Virtue (with a capital V) into a series of separate (lower-case) virtues, Aristotle must argue that each social role (as each function of a tool) implies a different virtue, which in turn is based on a different nature. Aristotle maintains throughout that different functions imply different natures.

The rhetorical move is the subtlest of all. Aristotle is faced with a problem. The division male/female exists by nature but is not necessarily hierarchical. The division master/slave is necessarily hierarchical but does not exist by nature. Aristotle's primary move here is to blur the two categories as much as possible. He will establish a vocabulary and use analogies that are valid for one case and then subtly apply them to the other. It is, in its own way, quite magisterial.

IV. The Philosophical Move (1259b18-60b20)

Aristotle's central philosophic move in this section is the denial of the unity of virtue. Despite our having the single name, *arete*, Aristotle must insist that virtue is not a single thing, since he wishes at every point to maintain that there are as many virtues as there are social roles. This leads him into several severe difficulties²⁰.

Aristotle's implicit and occasionally explicit enemy throughout is Plato. Schütrumpf (1993), Mayhew (1997), and others have illustrated the ongoing argument that Aristotle has with Plato in the matter of slavery. A contrast with the *Republic* can make clear how the philosophical and teleological arguments depend on each other²¹.

In the *Meno*, Socrates argues – against Meno and his teacher Gorgias – that virtue is a single form, that like strength or health, it is the same whether it shows up in a man or woman, an old man or a child (70a-73c). This entails some profound consequences, which here and in the *Republic* Plato is not afraid to face (though he does shirk the implications for slavery). Since both male and female dogs do not differ according to their virtue for guarding, we use both for guarding (*Rep.* 5, 451-62). Similarly, if men and women have the same capacity for virtue, it follows that they must have the same functions, that is the same roles within the state. The state is best served when both men and women are allowed to

20 — Deslauriers (2006: 54-55) notes Aristotle's difficulties in getting the answer he wants: "Natural subjects must have virtue, that virtue must be human (i.e., it must involve reason), and that human virtue must be different in kind from the virtue of free adult men. What he has then to explain is just how the virtues of women, children, and slaves differ one from the other and in general how they differ from the virtue of free men, while remaining recognizably human".

21 — Reeve 1996: 1 n. 34: "It is regrettable that Aristotle does not discuss Plato's claims (*Republic* V) that the natural differences between men and women should have no political consequences, that men and women with the same natural abilities and talents should receive the same education and play the same social roles".

exercise that virtue. This in turn means that if a woman turns out to have the highest amount of virtue she ought to be in the caste of the rulers²².

Fortenbough's misreading can illustrate Aristotle's philosophical and teleological moves (1975: 49-50):

Justifying the subordinate role of any large group²³ within a political community is in itself always a matter of considerable interest, but Aristotle's remarks have an additional historical interest in that they are quite consciously intended to support the claim of Gorgias that different groups within society have different roles and virtues (1260a27-2; cf. Plato, *Meno* 71c5-72a5). Aristotle accepted Plato's demand that a difference in role be tied to a relevant difference in nature or capacity (*Rep.* 454c7-d1).

But Fortenbough is simply wrong. In fact, Aristotle's logical move is the exact opposite of what Plato demanded: Plato moved from virtue to role. Aristotle is moving from role to virtue. Since the "difference in role" (the subordination of women and slaves) must be preserved, it is necessary to find or create a "difference in nature or capacity".

Aristotle is comparatively straightforward about why he denies the Unity of Virtue. If there is only one virtue, the foundations of absolute rule disappear²⁴. So he says (1260a20-29):

22 — Similar arguments are made at Pl. *Amat.* 138c, Pol. 259b-c; Xen. *Oec.* 3.4.6, 12; 3.6.14; cf. Pl. *Laches* 191c-e.

23 — Under the heading, "The imperfection of young people". The preceding sentences likewise present Aristotle benignly seeking improvements in education and only incidentally discovering a rationale for slavery and subordination: "Focusing upon emotional behaviour and making precise the relationship between emotion and reasoned reflection resulted not only in an improved formulation of educational theory but also in a natural or psychological explanation of the position of young people, slaves and women within the Greek city-state".

24 — For Moraux (1957: 28) the difference in virtue is "un point de détail" and not "une thèse centrale". Deslauriers (2006: 52-57) rightly sees it as essential: "Aristotle makes clear that there are two affirmative responses to this question ["whether slaves can have human virtues... whether in general natural subjects can have the virtues of free adult men"] that are unacceptable. The first is to say that the virtues of slaves, women, and children are identical with the virtues of adult free men. This cannot be right because, were the virtues of natural rulers and natural subjects to be identical, the naturalness of both the rule and the subjection would be threatened... The second affirmative answer to the question that Aristotle treats as unacceptable is to say that natural subjects and natural rulers have the same virtues, but possess them in different degrees. He rejects this for the same reason that he rejects the suggestion that the virtues are simply identical: he thinks that if natural rulers and natural subjects had the same virtues, even if natural rulers were to have more of those virtues, the rule of natural rulers would not be legitimate... The difficulty as Aristotle sees it is that we cannot say that slaves and women have the same virtues as men, even if we allow that they might have different degrees of those same virtues, and still hope to justify the relations of natural rulers to natural subjects... The position that slaves do not differ in kind from free men because they are capable of acquiring the same virtues is thus connected to the claim that ruling in any context is the same. If everyone — free man, slave, and woman — is capable of the same virtue, then anyone can (in principle) become a ruler, and anyone can be ruled". Cf. 62 n. 23, 65.

ὥστε φανερόν ὅτι ἔστιν ἠθικὴ ἀρετὴ τῶν εἰρημένων πάντων, καὶ οὐχ ἡ αὐτὴ σωφροσύνη γυναικὸς καὶ ἀνδρός, οὐδ' ἀνδρεία καὶ δικαιοσύνη, καθάπερ ᾤετο Σωκράτης, ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν ἀρχικὴ ἀνδρεία ἡ δ' ὑπηρετικὴ, ὁμοίως δ' ἔχει καὶ περὶ τὰς ἄλλας.

δῆλον δὲ τοῦτο καὶ κατὰ μέρος μᾶλλον ἐπισκοποῦσιν· καθόλου γὰρ οἱ λέγοντες ἐξαπατῶσιν ἑαυτοὺς ὅτι τὸ εὖ ἔχειν τὴν ψυχὴν ἀρετὴ, ἢ τὸ ὀρθοπραγεῖν, ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων· πολὺ γὰρ ἄμεινον λέγουσιν οἱ ἐξαριθμοῦντες τὰς ἀρετάς, ὥσπερ Γοργίας, τῶν οὕτως ὀριζομένων. διὸ δεῖ, ὥσπερ ὁ ποιητὴς εἶρηκε περὶ γυναικός, οὕτω νομίζειν ἔχειν περὶ πάντων· “γυναικὶ κόσμον ἢ σιγὴ φέρει”, ἀλλ' ἀνδρὶ οὐκέτι τοῦτο.

So it is obvious that there is a moral virtue for each of those mentioned above and that moderation is not the same for a woman and a man, not their courage or justice, as Socrates thought, but that there is a ruling and a serving courage²⁵, and this holds true for the other virtues²⁶.

This is clear when take a closer look, part by part²⁷. For those who speak in a general way deceive themselves by saying that virtue is a healthy soul [Plato *Rep.* 444d.], or acting correctly, or something of that sort [what Socrates was trying to get Meno to admit]. They speak more accurately when they enumerate the virtues, like Gorgias, than those who define it in that way. And so, what the poet [Sophocles, *Ajax* 293] said about woman, we must consider also holds true about all the other cases²⁸: “Silence lends a woman grace”, but this is not so for a man²⁹.

Aristotle cites Gorgias (whom elsewhere he mentions only ironically or in passing) not because he is enamored of his philosophic ideas, but because he provides a argument useful to holding society up and holding the Republic off.

V. The Teleological Move

Now that Aristotle has split up a unitary virtue into several virtues, a further move is necessary. For a mere random distribution of virtues is insufficient for absolute mastery. At this point nothing prevents a woman or a slave from having the “ruling courage” necessary to run the state.

25 — The term, *courage*, is deliberately chosen since it is etymologically obvious that a woman cannot really have ἀνδρεία ‘manliness’.

26 — The point is taken as given at 1277b20-25.

27 — Rightly Saunders 1995: 100: “‘In detail’, literally ‘part by part’, i.e. by individual virtues, parts of virtue in general”. The word choice guides the reader to the preordained conclusion.

28 — Jowett in Barnes 1984: 2000: “All classes must be deemed to have their special attributes”.

29 — A good example of intertextuality gone wrong: Since these words come from Tecmessa who quotes Ajax’s blunt reply of an old saw to her when she tried to stop him going out to kill the Greek commanders, some have wanted this to show that Aristotle really means the opposite of what he actually says; so Davis 1989: 44 = 1996: 25-26, Nichols 1983: 183-85; 1992: 32-34; Saxonhouse 1982: 208-9, 1985: 73; see the criticisms of Mulgan 1994: 189, Simpson 1998: 68 n. 91.

The Republic is still a possibility. So Aristotle resorts to a logical sleight of hand. Plato maintained that since there is no *relevant* physical difference between men and women, there should be no difference in social roles (*Rep.* 5.451c-56b). That is, the same virtue implies the same role. Aristotle stands Plato's argument on its head: the differences in social roles imply a different virtue, and the different virtues, as attributes, imply different natures.

The teleological argument is a profoundly subtle tool. Like the Delphic knife (apparently the Swiss army knife of antiquity) it can be put to a number of different uses. In particular, the teleological argument determines the results produced. By beginning with the ends, he ends with his beginnings. Aristotle argues consistently on a teleological basis that the different social roles he see about him (wives, slaves, craftsmen) necessitate that there be different corresponding virtues, which in turn derive from fundamentally different natures. In a characteristic move he begins with bold claims that he will repeat but not substantiate (1252b1-5):

φύσει μὲν οὖν διώρισται τὸ θῆλυ καὶ τὸ δοῦλον (οὐθὲν γὰρ ἡ φύσις ποιεῖ τοιοῦτον οἷον οἱ χαλκοτύποι τὴν Δελφικὴν μάχαιραν, πενιχρῶς, ἀλλ' ἐν πρὸς ἓν· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν ἀποτελοῖτο κάλλιστα τῶν ὀργάνων ἕκαστον, μὴ πολλοῖς ἔργοις ἀλλ' ἐνὶ δουλεῦον).

So the feminine and the slavish are defined as different *by nature*. For nature makes nothing cheap, the way smiths make the Delphic knife, but one thing intended for one thing; and therefore each tool would perform its function (*telos*) most beautifully if it served (*doulos*) one task rather than many.

Different functions imply different natures. Again, Aristotle's vocabulary subtly guides the reader to his end. First, Aristotle speaks not of women and slaves but "the feminine" and "the slavish", abstract neuter nouns reified as eternal principles (*das Ewig-Weibliche* and *-Sklavische*)³⁰. Slaves and women are different tools but what their ends are is left unspecified at this point.

So too at 1260a14-17:

περὶ τὰς ἠθικὰς ἀρετὰς... δεῖν μὲν μετέχειν πάντας, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον, ἀλλ' ὅσον <ικανόν> ἑκάστῳ πρὸς τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔργον.

30 — Nietzsche 1974:18: "das Ewig-Weibliche ist der idealisirte Sklavensinn" ("The 'eternal feminine' is the idealized slave mentality").

Concerning the moral virtues... on the one hand all must have a share in them, but not in the same way, but in a way that is proper for his own work.

The division of virtues and the teleological argument, however, run Aristotle into trouble. If each social role is tied to a different virtue, we ought to have as many different virtues as there are steps in the great ladder of being, each tied to a different nature³¹. This is Meno's unformed opinion (72a2-4):

καθ' ἐκάστην γὰρ τῶν πράξεων καὶ τῶν ἡλικιῶν πρὸς ἕκαστον ἔργον ἐκάστω ἡμῶν ἡ ἀρετὴ ἐστίν,

In accordance with each of our activities and times of life, each of us has a virtue for each job.

Now, this is at least a consistent position and a form of it is held in many feudal societies. But this will not do for Aristotle, since he needs to have an absolute difference in nature between free and slave, and he is unwilling to grasp the nettle and claim that ordinary workers have a fundamentally different physical and mental nature than the aristocrats. So he continues (1260a33-36) that just as a child's virtue is not in relation to himself (πρὸς αὐτόν):

ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ δούλου πρὸς δεσπότην. ἔθεμεν δὲ πρὸς τὰναγκαῖα χρήσιμον εἶναι τὸν δοῦλον, ὥστε δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ἀρετῆς δεῖται μικρᾶς, καὶ τοσαύτης ὅπως μήτε δι' ἀκολασίαν μήτε διὰ δειλίαν ἐλλείψῃ τῶν ἔργων.

So too the virtue of slave is in relation to his master. We set down that the slave is useful with respect to the necessities of life, so that he clearly needs only a small amount of virtue, just enough so he doesn't leave his jobs undone through disorderly living or cowardice [the typical slave vices].

Here is the teleological argument and we note how it contradicts what Aristotle has said before. Here the difference is one of quantity not quality. He continues (1260a36-b2):

ἀπορήσειε δ' ἂν τις, τὸ νῦν εἰρημένον εἰ ἀληθές, ἄρα καὶ τοὺς τεχνίτας δεήσει ἔχειν ἀρετήν· πολλάκις γὰρ δι' ἀκολασίαν ἐλλείπουσι τῶν ἔργων.

31 — Aristotle falls into the trap of ever tinier divisions of *arete*; so not just virtue for a slave, but "We list many types of slaves, just as their jobs are different" (1277a37-38).

One might raise the question whether, if what has just been said is true, artisans too will need to have virtue.

Here is the answer:

ὁ γὰρ βάνανσος τεχνίτης ἀφωρισμένην τινὰ ἔχει δουλείαν, καὶ ὁ μὲν δοῦλος τῶν φύσει, σκυτοτόμος δ' οὐθείς, οὐδὲ τῶν ἄλλων τεχνιτῶν.

The ordinary artisan is under a special sort of slavery [i.e. he is subordinate], while the slave is one of those by nature, but no shoemaker is or any of the other artisans.

That is, Aristotle is unwilling to consider the idea of “Shoemaker by Nature”, but he must have the category “Slave by Nature”³².

VI. The Rhetorical Move³³

How does he do it? How does he get the category Slave by Nature? For he raises briefly the notion of *nomos* versus *physis* only in order to reject it (1253b20-22)³⁴. The answer is that he makes use of the undeniable category of “woman by nature”. How does he justify the subordination of women? The answer is that he makes use of the undeniable fact of the subordination of slaves³⁵.

32 — Newman 1887-1902, II: 222: “Yet in 4 (7). 8. 1328 b 6 and 6 (4), 4, 1291 a 1 sq. artisans are admitted to be a necessary element in a State: it seems strange then that they are not by nature”. There is no conceptual difficulty about having a *Vaishya* caste, for example, but for Aristotle (and Greek culture in general) the great gulf is fixed between slave and free. For attempts to make this mean that artisans are somehow *worse* than slaves, see Jowett 1885: 2: 40; Schütrumpf 1991, I: 379; Dobbs 1994: 90; Simpson 1998: 69.

33 — On Aristotle’s dubious rhetoric throughout *Pol.* 1, see Millett 2007: 192-93: “In his presentation of slavery, Aristotle wishes to win over his audience. That is apparent in modes of argument reminiscent of law-court speeches: exhortatory use of *delon estin* (when the point at issue seems not necessarily clear); arguments concluded with some variant on the phrase ‘both expedient and just’; irony (‘even among the wise...’); and appeals to non-philosophical authorities: Hesiod, Euripides, and apparent proverbs”.

34 — Goldschmidt 1973: 158. A long digression on property acquisition (1.4) follows, one of whose effects (if not purposes) is to blunt the reader’s perception of the weaknesses of Aristotle’s case. Garver notes the *husteron proteron* of Aristotle’s presentation (2011: 19): “To see how odd it is for Aristotle first to show that natural slaves are necessary, and then that they exist, imagine proceeding in the same way, first showing the necessity of the male/female relation, and then proving the existence of women”. This is contrary to “Aristotle’s general methodology. Aristotle says that it is improper to inquire what a thing is, until you have established that it is, i.e. established that there is such a thing (e.g. *An. Po.* II. 93a19-20)”—Charlton 1970: xv.

35 — Schofield (1990: 11) indirectly points to Aristotle’s strategy: the well-known mental inferiority of women is used to imply that of slaves. “The key assumption Aristotle makes is that the grip of women and slaves on practical reason is such that they need to have their lives organized by others. He devotes very little energy to arguing this in the case of women. He takes it simply for a fact. And he is mistaken. The obvious reason for this male mistake is an inference from the pliability of many women reinforced by contemporary social forms: a classic instance of false consciousness. The

This fusion and confusion of categories starts at the beginning of the *Politics* (1252a24-34):

Εἰ δὴ τις ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὰ πράγματα φυόμενα βλέψειεν, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις, καὶ ἐν τούτοις κάλλιστ' ἂν οὕτω θεωρήσειεν. ἀνάγκη δὴ πρῶτον συνδυάζεσθαι τοὺς ἄνευ ἀλλήλων μὴ δυναμένους εἶναι, οἷον θῆλυ μὲν καὶ ἄρρεν τῆς γεννήσεως ἔνεκεν (καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐκ προαιρέσεως, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ζώοις καὶ φυτοῖς φυσικὸν τὸ ἐφίεσθαι, οἷον αὐτό, τοιοῦτον καταλιπεῖν ἕτερον), ἄρχον δὲ φύσει καὶ ἀρχόμενον διὰ τὴν σωτηρίαν. τὸ μὲν γὰρ δυνάμενον τῇ διανοίᾳ προορᾶν ἄρχον φύσει καὶ δεσπόζον φύσει, τὸ δὲ δυνάμενον [ταῦτα] τῷ σώματι πονεῖν ἀρχόμενον καὶ φύσει δοῦλον· διὸ δεσπότη καὶ δούλω ταῦτο συμφέρει.

As in other cases, one can get the clearest view of these things [the make up of the polis] by seeing how things grow from their beginnings.

First, then, it is *necessary* for there to be a coupling of those who cannot exist without one another: on the one hand, male and female, on account of reproduction (and this not from deliberate choice, but just as in the other animals and plants from a *natural* drive to leave another just like itself); and on the other hand, that which rules by *nature* and that which is ruled, for the purpose of preservation. For that which can foresee with the mind is that which rules by *nature* and masters by *nature*, and that which can work with the body is that which is ruled and slave by *nature*. Therefore the same thing benefits both master and slave.

There are four distinct statements here which A. runs together both syntactically and logically.

1. Master and slave form a basic, necessary, and irreducible building unit of the polis exactly like that of male and female (cf. 1253b4-6). Slaves and women are therefore indispensable to the polis but do not have a share in it (1278a2-4, 1328a22-25).

2. The essential purpose of the male/female unit is reproduction (γέννησις); that of the master/slave unit is production (σωτηρία)³⁶.

3. Master and slave benefit equally from this relationship³⁷.

treatment of slavery is quite different. It occupies the best part of five chapters of *Pol. A*". As though Aristotle had made a deep study of the pliable personalities of Athenian women before drawing his conclusions.

36 — Aristotle locates the slave's production only within the household and limits his interpretation of slavery to a part of the science of economics (ignoring contemporary reality of slaves used as miners, policemen, or mass-labor). Cf. 1253b15 (1260a33) where slaves provide ἀναγκαίαν χρεῖαν "essential services". Aristotle here anticipates Engel's opposition of production and reproduction (1884; Engels 1972: 71-2). Feminist re-examination of the production/reproduction dichotomy began with Rubin 1975, especially among Marxist and materialist feminists; see inter alia Rapp 1979: 511; Barrett 1980; Hartsock 1983; Jaggar 1983, esp. 70-76, 156-58; Laslett and Bender 1989; Vogel 1995, esp. 23-37, 52-66, 80-88. Jackson 1998.

37 — More at 1254a17-32, 1254b6-20, 1255a1-2, 1255b4-15, 1278b32-37. This may be

4. The definition of master is “that which can foresee with the mind”; the definition of slave is both positive “that which can work with the body” and by implication negative: “that which cannot foresee with the mind”.

Here at the beginning of his argument we can see the interdependence of Aristotle’s assertions about women and slaves. For it is not the case that male and female cannot exist apart from each other. What is the case is that the *species* cannot continue to exist without sexual reproduction by males into females. Equally, that slaves cannot exist apart from masters is manifestly untrue³⁸. But the analogy of the nuclear unit of male and female makes it seem as though master and slave have the same kind of link necessary to existence.

Aristotle, in a repeated move, begins by the direct assertion of what he will later attempt to justify³⁹. He has two categories: the female by nature and the slave by nature. Since he does not need to prove the existence of the female-by-nature, he can assert the existence of the slave-by-nature⁴⁰. He wishes to establish as natural and parallel the two power relations he considers fundamental to society: male over female and ruler over ruled⁴¹. Since he begins with the assertion that male and female, masters

both rhetorically and logically the best indicator of a spurious argument about societal roles. Pellegrin 1982: 350: “Le discours des classes dominantes a toujours présenté l’oppression non seulement comme nécessaire (naturelle), mais comme profitable aussi à ceux qui la subissent. Il est donc bon pour l’esclave d’être esclave”. When anyone claims that something is not only necessary but also in your interest, he is lying. Necessity, that which is inescapable, is sufficient in itself; no further justification is needed. No one says, “You can’t breathe under water, and it’s better so”. “You are subject to the laws of gravity, and a good thing too”. Rather, they say, “Women shouldn’t vote, go outside, go to medical school, and it’s better for them that way”.

38 — Not only is it the case that “freed (supposedly) natural slaves do not simply die like flies” (Reeve 1998: li), but how do the barbarian nations composed of uniform actual or proto-slaves (1252b5-9, 1280a31-35, 1285a 16-24, 1330a25-33, 1338b17-24; *EN* 1149a9-12) continue to survive?

39 — Brunt 1993: 356: “He announces that the household comprises masters, those capable of mental foresight, and slaves, those capable only of bodily work (1252a26-39). He thus presupposes the conclusions of later argument that there are two such categories of human beings, and ignores the probability that slavery could hardly have come into existence without the coercive power of the state”.

40 — Just 1985: 176-77: “We do not in their case find any distinction drawn between ‘women by nature’ and ‘women as a result of society’, that is to say, between the possession of a set of ‘natural’ characteristics and the constraints of a particular social role. Rather, women are what they are. And in Athens women were at all times subject to the authority of men. Throughout their lives they remained under the guardianship of a male *kúptōs* (master/controller), whether father, brother, husband, son or some other male relative or appointee, in whose household and under whose protection they lived, and by whom they were at all times represented. Women are the entirely dependent wards of the male citizenry, and by Aristotle they are seen as designed for that role by nature. In their case social role and natural characteristics collapse; the one can be read off the other unproblematically: women are dependent beings”.

41 — Baruzzi 1970: 17: “Es gibt das von Natur Regierende und das von Natur Regierte. Bevor Aristoteles ergründen will, warum es diesen Unterschied von Regierendem und Reglernten gibt, zählt er ihn als etwas natürlich Vorkommendes so einfachthin auf, wie das Vorkommen von Weiblichem

and slaves, cannot *exist* without each, that he then goes on to create as slaves people who cannot exist without masters is not surprising. Equally unsurprising is the fact that Aristotle leaves the idea of the master who cannot exist without his slaves unexplored⁴².

Syntactically this is a convoluted sentence, and I think there is a reason for the long parenthetical insertion, for it helps disguise the fact these two primary relations are not in fact at all parallel and Aristotle works to confuse the categories of Reproduction (female) and Production (slave)⁴³. Aristotle establishes early on a barrage of words for *necessary* and *natural*⁴⁴. The sexual difference is rooted in nature. Without sexual reproduction the species cannot continue. All well and good, but the relation of master and slave is not necessary in this sense at all⁴⁵. Aristotle himself seems aware of this and resorts to a bit of sleight of hand in his quotation of Hesiod (1252b12):

καὶ ὁρθῶς Ἡσίοδος εἶπε ποιήσας “οἶκον μὲν πρῶτιστα γυναῖκά τε
βοῦν τ’ ἀροτῆρα”. ὁ γὰρ βοῦς ἀντ’ οἰκέτου τοῖς πένησιν ἐστίν.

As Hesiod rightly said, “A house first of all, and a wife and a plow ox”
[*Works and Days* 405]: for the ox is in place of a house-slave for the poor.

It is clear then that households do and can exist without slaves, and Aristotle gives the game away, when much later in the *Politics* (1323a5-6) he remarks that “the poor have to use their women and children as attendants because of their lack of slaves”⁴⁶. Here is the beginning of the rhetorical move: the blurring of arguments about women and slaves. He is also setting up his master analogy, that of soul to body.

und Männlichem”.

42 — As opposed to Diogenes, for example: DL 6.55, Sen. *Tranq.* 8.7-9.

43 — Aristotle rules women’s work out of production; women’s role is rather conservation: *Pol.* 1277b23-25: τοῦ μὲν γὰρ κτᾶσθαι τῆς δὲ φυλάττειν ἔργον ἐστίν “His role is to gain possession, hers to guard the possessions” (Fememías 1994: 17). Deslauriers 2006: 53 n. 12: “Aristotle’s focus on domestic slavery is important here for two reasons: first, because it makes the case of women and that of slaves seem parallel, when they might not so seem had Aristotle focused rather on industrial slavery, and second, because slavery in the context of the household is more likely than industrial slavery to appear to be a natural relation”.

44 — Frank (2004, 2005) argues that *physis* in Aristotle refers to “growth” not essence, and so “nature” does not imply necessity or immutability. See below.

45 — Gigon 1965: 248: “Es ist kaum eine Überforderung des Textes, wenn wir folgern, dass ebenso wie Mann und Frau auch diese Partner nicht ohne einander gegenseitig bestehen können”.

46 — Saunders 1995: 72: “On this showing, a good many ancient Greek households were incomplete”. Cf. Brunt 1993: 360.

VII. *The Rhetoric of Slavery*

It is easiest to see how Aristotle deploys all these moves by examining some details of two of the most important passages in the first book of the *Politics*, beginning with some of the major points of chapter four.

In 1253b3-11 Aristotle sets up three basic hierarchical relations

Master : slave

Husband : wife

Father : child

οικονομίας δὲ μέρος ἐξ ὧν πάλιν οἰκία συνέστηκεν· οἰκία δὲ τέλειος ἐκ δούλων καὶ ἐλευθέρων. ἐπεὶ δ' ἐν τοῖς ἐλαχίστοις πρῶτον ἕκαστον ζητητέον, πρῶτα δὲ καὶ ἐλάχιστα μέρη οἰκίας δεσπότης καὶ δοῦλος, καὶ πόσις καὶ ἄλοχος, καὶ πατήρ καὶ τέκνα, περὶ τριῶν ἂν τούτων σκεπτέον εἴη τί ἕκαστον καὶ ποῖον δεῖ εἶναι. ταῦτα δ' ἐστὶ δεσποτική καὶ γαμική (ἀνώνυμον γὰρ ἢ γυναικὸς καὶ ἀνδρὸς σύζευξις) καὶ τρίτον τεκνοποιητική (καὶ γὰρ αὕτη οὐκ ὠνόμασται ἰδίῳ ὀνόματι).

The parts of household management correspond to the parts out of which the household in turn is made; and a complete household is made up of slaves and free. And since each thing must first be examined in terms of its smallest parts, the first and smallest parts of a household are master and slave, husband and wife, father and children. And concerning these three things, each must be examined as to what is it and what sort of thing it must be. These are the art of the master, the art of marriage (for the union of man and wife does not have a specific adjective) and the art of creating children (for this too has not been designated with its own proper name)⁴⁷.

Again social roles are the starting point, the proof of different corresponding virtues.

He almost immediately abandons these three hierarchies⁴⁸ to set up a more complex pair of four linked relationships that isolate the master from (literally) dirtying his hands (1253b23-54a12):

Master -> slave -> tool -> product

Craftsman (ἀρχιτέκτων) -> assistant (ὑπηρέτης) -> tool -> product

47 — To interrogate the text at this point: the three pairs are meant to be hierarchical with the master/husband/father alone exercising all three skills (Saunders 1995: 72). Yet obviously both husband and wife must have the *marriage* skill (almost as a matter of definition), and both have the *baby-making* skill, since it is impossible for either partner to go it alone (Aristotle's starting point; but see below on his biology).

48 — Recapitulated at 1259a37-b1 and never to be seen again.

Between the master and the tool is the slave/assistant, a tool for using tools (1253b33)⁴⁹. The master does not weave: he orders the slave (the ensouled/intelligent-at-least-to-the-point-of-understanding-orders/endowed-with-a-soul-albeit-a-defective-one possession) to weave on a loom (the tool) which produces cloth, another type of possession. Aristotle then reverses this argument by analogy. Since slaves are the ones who handle tools, anyone who handles tools ought (in a well-run polis) to be a slave⁵⁰.

Aristotle thus subtly implies a series of analogies. Women and slaves are different kinds of tools (1252a34-54b4). The master uses the slave as an intermediary for production, the female as intermediary for reproduction. If looms ran themselves there would be no need of slaves. If men could have children any other way, there would be no need of women⁵¹. Even as the resultant product belongs to the master, not the slave, so the offspring belong to the father. They are a part of him, not of the field in which they were sown (*EN* 1134b8-13).

Aristotle changes tack again at the opening of Chapter 5 (1254a17-21):

Πότερον δ' ἔστι τις φύσει τοιοῦτος ἢ οὐ, καὶ πότερον βέλτιον καὶ δίκαιόν τι διουλεύειν ἢ οὐ, ἀλλὰ πᾶσα δουλεία παρὰ φύσιν ἐστὶ, μετὰ ταῦτα σκεπτέον. οὐ χαλεπὸν δὲ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ θεωρῆσαι καὶ ἐκ τῶν γινομένων καταμαθεῖν.

Whether anyone is of this sort [a slave] by nature or not, and whether it is better and just for anyone to be a slave or not, and if not whether all slavery is against nature, must be investigated next. But it is not difficult both to see the answer by reasoning and to learn it from what happens.

49 — See Pellegrin 2001: 41 for this “nicht vollkommen klar” description, which somewhat messes up Aristotle’s own classification. The soul/body, craftsman/tool, master/slave analogy is repeated at *EE* 1241b17-22.

50 — Cf. 1328b37-29a3, 1329a25-29, 1330a26-30, where all farming ideally ought to be done by slaves; and 1278a6-8, 1277a38-39, where all craftsmen (who lead a slavish life already) really ought to be slaves.

51 — For the recurrent Greek “Dream of a World without Women” (Arthur 1983), see Aesc. *Eum.* 658-66, 736-38; Eur. *Hipp.* 616-19, *Med.* 573-5; cf. Milton *PL.* 10.888-95; Vernant 1965: 106 = 1985: 164 = 2006: 165: “Ce rêve d’une hérédité purement paternelle n’a jamais cessé de hanter l’imagination grecque... C’est le même rêve qui se déguise en théorie scientifique chez les médecins et les philosophes quand ils soutiennent, ainsi que le fait, par exemple, Aristote, que dans la génération la femelle n’émet pas de semence, que son rôle est tout passif, la fonction active et motrice appartenant exclusivement au mâle”, citing Arist. *GA* 729a ff. Songe-Møller 2002: 56: “In his biological writings it is important for him to show that the man – or more generally the male – is the sole source of offspring, a position that Aristotle interprets metaphysically: the male is the proper and determining *arche* of the offspring. Thus the man is effectively self-sufficient in both a biological and a metaphysical sense”.

Now in fact, at the end of Chapter 4, in the lines immediately preceding these, while discussing what the one function (and hence the one virtue and hence the one nature) of the slave might be, Aristotle had already concluded (1254a13-17):

τίς μὲν οὖν ἡ φύσις τοῦ δούλου καὶ τίς ἡ δύναμις, ἐκ τούτων δῆλον· ὁ γὰρ μὴ αὐτοῦ φύσει ἀλλ' ἄλλου ἄνθρωπος ὢν, οὗτος φύσει δοῦλός ἐστιν, ἄλλου δ' ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος ὃς ἂν κτῆμα ἢ ἄνθρωπος ὢν, κτῆμα δὲ ὄργανον πρακτικὸν καὶ χωριστόν.

What *the nature of the slave* is and what is his ability is clear from these things. For he who does not belong to himself *by nature* but belongs to another, though a human being, is *by nature a slave*.

Aristotle has not in truth talked at all about the slave by nature; rather by a subtle syntactic shift, “the nature of the slave” (ἡ φύσις τοῦ δούλου) has become “the slave by nature” (φύσει δοῦλος). Thus Aristotle opens Chapter 5 with his conclusion already in place.

Aristotle begins his argument for the existence of the slave by nature, not with argument nor with the craftsman : assistant : tool hierarchy, but a return to analogy he had planted at the beginning⁵², that of soul to body (1254a28-36):

ὅσα γὰρ ἐκ πλειόνων συνέστηκε καὶ γίνεται ἐν τι κοινόν, εἴτε ἐκ συνεχῶν εἴτε ἐκ διηρημένων, ἐν ἅπασιν ἐμφαίνεται τὸ ἄρχον καὶ τὸ ἀρχόμενον, καὶ τοῦτο ἐκ τῆς ἀπάσης φύσεως ἐνυπάρχει τοῖς ἐμψύχοις... τὸ δὲ ζῶον πρῶτον συνέστηκεν ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος, ὃν τὸ μὲν ἄρχον ἐστὶ φύσει τὸ δ' ἀρχόμενον.

Whatever is composed of many parts and the result is a single unity, from either continuous or discontinuous parts, in all cases the ruling and the ruled appear and this is inherent in living things from nature as a whole⁵³... An animal is primarily composed of soul and body, of which the one is the ruling element by nature, the other the ruled.

Aristotle's basic point is that in any unitary (harmonious) combination of things there must be a hierarchy. This is manifestly untrue⁵⁴. And

52 — 1252a31-32, quoted above, contrasting διανοίᾳ with σώματι.

53 — Reeve (1998: 7) nicely translates: “These are present in living things, because this is how nature as a whole works”.

54 — Contrast Aristotle on animals: cranes and bees have a ruler; ants and many others do not (HA 488a9-12. Saunders 1995: 77: “Are there then no *purely* co-operative enterprises, no associations, in which no one rules? And what would constitute ‘rule’ in a physical compound?”. Aristotle raises the example of military alliance (συμμαχία 1261a25) and his own social model of the polis is against this earlier assertion (1261a22-b6). In a polis everyone can't be archon all at once. They have to take turns. “And so in this way it turns out that everyone rules, as if shoemakers and carpenters swapped places and the same people weren't always shoemakers and carpenters” (καὶ συμβαίνει δὴ

the seemingly innocuous throw-away phrase, “from either continuous or discontinuous parts” plays an important part, for Aristotle is arguing that the organic unity and organic hierarchy of mind over body (within the body) can apply at a distance between bodies, to the discrete units of the household, the women, children, and slaves⁵⁵. Aristotle then hurries on to introduce a further analogy (1254b10):

πάλιν ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ζώοις ὡσαύτως

This in turn holds true in the case of man and other animals.

Finally we get to the heart of the matter (1254b13-16):

ἔτι δὲ τὸ ἄρρεν πρὸς τὸ θῆλυ φύσει τὸ μὲν κρείττον τὸ δὲ χεῖρον, καὶ τὸ μὲν ἄρχον τὸ δ' ἀρχόμενον. τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τρόπον ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι καὶ ἐπὶ πάντων ἀνθρώπων.

Further, the relation of male to female is by nature that of superior to inferior and ruler to ruled. The same relation *necessarily* holds true between all human beings.

Thus all the preceding hierarchies are parts of the master hierarchy of male over female, which is stated as axiomatic, in need of no proof. The *natural* differences between humans and animals substantiates the *natural* differences between men and women. And these differences provide the analogical basis for what follows – the *social* differences between free and slave (1254b16-20):

ὅσοι μὲν οὖν τοσοῦτον διεστᾶσιν ὅσον ψυχὴ σώματος καὶ ἄνθρωπος θηρίου (διάκεινται δὲ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ὅσων ἐστὶν ἔργον ἢ τοῦ σώματος χρήσις, καὶ τοῦτ' ἐστ' ἀπ' αὐτῶν βέλτιστον), οὗτοι μὲν εἰσι φύσει δοῦλοι, οἷς βέλτιόν ἐστιν ἀρχεσθαι ταύτην τὴν ἀρχήν, εἴπερ καὶ τοῖς εἰρημένοις.

Therefore, those who differ from each other as much as the soul differs from the body or human from animal (and this is the condition of

τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον ὥστε πάντα ἄρχειν, ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ μετέβαλλον οἱ σκυτεῖς καὶ οἱ τέκτονες καὶ μὴ αἰεὶ οἱ αὐτοὶ σκυτοτόμοι καὶ τέκτονες ἦσαν). But this model undercuts the very permanent, natural, distinction that Aristotle must have between free and slaves. We can watch him struggle with democracy, insisting that some jobs at least ought to be permanent: 1261a29-b6; cf. 1252a16, 1259b4-6. The permanent inferiority of the female provides the model: 1259a37-b10.

55 — Cf. 1254a16-17, where the slave is a tool, and a tool is something for accomplishing some purpose and separable from its owner (i.e. your hammer, not your hand: κτῆμα δὲ ὄργανον πρακτικὸν καὶ χωριστόν). Nichols sees the significance of this but believes it is part of Aristotle's secret attempt to do away with slavery (1992: 21) “A whole with separable parts is somewhat precarious, prey to the very insecurity against which slavery may have been meant to protect (1252a31)”.

those whose work is the use of their body, and if this is the best that can be expected of them) are slaves by nature.

Here Aristotle sets up the two analogies of soul to body and human to animal. He then airily asserts that the hierarchy of male over female necessarily exists in all possible human relationships⁵⁶. At this point, however, an obvious objection occurs: slaves manifestly are not as different from masters as animals are from humans⁵⁷. Aristotle has two answers: one is to return to the doctrine that different roles indicate different virtues and different natures. This the mere fact that they are slaves, doing work with their bodies, proves that they are slaves by nature (1254b20-26). More subtle is the lingering influence of the analogy he has just utilized above: that of the difference between men and women⁵⁸. Women have a clear use as tools – to make babies; ergo, they have a different nature. So Aristotle can argue, slaves have a clear use as tools – for completing the actions of the master; ergo, they too have a different nature.

This becomes clearer in the next paragraph. Nature, it seems, can sometimes fail to live up to Aristotle's high ideals (1254b27-34; cf. 1254a36-39, 1254b13-14, 1255b3-4, 1259b2-3):

βούλεται μὲν οὖν ἡ φύσις καὶ τὰ σώματα διαφέροντα ποιεῖν τὰ τῶν ἐλευθέρων καὶ τῶν δούλων... συμβαίνει δὲ πολλάκις καὶ τοῦναντίον, τοὺς μὲν τὰ σώματα ἔχειν ἐλευθέρων τοὺς δὲ τὰς ψυχάς·

Nature therefore wishes to make the bodies of free persons and slaves different as well [as their souls]... yet the opposite often results: some have the bodies of free men, others the soul.

That is, Aristotle is free to ignore any contrary evidence⁵⁹. How happy Aristotle would have been with the IQ test and a copy of Herrnstein

56 — Gigon 1965: 266: "Die anthropologische Tragweite des ἄκυρον bei der Frau ist dagegen genau so undurchsichtig wie vorhin die Tragweite des entsprechenden ἡγεμονικώτερον beim Manne (1259b2). Obenhin sind beide Begriffe durchaus verständlich. Doch für eine besondere Beschaffenheit des Logikon mit ihnen indiziert werden soll, kann man nur erraten. Vollends rätselhaft wird der Status des Sklaven. Was bedeutet es, wenn er zwar das Logikon, aber in keiner Weise das βουλευτικόν besitzt? Es bleibt nur der Rückgriff auf 1254b22-23, wonach er den Logos zwar nicht besitzt, aber zu begreifen vermag".

57 — Brunt 1993: 379: "So Aristotle needed to establish that there must be a class of human beings capable of no better lot. But there is nothing in his hierarchical theory of the natural order that demands that there must be a gradation among human beings corresponding to that between soul and body or man and beasts. I can hardly believe that Aristotle would himself have found his theory convincing unless he had been persuaded by experience of the existence of natural slaves. But though he says that this can be proved by empirical evidence [e.g. 1254a20-21], he offers none".

58 — Gigon (1965: 256) points out the slipperiness of this transition.

59 — Hence his earlier qualification that the examples used to show what is natural must be κατὰ φύσιν and not degenerate (1254a36-b2). That this is a circular argument is not coincidental. It allows Aristotle to ignore even the "George Washington Carver" argument: the sport, the exception

and Murray's *The Bell-Curve* (1994)⁶⁰. For these would provide just what he most wanted: a theory of inferiority founded on an observable “natural” difference. Aristotle is kept from a completely racial theory of slavery, dearly as he would like one (see 1255a25-30, 1327b18-31), by the phenomena of the actual practice of Greek slavery: not all slaves were in fact barbarians. However, the case where nature never fails, is to make women different from men. Thus the consistent and visible difference of men from women provides the analogy for the inconsistent and invisible difference of free men from slaves. At the same time the subordination of slaves provides the analogy for the subordination of women.

VIII. Aristotle's Unanswered Questions

We do not have the space to go through Aristotle's rhetoric point by point. I merely want to draw attention to two unanswered rhetorical questions (1259b22-60a4):

πρῶτον μὲν οὖν περὶ δούλων ἀπορήσειεν ἂν τις, πότερον ἔστιν ἀρετὴ τις δούλου παρὰ τὰς ὀργανικὰς καὶ διακονικὰς ἄλλη τιμιωτέρα τούτων, οἷον σωφροσύνη καὶ ἀνδρεία καὶ δικαιοσύνη καὶ <ἐκάστη> τῶν ἄλλων τῶν τοιούτων ἕξεων, ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία παρὰ τὰς σωματικὰς ὑπηρεσίας (ἔχει γὰρ ἀπορίαν ἀμφοτέρως· **εἴτε γὰρ ἔστιν, τί διοίσουσι τῶν ἐλευθέρων;** εἴτε μὴ ἔστιν, ὄντων ἀνθρώπων καὶ λόγου κοινωνούντων ἄτοπον). σχεδὸν δὲ ταυτόν ἐστι τὸ ζητούμενον καὶ περὶ γυναικὸς καὶ παιδός, πότερα καὶ τούτων εἰσὶν ἀρεταί, καὶ δεῖ τὴν γυναῖκα εἶναι σώφρονα καὶ ἀνδρείαν καὶ δικαίαν, καὶ παῖς ἔστι καὶ ἀκόλαστος καὶ σώφρων, ἢ οὐ;

καθόλου δὴ τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐπισκεπτέον περὶ ἀρχομένου φύσει καὶ ἄρχοντος, πότερον ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ ἢ ἕτερα. **εἰ μὲν γὰρ δεῖ ἀμφοτέρους μετέχειν καλοκαγαθίας, διὰ τί τὸν μὲν ἄρχειν δέοι ἂν τὸν δὲ ἄρχεσθαι καθάπαξ;** οὐδὲ γὰρ τῷ μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον οἷόν τε διαφέρειν· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἄρχεσθαι καὶ ἄρχειν εἶδει διαφέρει, τὸ δὲ μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον οὐδέν. εἰ δὲ τὸν μὲν δεῖ τὸν δὲ μὴ, θαυμαστόν... φανερόν τοίνυν ὅτι ἀνάγκη μὲν μετέχειν ἀμφοτέρους ἀρετῆς, ταύτης δ' εἶναι διαφοράς, ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν φύσει ἀρχομένων⁶¹.

to the rules.

60 — See also Murray 2012.

61 — Aristotle's train of thought is more than usually opaque here, and seems to run in two directions. Things are not helped by a textual problem. All the Greek mss read ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν φύσει ἀρχομένων “just as there are in those who are ruled by nature”. However, the Latin translation of the Dominican Guillelmus de Moerbeke (Willem van Moerbeke, c. 1265) of a lost ms. (Γ) reads “quemadmodum et natura principantium et subiectorum”, which might point to a Greek text of *ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν φύσει ἀρχόντων καὶ ἀρχομένων, or might merely reflect Willem's emended understanding of the text. This is what Susemihl (1894) printed with the app. crit. “om. II Ar. Bk,” rather giving the impression that most mss carry his reading, and a handful accidentally omitted it, but II stands for all the Greek manuscripts known to him plus the Aldine, Ar. for Leonardo Bruni's Latin

First then, about slaves, one might ask whether there is any virtue in a slave, besides his virtues as tool and servant, more honorable than these, such as self-restraint and manliness and justice and any other similar states of mind, or is there none apart from service with the body? There is a difficulty either way. **For if there is [such virtue], how will they differ from free men?** If there is not, since they are human and have a share of reason, it is odd. There is nearly the same question about woman and child. Are there virtues in them? Is it necessary for woman to be self-restrained and manly and just? Is a child either undisciplined or self-controlled, or not?

This must be examined in relation to the whole question of the one who is ruled by nature and the one who rules. Is it the same virtue or different? **For if both have a share in gentlemanliness, why it is necessary for the one to rule and the other to be ruled once and for all?** For it is not possible for them to differ in terms of greater or lesser. For to be ruled and to rule differ in kind, and not merely in greater and lesser. But if one must [have virtue], and the other not, that is surprising... Obviously then, it is necessary that both have a share of virtue, but that there are differences in it, just as there are in those who are ruled by nature.

In the course of trying to disprove that there is a single virtue that all humans share, Aristotle asks, “For if there is [such a single virtue], how will [slaves] differ from free persons?” How indeed? And a bit further, “For if they both [men and women, ruler and ruled] should share in gentlemanliness, why should the one rule and the other be ruled once and for all?” Why indeed? We note how the term used, καλοκαγαθία “gentlemanliness” – a term which only Plato (*Gorg.* 470e) would think of applying to women, and no one to slaves – determines the result sought.

If these questions are allowed to be answered, we get Aristotle’s nightmare: the dissolution of society, and in its place the world of Plato’s

translation (1433), and Bk. for Bekker. Thurot (1860: 16-18) has a thorough discussion but changed his mind (281). Newman (1887-1902, II: 215; see also 75-76 for the variant readings of the mss of Moerbeke) pointed out the difficulties in either reading: “These words are often translated – ‘and that there are different forms of virtue corresponding to the differences between the naturally ruled’. But then hitherto, as Susemihl remarks (*Hermes* (1884), Bd. 19. Heft 4 [p. 589]), Aristotle has been dwelling on the difference between ruler and ruled, not on the differences between various ruled elements, and if ὥσπερ here means ‘corresponding to’ we certainly expect ὥσπερ καὶ τοῦ φύσει ἄρχοντος καὶ ἀρχομένου. for hitherto, as Sus. sees, though he accepts this reading, no stress has been laid on the fact of the existence of different forms of ἄρχοντα and ἀρχόμενα: on the contrary, it is on the difference between τὸ ἄρχον and τὸ ἀρχόμενον and their respective ἔργα that the existence of different forms of virtue has been rested”. However, the next section (on psychology) seems to argue first the difference between ruler and ruled, and then the differences between the types of ruled: slaves, women, and children. See below.

Ross’s OCT text (1957) must be an typo: ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν φύσει ἀρχόντων (“just as there are differences in those who rule by nature”), which makes no sense in the context. His app. crit. reads “ἀρχόντων καὶ aliqui codices Guilelmi: om. cet.” as if the other texts read ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν φύσει ἰαρχόντων. καὶ} τοῦτο εὐθὺς ὑφήγηται.

Republic, which (as we noted) springs from the observation that virtue is a single entity, the same for men and women.

Aristotle is open about what he is doing. "For it is not possible for them to differ in terms of greater or lesser. For to be ruled and to rule differ in kind, and not merely in greater and lesser". Aristotle must reject the unity of virtue, since any mere difference in *quantity*, i.e. that women have the same virtue as men, just less of it (this is Plato's solution, *Rep.* 5.455c-e), does not provide for an *absolute* rule. If the basis is contingent, the rule of master and male is also contingent⁶². Accordingly, the difference in virtue between men/women/slaves *has* to be *ontological*. It is *necessary* that men be superior to women, otherwise mastery disappears⁶³. Fortenbaugh says that Aristotle's position is "neither the sophistry of a prejudiced Greek male enjoying a privileged position..." – but that's exactly what it is. Fortenbaugh continues, "nor simply the product of a misguided biologist who assumes uncritically that nature's way is identical with the *status quo*" (1977: 135 = 2006: 241). Instead it is the reverse, Aristotle critically argues that the status quo is identical with nature's way, otherwise, the status quo might disappear.

These rhetorical questions make explicit Aristotle's purpose: to keep power where it is. He therefore *must* deny the unity of virtue (1260a15-17, 27-28): The virtue of a man must be completely different than the virtue of a woman. And the difference must be grounded in nature.

IX. Aristotle's Psychology

This is not the place to show how Aristotle's biology – where anatomy is destiny with a vengeance, or rather, "destiny is anatomy" – contributes to this grounding in nature⁶⁴. Instead, we really only have time to glance

62 — See Muller 1993: 198-99; Saunders 1995: 98-99 on this point and the contradictions it causes within Aristotle's thinking.

63 — See the landmark case in American slave law, *The State [of North Carolina] v. John Mann*. 13 N.C. 263 (1829) [=Devereaux's North Carolina Reports] "Such obedience is the consequence only of uncontrolled authority over the body. There is nothing else which can operate to produce the effect. The power of the master must be absolute, to render the submission of the slave perfect" -Thomas Ruffin, Judge.

64 — Laqueur 1990: 25: "Destiny is anatomy". From the extensive literature, see in particular Horowitz 1976 (the seminal article); Clark 1982; Lloyd 1983: 94-105; Lange 1983; Cook 1986; Dean-Jones 1990; Green 1992; Dean-Jones 1994: 13-21 et passim; Tuana 1994; Deslauriers 1998. The calls by some to separate Aristotle's biology from the rest of his thinking (e.g. Tress 1992) sit ill with the call to see his philosophy as a seamless garment. One notices the prevalence of questions in the titles: "Was Aristotle's Biology Sexist?" (Morsink 1979): "Does Aristotle Exclude Women from Politics?" (Levy 1990); "Was Aristotle Racist, Sexist, and Anti-Democratic?" (Lindsay 1994); "How Sexist Is Aristotle's Developmental Biology?" (Henry 2007). To these rhetorical questions, the only answers are yes, yes, yes, and very. There is a great deal of special pleading in the various defenses of Morsink 1979, Saxonhouse 1985: 67-75, Salkever 1986, Levy 1990, Dobbs 1996. To replace an Aristotle who takes something on hearsay (as which of us has not) with an Aristotle who cannot tell

at what is new in this passage: a new division of the soul, the new psychology that won Fortenbaugh's approval.

In the sentences immediately following the above, Aristotle turns back to the soul, and creates within the soul a smaller version of the soul to body, male to female, master to slave analogy he has been using all along (1260a4-14)⁶⁵.

καὶ τοῦτο εὐθὺς ὑφήγηται <τὰ> περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν· ἐν ταύτῃ γάρ ἐστι φύσει τὸ μὲν ἄρχον τὸ δ' ἀρχόμενον, ὧν ἑτέραν φαμέν εἶναι ἀρετὴν, οἷον τοῦ λόγον ἔχοντος καὶ τοῦ ἀλόγου. δῆλον τοίνυν ὅτι τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ἔχει καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων, ὥστε φύσει τὰ πλείω ἄρχοντα καὶ ἀρχόμενα. ἄλλον γὰρ τρόπον τὸ ἐλεύθερον τοῦ δούλου ἄρχει καὶ τὸ ἄρρεν τοῦ θήλεος καὶ ἀνὴρ παιδός, καὶ πᾶσιν ἐνυπάρχει μὲν τὰ μόρια τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀλλ' ἐνυπάρχει διαφερόντως. ὁ μὲν γὰρ δούλος ὅλως οὐκ ἔχει τὸ βουλευτικόν, τὸ δὲ θῆλυ ἔχει μὲν, ἀλλ' ἄκυρον, ὁ δὲ παῖς ἔχει μὲν, ἀλλ' ἀτελές.

The facts about the soul lead us to this conclusion. For there is in it by nature that which rules and that which is ruled and we say that they have different virtues, i.e. [the virtue] of the part that has reason and that of the part without reason. It is clear therefore that the same holds true in the case of the others. So that there are by nature many cases of ruler and ruled. For in different ways the free rules the slave, the male the female, the adult man the child. The parts of the soul are present in them all, but present differently⁶⁶. For the slave has not got the deliberative part at all; the female has it, but it is without mastery, and the child has it, but incomplete.

There are *by nature* two parts to the soul, one ruling and one ruled, one having *logos* and the other *a-log-os*. Aristotle now subtly changes terms, a rhetorical sleight of hand before our very eyes, when the part with *logos* is now becomes instead “deliberative” (*bouleutikon*)⁶⁷. He has carefully prepared the way for this move by asserting at the beginning that the master by nature has foresight (προοράν) and hence implying that the slave by nature does not (1252a32). This *bouleutikon* part is missing in slaves: that is, they can understand orders, even be appealed to on logical grounds, but they just cannot formulate plans, or act with

a healthy tooth from a rotted stump is not an improvement (Mayhew 2004: 81-86). What all these apologists fail to note or explain is why the female case is *always* less, *always* inferior (or if they have more, it is of a vice; GA 608b10-12).

65 — Spelman 1983: 17: “Aristotle makes clear to us what the relation between the rational and irrational parts of the soul is, by reference to the very same political relationships he hopes to justify by reference to the soul”.

66 — The change from ἄρχει to ἐν-υπ-άρχει eases the transition.

67 — Gigon 1965: 265: “Eine Explikation des Schema scheint Aristoteles nicht für notwendig zu halten”.

forethought (again despite any evidence to the contrary). The great advantage of adding this new part to the mind, and then denying it to slaves, is that it is invisible. Aristotle cannot simply declare that slaves have no rational thoughts, because everyone can see that they do⁶⁸. As he stated at the outset (1253a9-10): οὐθὲν γάρ, ὥς φαμέν, μάτην ἢ φύσις ποιεῖ· λόγον δὲ μόνον ἄνθρωπος ἔχει τῶν ζώων· “Nature, I say, makes nothing in vain; and man alone of the animals has logos”, a point he reiterates after his first rhetorical question: “If slaves do not have virtue, since they are human and have a share of reason, it is odd”⁶⁹. So slaves have enough reason to *appear* human, without being completely human⁷⁰. This gives him the absolute difference in kind not just quantity that he needs to anchor absolute mastery⁷¹. Women are at least fully human, but never completely adult⁷². Yet, this move traps Aristotle in a contradiction. Women are between slaves and children. Therefore their difference in mind is not qualitative (like slaves, missing a part) but quantitative (like children, present but weak)⁷³. Aristotle’s solution is that women’s souls

68 — This is one of the reasons for the long digression on slave knowledge and master-ship: 1255b23-30; see Schofield 1990: 14 for an argument that Aristotle views such skills as not involving a deliberative faculty.

69 — So *EN* 1161b3-8, where slaves can share in the human/master activities of law and contract (νόμου καὶ συνθήκης). That is, your master can tell you what the rules are and you can shake hands on it. You have humanity to that extent.

70 — Schofield 1990: 12: “On Aristotle’s own finding, ‘slave’ and ‘man’ must be *incompatible* designations, for the consequences of applying them to one and the same individual are contradictory”. Khan in reply (1990: 31): “The weakness of the argument here only underlines the extraordinary nature of the assumption... The claim now that the natural slave shares in *logos* to the extent of perceiving but not possessing it’ (*A* 5, 1254 b 22) emerges as an arbitrary thesis, required by his argument but apparently incompatible with Aristotle’s own theory of human nature”.

71 — Chuska (2000: 289-95) has a very interesting reading in which he argues that Aristotle can have his cake and eat it too, by asserting a single human nature but with *qualitative* differences in it, which justify qualitatively different treatments, as in the case of children. Thus Aristotle has “a theory of human sameness” opposed to “theory of human equality and inequality” (290-91). However, all the differences there mentioned are differences in *quantity* not quality, as his citation of *Meta.* 1021a8-14 shows. Witt (1998: 129) attempts much the same defense: “On my view, having a form admits of degrees; one human being can be more fully formed (i.e. more capable of performing the human functions) than another”. Aristotle himself, however, is explicit about the need for an absolute difference, and such defenses fall foul of his own logic. So, e.g., *Cat.* 3b33-39: Δοκεῖ δὲ ἡ οὐσία οὐκ ἐπιδέχασθαι τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ ἥττον... οἷον εἰ ἔστιν αὐτῇ ἡ οὐσία ἄνθρωπος, οὐκ ἔσται μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον ἄνθρωπος οὔτε αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ οὔτε ἕτερος ἐτέρου, “It seems then that a essence is not qualified by ‘more’ or ‘less’... For example, if the essence is ‘human’ then it will not be more human or less human, nor more itself than itself or more another than another”.

72 — Cf. for example, *Meta.* 11.9 158a29-b25, where the idea of genus and species is illustrated by the fact that both men and women are human, despite being “opposites”. The same goes for black and white. Spelman 1994: 107: “To twist a phrase from Nietzsche, Aristotle holds that women and slaves are human, but not too human. As humans they have at least a minimal level of reason just enough to enable them to perform well their functions in the state... Nature tossed them a dash of reason enough to make them members of the same species as male citizens but clearly not the kind of reason found in the souls of their natural rulers”.

73 — Spelman notes the difficulty (1983: 23, 29): “The merely contingent lack of authority of the rational part of someone’s soul would not establish the claim that that person is naturally

are naturally, permanently, weakened even as their bodies are naturally permanently other.

As in the standard rhetoric of slavery, slaves are just like children (except that children – male children, at least – will grow out of it and reach their *telos*). As for women, they have the *bouleutikon*, but it is *a-kur-on*, ‘without authority, without mastery’. Again, the terms chosen imply the result sought. Women’s minds are *a-kur-on*, they have no control over their emotions and therefore need a master, a husband, a *kurios*⁷⁴.

Thus both slaves and women in Aristotle’s philosophy “exist by a sort of inability” or weakness (*GA* 728a17, 775a15)⁷⁵. For the female the failure is bodily, a lack of heat (721a30-730b31)⁷⁶. The female is a type of mutilated male (737a28), like eunuchs (766a25-30, 784a6-9), incomplete and deformed. But, says Aristotle, nature does nothing without a reason. Therefore, women’s incompleteness is a *necessary* deformity, necessary for the continuation of human life (767b7, *Pol.* 1252a27-28). Teleology determines ontology. For slaves the defect is mental: they lack an important part of the soul. But as Aristotle asserted at the beginning, this defect too is necessary for the preservation of the master’s (and therefore, incidentally) the slave’s life (*Pol.* 1252a30-34; 1278b32-37). Teleology determines ontology⁷⁷.

subordinate to someone else... The only reason we’ve been given for believing not just that women’s deliberative capacity lacks authority, but by nature lacks this authority, is that if it weren’t true women would not be by nature subordinate to men”. See also Modrak 1994, Senack 1994, Spelman 1994.

74 — Fourtenbaugh rightly interprets (1977: 138 = 2006: 245): “Their deliberative capacity is *akuron*, that is to say it lacks authority and is overruled easily... Her deliberative capacity lacks authority, because it is often overruled by her emotions or logical side. Her decisions and actions are too often guided by pleasures and pains, so that she is unfitted for leadership and very much in need of temperance”. See Modrak 1994: 213; Horowitz 1976: 207-11, for the full range of associations (however, the passage at *GA* 7772b27-33, while suggestive, does not refer to humans). See also Smith 1983b: 475-77. For the holes in Aristotle’s schema made by the being who is both female and slave, see Spelman 1994.

75 — *GA* 728a17 ἀδυναμία γάρ τινα τὸ θῆλυ ἐστι; 775a15: καὶ δεῖ ὑπολαμβάνειν ὥσπερ ἀναπηρίαν εἶναι τὴν θηλύτητα φυσικὴν. “One needs to interpret the female physical make-up as a malformation/disability”.

76 — Deslauriers (1998, 2009) rightly notes that Aristotle does not directly connect the differences in temperature that he uses to show the inferiority of the female in his biological works with the lack of the deliberative facility that he posits to show the inferiority of women in the political works. This is an important point, but I draw a somewhat different conclusion. It shows that Aristotle’s thinking is not as systematic when it comes to women as some have thought. Instead, female inferiority in each area is taken as a natural given, a fact so obvious that it does not have to be justified or proven, merely asserted.

77 — Heath’s summation of Aristotle’s position is direct (2008: 264): “If no one was enslaved, then everyone would have to do their own labour, and no one would have the leisure needed to cultivate virtue (*Pol.* 7.9, 1329a1). But enslaving people who were not natural slaves would be unjust, creating an internal contradiction even more fundamentally subversive of the good life. So it would be reasonable for Aristotle to conclude that the existence of humans who are naturally impaired in the way that natural slaves are is *better*”. Reasonable, that is, in light of nature’s beneficence to man (well, some men).

Two scholars have done a better job than Aristotle did of uniting parts of his thinking on women and slaves. Deslauriers (2003) in an elegant analysis ties two different conceptions of part to whole to the difference in the failed deliberative part of the soul in slaves and women⁷⁸. The slave is an part of the master, a wholly owned subsidiary, separable but having a soul⁷⁹. The very definition of a slave by nature is that he is *capable* of being a possession – which why he *is* a possession (1254b22-24)⁸⁰. Female, on the other hand, is part of a whole in a different way, that is, she forms a whole *with* the male as part of the household⁸¹. Her conclusion is that (2003: 229):

Natural slaves, although they lack a faculty of deliberation, can acquire human virtue by borrowing the *phronēsis* of the free man, and thereby cultivating rational desire. This borrowing occurs more readily just because the natural slave is a part of the master. Women, on the other hand, are not parts of men, but rather parts *with* men in the whole that is the household. Because women are co-equal parts of the household with men, Aristotle does not want to deny to women a faculty of deliberation and a certain authority. This is the basis of the distinction he draws between the virtue of women and the virtue of natural slaves. Aristotle does, none the less, insist that the deliberations of free women lack authority relative to the deliberations of free men, and so women too will have to borrow *phronēsis* in order to develop the moral virtues of obedience. I have argued that to say that the deliberative faculty of women lacks authority means simply that the tasks of women over which they have authority are for the sake of the tasks of men and hence, on Aristotle's view, inferior to the tasks of men⁸².

78 — Deslauriers 2003: 214: “While I do not believe that Aristotle demonstrates that there are people who correspond either to his description of natural slaves or to his description of women, I do not think that his claim that there are people who lack a deliberative faculty or who have a defective deliberative faculty is in itself incoherent... I take it for granted that ideological concerns, as well as philosophical commitments, must be adduced to explain fully Aristotle's views on the nature and virtues of slaves and women”. I agree, but I do not think his philosophical commitments last long outside their immediate use, and they contradict other commitments elsewhere. In sum, Aristotle's ideas lack deliberative power and are without mastery.

79 — 1241b17-22; 1255b11-12: ὁ δὲ δοῦλος μέρος τι τοῦ δεσπότητος, οἷον ἔμψυχόν τι τοῦ σώματος κεχωρισμένον δὲ μέρος.

80 — Deslauriers 2003: 219.

81 — Deslauriers 2003: 220-21, 225-26.

82 — 2003: 228: “Although both men and women have a certain role in the household, the tasks of women are restricted to the household, while the tasks of men extend beyond the household to the city... The authority of women is inferior to that of men [because] the tasks of running the city are better than the tasks of running the household. This is because the city itself has priority over the household, because the household is for the sake of the city”. See also Deslauriers 2009: 218-19. However, it would not be correct to label women's souls as ἄκυρον, when it is κυριεύων but just over a smaller sphere (so the implications of *EN* 1160b32-a1; cf. Deslauriers 2003: 226-27).

This is an ingenious argument that Aristotle could have made, had the simple assertion of female inferiority not satisfied him, and fact that he does not make it is itself revealing⁸³. But in fact, Aristotle tosses around the two types of part to whole analogy with careless ease⁸⁴. I am not convinced that the last part of Deslauriers' analysis is correct. The deliberative part of women's souls is *a-kur-on* not because it is confined to the lesser/domestic sphere, but because it has no authority over its appetites. This is made clearer by Aristotle's own divisions of the soul at 1254b2-15 (above): ἡ μὲν γὰρ ψυχὴ τοῦ σώματος ἄρχει δεσποτικὴν ἀρχήν, ὁ δὲ νοῦς τῆς ὀρέξεως πολιτικὴν ἢ βασιλικὴν "The soul rules the body with a master's rule", that is the analogy for the slave, "the mind rules the appetite with a political or kingly rule", that is the analogy for the woman (so too at *Pol.* 1259b1)⁸⁵.

We can see the weaknesses in Aristotle's insistent analogies. The woman is part of the couple of man plus woman, but Aristotle merely asserts as a fact of nature, without offering an argument, that she must be the inferior part (1254a24-b16, above; 1259b1-3)⁸⁶. He can do so on the analogy of the master/slave hierarchy. The slave is inferior to the master, but he can be claimed to be part of a natural whole on the analogy of woman to man. The master/slave analogy provides the hierarchy, the male/female relationship provides the grounding in nature⁸⁷.

83 — Cf., for example, the long discussions of the parts of the soul, *EN* 1102b13-3a3, *Pol.* 1333a17-b4, where neither women nor slaves make any appearance. Deslauriers' argument might be strengthened by comparing *EN* 1160b32-36 (where the husband by not handing to his wife control over the woman's proper sphere converts aristocracy into oligarchy) with *Pol.* 1313b32-39 (where women stepping out of their proper sphere in the home and laxness towards slaves – γυναικοκρατία τε περὶ τὰς οἰκίας... καὶ δούλων ἄνεσις) leads democracy towards tyranny).

84 — Garnsey 1996: 123: "The whole/part analogy is much favoured in the *Politics* and is used in diverse ways, but principally of the relation of individual citizen to his polis and of the slave to his master. This in itself illustrates the fact that the analogy is not well-integrated and is difficult to control".

85 — See n. 74 and Deslauriers' objections (2003: 222-23). She tries to head off this reading (227-28): "The relation of free men to free women is thus like the relation between the faculty of intellect and the faculty of desire; the two parts are equal just in so far as they are parts of the same whole". But Aristotle insists there is always a ruler and a ruled in every such dyad (1254a28-32). "The implied comparison between the intellect and men, on the one hand, and women and the faculty of desire, on the other, is not here intended to demonstrate the incapacity of women to control their emotions but rather to demonstrate the sense in which women are the equals of men".

86 — Deslauriers 2006: 68: "The naturalness of conventional household relations was assumed by Aristotle, not demonstrated. That assumption is then used to demonstrate that there are different kinds of people, and hence different kinds of rule", to which add "and different kinds of virtue".

87 — Cf. Deslauriers 2003: 225 n. 19: "See *Politics* I. 1-2 for the argument that the relation of master to slave and of men to women is foundational to the household and, more generally, to all human community. The argument depends on the claim that the dominance of the head of the household over women and slaves is natural. The naturalness of this dominance is crucial in maintaining the naturalness of the state".

In a subtle reading Garver ties Aristotle's conception of the maimed slave to his teleological argument (2011: 20):

Slaves have incomplete souls because they cannot fully engage in action... Incomplete praxis is the praxis of an incomplete human being. All humans engage in productive actions. But slaves differ from complete human beings because their central, essential, characteristic activities are incomplete. They act for the sake of something outside the actions, namely, the master. Since their actions are essentially incomplete, or, what is the same thing, essentially instrumental, children, women, and slaves are all in different ways incomplete human beings.

I would only reverse this causality. Aristotle creates incomplete souls for slaves because he must deny them autonomy. The child is for his own eventual *telos* (1260a30); women are for having babies (1252a27-30).

X. Mental Misreadings

Attempts to read Aristotle's positions on women and slaves at the opening of the *Politics* as a self-consistent philosophy fail. Indeed, they can often lead even the best scholars into misreadings. Aristotle's servile psychology (*Sklavensinn*) has appeared to some as amounting to a form of compassion and to others as a call for abolition⁸⁸. For example, Martha Nussbaum writes in the *Fragility of Goodness* (2001: 348):

88 — Among others: Barker 1906: 368-69; Saxonhouse 1985: 72: "By looking at slavery in ancient Athens, one is looking at a condition of corruption rather than one existing by nature". Ambler 1987: 404: "Indeed, if it were removed from its context, Aristotle's account of natural slavery would arm the reader to heap scorn on such slavery as is encountered in actual political and domestic life"; Arnhart 1988: 179-80; Shulsky 1991: 100; Nichols 1992: 20-24, 142-45 (23: "Aristotle defines natural slavery in such a way as to rule out most, if not all, actual slavery"); Chuska 2000: 130-31, 289-310 (303: "Aristotle's theory of natural slavery would have reformed the institution of slavery in no small way if it had been implemented"). Goodman 2007: 146 is gob-smackingly perverse: "The limitations of Aristotle's approach are legion. Most serious, no doubt are his acceptance of slavery and his ill-informed ideas about women. Even here there is much that we can profit from. For despite his acceptance of the institution of slavery, Aristotle, far better than many an abolitionist, articulates the reason why slavery is morally abhorrent: It is because slaves are living tools, as he puts it [he does not quite]. Barred from choosing their own ends, they are denied the subjecthood that is constitutive in the human *telos*. The reason God and nature give them is thwarted, their personhood, their subjecthood, negated, regardless of how 'well' they are treated or cared for. Compounding Aristotle's help to us on this score is his warning about 'natural slaves'. For the mere fact of freedom does not suffice to impart actual freedom to any of us. Freedom is won only when we actually can and do choose ends for ourselves, not slavishly apprenticing ourselves to convention or emulation or indenturing ourselves to externals".

For Aristotle as proto- or crypto-feminist see Mulgan's survey (1994: 181-82); Nichols 1983, 1992; Levy 1990; Swanson 1992, esp. 44-68; Salkever 1986; Schollmeier 2003; Dobbs 1996: 88: "Far from being an enemy to the interests of women, Aristotle seeks to promote their genuine liberation by combating the patriarchal complacency that impedes the good order of the household". To what extent Dobbs urges his view of Aristotle's separate but equal "sex complementarity" (78, 84, 87-88) as policy is unclear. Bouchard (2004) provides a taxonomy of the attempts (among French

Aristotle argues that no person who has the natural capacity for practical reason should be held in slavery (1252a32, 1255a25). Although he recognizes that there are some more or less human creatures who might be called “natural slaves”, and might appropriately be held in slavery because they “do not have the deliberative faculty at all” (1260a12, 1254b20), nevertheless he, *in effect* [my emphasis], condemns as unjust most of the actual practice of slavery in his culture, since that in fact consisted in holding in bondage perfectly reasonable and reasoning people who simply happened to be captured in war.

But this is a misreading. Aristotle was not, even in effect, an abolitionist. Far from indirectly condemning “most of the actual practice of slavery in his culture”, Aristotle is valiantly striving to justify it⁸⁹. Nussbaum continues in a footnote:

It is not too likely that Aristotle *believes* most actual slaves to be capable of practical reason, hence unjustly enslaved. He sets very stringent criteria for slave-holding, criteria which *in fact* imply that most actual Greek practice is unjust. But his application of his own criteria may be marred by prejudice and xenophobia.

That is, Aristotle (noble but all too human) fails to live up to his theories. Far from being “not too likely”, Aristotle explicitly states the opposite. Aristotle does not argue that “there are some more or less human creatures who might be called ‘natural slaves’... because they ‘do not have the deliberative faculty at all’”. He argues that the brute fact that you are a slave proves that you are a less-than-human creature who lacks any deliberative faculty (1252a31-34, 1254b20-24), *despite all phenomena to the contrary*⁹⁰.

So too Nicholas D. Smith in his influential article “Aristotle’s Theory of Natural Slavery” (1983a: 112, 113 n. 17):

scholars) to rehabilitate Aristotle on slaves. It is hard to reconcile these readings with the Aristotle who writes that represented characters must be good (*Poet.* 1454a19-22): ἔστιν δὲ ἐν ἐκάστῳ γένει· καὶ γὰρ γυνὴ ἐστὶν χρηστὴ καὶ δοῦλος, καίτοι γε ἴσως τούτων τὸ μὲν χεῖρον, τὸ δὲ ὅλως φαῦλόν ἐστιν. This is possible in each type; for example, a woman is ‘good’ and so is a slave, although perhaps the first of them is an inferior thing and the other generally of no account”.

89 — See Ambler 1987 for one of many attempts to divorce Aristotle’s thinking from the institutions of his time.

90 — This is the point that a number of apologists for Aristotle’s position fail to take into account. Aristotle could see with his own eyes that slaves of all sorts were in fact capable of higher-level cognition, but he chose to ignore this. As Schofield notes (1990: 4 and n. 13, thanking John Cooper and Martha Nussbaum): “Any treatment of the question of Ideology in Aristotle’s theory of slavery must come to grips with this argument... The obvious explanation of the assumption is wishful thinking”. Other masters recognized that slaves could think and plan. They draw no moral conclusions, much less were they in favor of abolition, but they were not self-deluding either.

Aristotle's critics also argue that, in defending slavery, Aristotle must resort to an account of the psychology of the natural slave that effectively ensures that no living human being (or, at the very least most, only extremely few of them) would actually qualify for slavery... Most critics at least give Aristotle credit for espousing a view that was relatively liberal for its day.

Nothing of the sort. Here is what Aristotle actually says (1254b22-24): ἔστι γὰρ φύσει δοῦλος ὁ δυνάμενος ἄλλου εἶναι (διὸ καὶ ἄλλου ἐστίν), καὶ ὁ κοινωνῶν λόγου τοσοῦτον ὅσον αἰσθάνεσθαι ἀλλὰ μὴ ἔχειν: «For he is a slave by nature that is *capable* of belonging to another – which is *why* he belongs to another – and who has a share in reason, enough so that he can recognize it [in another] but does not have it himself”. The fact that you are a slave is the proof that Nature made you a slave⁹¹. You merely *thought* that you were a free person capable of independent

91 — Brunt (1993: 359) disagrees with this reading: “The natural slave is one who (a) is capable of belonging to another’s (that is why he actually does belong to another), and (b) one’s who has only enough share in reason to apprehend but not to possess it (1254b 22)... The first [condition] is liable to misinterpretation. Taken by itself, it might suggest that the mere fact that a man does belong to another shows that he is a natural slave. But of course that cannot be the meaning”. On the contrary, I think that is exactly what Aristotle means. Brunt continues: “I take it that Aristotle is simply pointing out that actual practice shows that a human being can be property. But this is justifiable only if the second condition is fulfilled. It is deficiency in reason that constitutes the natural slave”. That one’s human can own another is not a fact in dispute, and Aristotle is not setting conditions for when enslaving a human would be just; he is locating the place of the natural slave. Brunt’s reading lays too much stress on the second καὶ, which is not the logical conjunction “and” (true if and only if both conditions are true); as διὸ καὶ shows, the first condition (being a slave) is sufficient proof. Rather, this is “responsive καὶ” (Denniston 1959: 293): the second clause provides an expansion/explanation of the first, the specific failure that makes someone capable of belonging to another. Rightly Newman 1887-1902, II: 146: “γάρ (21) justifies what precedes: the slave has just been mentioned as on a level with the brute, and now facts are adduced which show how nearly they approach each other. The natural slave is a being who can be another’s, just as any article of property can, but who differs from brutes in this, that he shares in reason to the extent of apprehending it, though he has it not”. Also Simpson 1998: 35: “Those who do not have reason will be such as to belong to another, for to have reason of oneself is the mark of self-possession and enables one to rule oneself by one’s own thinking. Conversely, not to have reason must make one subject to those who can do the thinking in one’s stead (which is the job of the master with respect to the slave, 1.2.1252a3134)”; Simpson 2006: 105-6: “He lays down the following propositions (1254b20-23): 9) He is a slave by nature who has the power of belonging to another, 10) and who shares reason sufficiently to perceive it but not to have it... There are two parts to proposition (10): that the slave by nature (a) shares reason sufficiently to perceive it but (b) not to have it. The force of (10b) seems clear. It relates to the part of the definition of the slave that involves belonging to another. For not to have reason is effectively to belong to another. It is to be subject to those who can do the thinking in one’s stead”.

judgment up until the moment of your capture⁹². Equally, the fact that your master is your master is proof that Nature made him a master⁹³.

Jonathan Lear made similar arguments (1988: 197):

When one first reads the *Politics*, it is easy to think that Aristotle uncritically defends one of the most unjust institutions of his day. This, I believe, is a mistaken impression. It arises from ignoring the social context in which the *Politics* is written. The *Politics* provides a serious critique of democratic society, and yet it is written in one of the greatest democracies in the history of the world. So the *Politics* cannot be an uncritical legitimation of the values of the day. Moreover, Aristotle was the first political thinker to realize that slavery *needed* a defense. In fact, his defense of slavery is a critique of the institution of slavery as it existed in Athenian society. For Aristotle argues that the mere fact that someone is a slave does not make it right that he *should be* a slave (See *Politics* 1.6)... Nor is it right to enslave a conquered people: that is the mere exercise of brute strength by one people over another (See also *Politics* VII.14, 1333b38-1334a1). Since Athenian slaves were, to a significant degree, either conquered peoples or their offspring, Aristotle must be criticizing the slavery of his day. In terms of the ancient antinomy of nature versus convention – *phusis* versus *nomos* – Aristotle thinks that all slavery that was founded *only* in *nomos* (law or convention) was unjustified.

Several of these points are weak or rest on misunderstandings of the passages in question. That Aristotle is critical of *one* value of the day does not mean that he is critical of any other⁹⁴. Aristotle does indeed argue that the fact you are a slave proves that you should be a slave. What he does in *Politics* 1.6-7 is to exempt certain *Greek* war captives from this logic (1255a29, 1255b37-40). So too at 1256b23-26 and 1324b1-41: far from saying that it is not right to enslave a conquered people, Aristotle endorses as just slave-hunting expeditions and warfare for the purpose of acquiring slaves. What is not just is to attack one's neighbors (τῶν πλησίων), i.e., one's fellow Greeks, without cause.

92 — Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, I.2 (trans. Susan Dunn): "The reasoning of Caligula is similar to that of Hobbes and Grotius. Aristotle, before them all, had also said that men are not naturally equal, but that some are born to be slaves and others to rule. Aristotle was right, but he mistook the effect for the cause. Every man born in slavery is born for slavery; nothing is more certain. Slaves lose everything in their chains, even the desire to escape from them; they love their servitude as the companions of Ulysses loved their brutishness. If, then, there are slaves by nature, it is because there have been slaves contrary to nature. The first slaves were made by force; their cowardice kept them in bondage".

93 — *Pol.* 1255b7-9: καὶ δεῖ τὸ μὲν ἄρχεσθαι τὸ δ' ἄρχειν ἦν πεφύκασιν ἀρχὴν ἄρχειν, ὥστε καὶ δεσπόζειν, "And it is necessary for the one to be ruled and the other to rule the rule which they were born to rule, so that they are masters". This latter point is not as often remarked.

94 — That the value he criticized is democracy, says little for his sympathy with those who work for a living much less slaves.

It is Lear's last point that is most interesting. However, his formulation appears to be incorrect: just wars, justly waged, may produce war captives justly subjected to slavery (1255a12-21)⁹⁵. More importantly, he shows Aristotle's way out of his own dilemma: if slavery based purely on convention is unjust, then for slavery to continue (as it must) it must be by nature.

Schofield, too, tries to take Aristotle's reasoning to a place that Aristotle had no intention of going (1990: 11):

The kernel of his answer—that there are some people better off being ruled than ruling—is a not unreasonable thesis. Above all, at no stage in the central argument of *Pol. A* 4-7 is any use made of an assumption that most of those who in contemporary Greece were enslaved are natural slaves⁹⁶... Aristotle's theory of natural slavery is at least potentially a critical theory. A slave owner who pondered it seriously would have to ask himself: "Is my slave really a natural slave? Or is he too shrewd and purposeful?"

But, of course, no slave owner did ponder it seriously⁹⁷. Nor, it would seem, did Aristotle⁹⁸. We are justified in asking why Aristotle's theory remained only "potentially" critical. Was it because he himself could not see the implications of his own words⁹⁹? Further, Aristotle's "not

95 — Aristotle's view is that δει τὸ βέλτιον κατ' ἀρετὴν ἄρχειν καὶ δεσπόζειν ("the one who is superior in virtue [courage/bravery] ought to rule and be master" 1255a21). Saunders 1984: 32, 34.

96 — Schofield (1990: 22): "There is a sort of insulation of theory from reality in *Pol. A*". This is common claim among scholars wishing to save Aristotle from the embarrassment of his own theories, so Ambler 1987: 390, 404; Schütrumpf 1993: 121. Rather, as Kahn notes (1990: 30): "What Aristotle argues for is neither the justice nor injustice of contemporary practice but *the rightness of the institution*". Cf. Shields 2007: 369: "Such apologetics are mainly banal. Moreover, they tend to obscure an important fact about Aristotle's justification of slavery: he overtly considers and expressly rejects the suggestion that slavery is unjust. It is not, then, that he is benighted by being parochial. Matters are both better and worse than that might tend to suggest".

97 — Millett in response (2007: 199): "I prefer to see Aristotle as providing masters with a series of 'get-out clauses', clauses'. So a master should not worry if his slave seems to be reasoning things out: 'it's only what he's learnt to do by watching you'", etc.

98 — Kahn's reply to Schofield's self-surprising conclusion "that Aristotle's theory is not to any interesting extent ideological" (1990: 1) is polite but blunt: "If Aristotle's theory of slavery does not count as a case of ideology, it is hard to imagine that any seriously argued philosophical doctrine could ever qualify for this description" (1990: 28). Kahn replies to this section (1990: 30): "Certainly many contemporary slaves will not have exhibited the intellectual deficiencies that characterize Aristotle's natural slave", a point Schofield had acknowledged before (n. 90 above). Pellegrin 1982: 350: "Il ne fait de doute pour personne que l'analyse aristotélicienne de l'esclavage — et surtout les chapitres qu'y consacre le livre 1 de la *Politique* — a une fonction idéologique au sens marxiste du mot".

99 — In a reading that one might call gnostic, Ambler (1987), Levy (1990), and Stauffer (2008) give a different answer. They present an Aristotle who is secretly in favor of women's rights and emancipation but lacks the courage to say so directly for reasons never overtly expressed. Ambler 1987: 393: "Aristotle's first remarks on slavery, which are admittedly careful not to offend Greek prejudices and do not present an attack on slavery, nevertheless stop well short of defending actual slavery on the grounds that it is natural". Ambler asks (404): "Is it not possible, however, that

unreasonable thesis” is not that some people might be better off being *ruled*, but that such people are better off being *slaves*¹⁰⁰. Aristotle does not mince words¹⁰¹. If this is the most positive interpretation that can be put on Aristotle’s philosophy – an interpretation that, as Schofield rightly points out, Aristotle did not himself make – then it does not seem to represent any great advance on an Aristotle who is making a reasoned defense of slavery.

Kraut takes a similar route to rehabilitate Aristotle (2002: 303):

We should not lose sight of a striking fact about his approach to this subject: he thinks that it is unjust to enslave anyone who has the capacity to deliberate. When we drop his assumption that there are whole peoples in whom this incapacity is widespread, we emerge with the result that slavery is an unjust institution. This is not Aristotle’s conclusion, but it is the conclusion to which his political philosophy is driven, when it abandons his empirical claim about the natural slavishness of Europeans and Asians.

This might indeed be the conclusion that *we* would reach from Aristotle’s arguments, but it is not Aristotle’s conclusion because it is not Aristotle’s premise. It is precisely these places where a philosopher fails to follow through that show most clearly the fundamental assumptions on which he bases his thought¹⁰². The existence of slavery is a given in

Aristotle refrained from attacking actual slavery not because he held it to be natural in the strict sense, but for some other reason?”. Levy (1990: 401) provides the answer, which seems to be moral and intellectual cowardice: “To Athens in particular, he teaches not as a citizen but as a mere metic. Now, he must trim his argument to the interest of citizens in preserving their own defective, even ridiculous, institutions and laws... Very guardedly, Aristotle implies reasons for including women in politics. He resorts to oblique satire”. Stauffer 2008: 930: «Aristotle does not, it is true, equate the subjection of women with slavery. But he does indicate important similarities between the two. While he gives the general impression that the household came about through the voluntary cooperation of all of its members, he quietly indicates that force played a considerable role in the origins of marriage. Moreover, Aristotle indicates that, in his own day, the household had not entirely transcended its brutal beginnings; the threat of physical force that helped bring about the rule of men over women continued to underlie and to shape the relations between the sexes”. To this she quietly adds “To be sure, these are not the conclusions to which one is led by a cursory reading of Book I”.

100 — Kahn 1990: 30-31: “This is the kind of argument for paternalism that seems quite plausible in the case of the feeble-minded or the mentally unstable. But it surely does not follow that they should be the chattel or tools of their keepers, or that it would be in their interest to toil for the sake of others with sound minds. The claim that it is the slave’s interest to belong wholly to the master seems grotesque; and Aristotle’s argument for it is quite specious (the slave is a part of the master, and the interest of a part is the same as the interest of the whole, A 6, 1255b 10)”.

101 — *Pol.* 1252a30-34; 1254b19-25, 1255b7-9, 1256b25. Contrast his view of swapping off being ruled and ruling in turn in a proper political constitution.

102 — A clear (if comic) case is Aristophanes’ myth of the sexes (*Symp.* 189d-193d). Aristophanes’ tale of our halved wholes, if followed through, would give us something very much like modern homo- and heterosexuality and some have been eager to see it so. But it is precisely Aristophanes’ somewhat clumsy efforts to bend Athenian pederasty into this shape that shows how much his sexual system differs from ours.

Aristotle's thought and therefore *must* be based on nature. For Aristotle "is" implies "ought".

What Aristotle actually says is that is just to enslave the slave by nature (1254a13-16, b16-23, 1255a1-2, b4-9, 1260a9-14)¹⁰³. Kraut's reading is a common mistake in logic. Aristotle nowhere asserts the *inverse* of this proposition, that it is *unjust* to enslave those *not* slaves by nature, much less the notion that no one (or at any rate very few) would qualify for his (humane and limited) category of mental defectives¹⁰⁴. Further, that mentally inferior people and peoples exist and therefore should be enslaved is not a separable appendix to his argument; it is the heart of his argument. Hunting expeditions to acquire such slaves are perfectly just (1255b37-39, 1333b39-34a2) as is war if they are too stupid to recognize their own good and do not like it (1256b24-26). Kraut continues (2002: 303-4):

Another feature of his theory deserves emphasis: Aristotle recognizes that the life of a slave is utterly removed from what is best for human beings... Although his cognitive impairment does not make him a helpless invalid, he is confined to a constricted and stunted life. To force such limitations on a human being who is capable of more would be a grave injustice, for slavery is defensible only if it benefits slaves as well as their owners... We should give Aristotle some credit for recognizing just how impoverished the life of a slave is, even as we deplore his idea that whole peoples can do no better.

We should not give Aristotle credit for an opinion he never held or expressed. This is a remarkable misreading of the text. The slave is not denied happiness, he is incapable of it. Aristotle is completely straightforward. A city must exist not just for the sake of life but for a good life (μόνον ἐνεκεν ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τοῦ εὖ ζῆν; 1280a32-34). Otherwise,

καὶ γὰρ ἂν δούλων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζῶων ἦν πόλις· νῦν δ' οὐκ ἔστι, διὰ τὸ μὴ μετέχειν εὐδαιμονίας μηδὲ τοῦ ζῆν κατὰ προαίρεσιν)

103 — Even the "anonymous opponents" — at least according to Aristotle — do not claim that slavery is unjust, rather that to be a *master* is against nature, and so unjust (1253b20-23: παρὰ φύσιν τὸ δεσποῖν (νόμῳ γὰρ τὸν μὲν δούλον εἶναι τὸν δ' ἐλεύθερον, φύσει δ' οὐθὲν διαφέρειν). διόπερ οὐδὲ δίκαιον· βίαιον γάρ. The question καὶ πότερον βέλτιον καὶ δίκαιόν τι διδουλεύειν ἢ οὐ, ἀλλὰ πᾶσα δουλεία παρὰ φύσιν ἐστὶ "whether it is better and just for someone to be a slave or not, and instead all slavery is contrary to nature" (1254a18-19) is part of Aristotle's rebuttal.

104 — The closest he gets is the implicature of 1255a1-2: τοῖνυν εἰσὶ φύσει τινὲς οἱ μὲν ἐλεύθεροι οἱ δὲ δούλοι, φανερόν, οἷς καὶ συμφέρει τὸ δουλεύειν καὶ δίκαιόν ἐστιν "So then, there are some who are free by nature, and others slaves — obviously — and for them to be a slave is profitable and just". Reeve (1998: 9 n. 36) misunderstands: the pronoun (οἷς) refers only to the slaves (Newman 1887-1902, I: 150). 1255a25-26 is part of the "opponents" argument. For a similar misstatement, cf. Pellegrin 2001: 40: "Theorie der natürlichen Sklaverei... die die natürliche Sklaverei als gerecht, alle anderen Formen der Sklaverei als ungerecht ansieht".

For then there could be a city of slaves and of the other animals. But as things are, it is not a city because they have no share in happiness nor in a life lived according to deliberate choice.

A slave can no more enjoy true happiness than can an animal. A slave cannot have virtue and so cannot have happiness¹⁰⁵. This is not compassion; it is contempt. Nowhere does Aristotle protest the grave injustice of forcing such limitations on human beings; the limitations are not forced, they are natural. Nor does he say that slavery is justified *only* if it benefits slaves as well as their owners. He says it *does* benefit slaves as well, but that is not its purpose; it benefits slaves only incidentally¹⁰⁶.

But it is not just slaves who are locked out of happiness by their natural deficiencies. As Femenías points out (1994: 166, 170):

The good/happiness turns out not to be that of the majority of inhabitants of the polis, but that of the majority of citizens of the polis. Hence, not merely foreigners, serfs, slaves, and children, but – and this is what we want to emphasize – all women of the polis, regardless of social position or age, are relegated to a secondary plane. As we can see, the number of beneficiaries of the model of the state proposed by Aristotle is extremely small... Happiness is not open to women, who lack the freedom and deliberative capacity necessary to attain it.

So too Garver (1994: 183): “In each case, while the incomplete person is best off being ruled, that does not mean that the child, the woman and the slave are *happy*: happiness is not an option for the incomplete person”.

Frank (2004, 2005) makes a strong attempt to absolve Aristotle from his own theories, but this results in crucial misreadings (2004: 94 = 2005: 26):

105 — So *EN* 1177a7-11: ἀπολαύσειέ τ’ ἂν τῶν σωματικῶν ἡδονῶν ὁ τυχὼν καὶ ἀνδράποδον οὐχ ἦττον τοῦ ἀρίστου· εὐδαιμονίας δ’ οὐδεὶς ἀνδραπόδῳ μεταδίδωσιν, εἰ μὴ καὶ βίου. οὐ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς τοιαύταις διαγωγαῖς ἡ εὐδαιμονία, ἀλλ’ ἐν ταῖς κατ’ ἀρετὴν ἐνεργείαις, “Anyone at all can enjoy the pleasures of the body, a slave as much as the best man, but no one ascribes a share of (true) happiness to a slave any more than a share in (true) life. For happiness does not lie in such pastimes but in actions in accordance with virtue”.

106 — *Pol.* 1252a34; 1254a21-25, b6-12, 19-20; 1255b6-14; 1278b29-37; *EN* 1161b1-2. Aristotle is more straightforward than Kraut’s defense of him (2002: 297): “The only way a slave can have a life worth living even to a small degree is for his master to inculcate some measure of virtue in him. And Aristotle thinks that this can be done. In 1.13 he admits that the question whether slaves can be virtuous is full of difficulties, but he resolves the issue by concluding that a slave needs ‘little virtue-so much as keeps him from failing in his tasks through intemperance or cowardice’ (1260a35-6). The slave benefits from slavery, then, because, were he not a slave, he would lead a life of idleness, dissolution, and petty immorality. The supervision of a master (at any rate, a good master) will keep his worst qualities in check. Properly disciplined, he can acquire a small portion of virtue, and although his life can never be a good one, since real virtue is beyond his capabilities, his subordination to a master makes him less distant from this ideal than he otherwise would be”. Some readers’ thoughts in the course of this discussion may have strayed in the direction of “The White Man’s Burden” or a “mission civilisatrice”.

Rejecting parentage or ancestry (*Pol.* 1255b1-3) and convention (which he calls *nomos* and equates with violence or force, *bia*) (*Pol.* 1255b15) as inadequate justifications of slavery... That he rejects as unjust all forms of enslavement by force shows that he is prepared to challenge the predominant form of slavery in ancient Greece, which was the enslavement of foreigners captured by war or kidnaped by pirates and their descendants.

But, these are not Aristotle's opinions at all, but those of the "anonymous opponents of slavery" (Cambiano 1987), whom Aristotle is at pains to refute¹⁰⁷.

Central to her argument is the claim that *physis* for Aristotle always implies "growth", that is, *physis* is always temporal (not atemporal), dynamic (not static), and does not imply necessity. This is not borne out by Aristotle's usage which is hardly uniform¹⁰⁸. Slavery then is reversible and Aristotle's advice to hold out the carrot of manumission (*Pol.* 1330a33-34) is claimed as proof that Aristotle is "presuming the capacity to cease being a slave" (2004: 95 = 2005: 27), rather than simply giving self-contradictory advice in another part of the treatise¹⁰⁹.

Her own analysis is somewhat disturbing. In seeking to explain away Aristotle' category of the natural slavery she ascribes to Aristotle (and

107 — These remarks have also been misunderstood as evidence of a self-consistent abolitionist tenant of some philosophical school or other. They deserve a separate discussion. See Saunders 1984, Cambiano 1987. For now let us note that the claim that slavery is *παρὰ φύσιν* (1253b20) is repeated in *Dig.* 1.5.4: "Servitus est constitutio iuris gentium, qua quis dominio alieno contra naturam subicitur". So, a recognition that something is "against nature" is not a claim that it is illegal, immoral, or even unjust. Aristotle is not arguing against ancient abolitionists.

108 — See her own analysis (2005: 48-49) of the definition of *physis* in *Meta.* 5.4, 1014b16-15a19. See the criticisms of Ober (2005: 240 n. 2). As a result, Frank also seems intent on making Aristotle into an Existentialist (2004: 99 = 2005: 45): "Is human nature all and only activity? Aristotle's answer seems to be 'yes'" ("There is no reality except in action"-Sartre 1945/2001: 36). This is a reoccurring problem with the explication of Aristotle: the temptation to assume that each item of Aristotle's vocabulary means only one thing and that this atomic vocabulary is consistent over the entirety of Aristotle's life and works. Polansky 2007: xi: "Though commentators tend to fasten upon a single correct reading, Aristotle sometimes deliberately utilizes disciplined ambiguity. Key terms with several meanings permit subtle distinctions that skirt apparent contradiction".

109 — E.g. Newman 1887-1902, 1: 152 n. 1; Brunt 1993: 372-73; Garnsey 1996: 98. Kraut (2002: 297) also argues that manumission is "entirely compatible" with Aristotle's view of the natural slave. Aristotle's promise to explain how manumission works is not fulfilled. Dobbs 1994 also sees Aristotle's "natural slavery" as not anchored in nature but in the barbarians' reversible "childrearing and other cultural practices", which have produced a "slavish second nature". However, Aristotle has already explicitly ruled out this sort of deformation from his data set (1254a35-b1): Gigon 1965: 257. So, too, Simpson (2006: 114), who stands Aristotle on his head (and makes him a Stoic): "We may summarize Aristotle's views about slavery thus. The natural masters are fundamentally the virtuous, or those who have been perfected in their development, and the natural slaves are fundamentally the vicious, or those who have in some way been damaged or corrupted in their development. Many barbarians are in this condition, to be sure, but there is no need to suppose that all of them are. More to the point, some Greeks will be in this condition, in particular the many and whom the many admire".

almost seems to endorse) a view that it is all the slave's fault. Being a slave then is no longer a natural failure¹¹⁰; instead, it is a moral failure (2005: 37, cf. 2004: 96):

The one who possesses the capacity, *dunamis*, for *logos* but consistently does not use it, engaging, instead, in activity that falls short of *prohairetic* activity, is a natural slave. Such a person can have no share in "a life based on choice" (*Pol.* 1280a34-35) but rather must have his choices made for him by someone who, in contrast, uses foresight to choose thoughtfully (*Pol.* 1252a32). Slavery thus benefits the person who consistently fails to engage in *prohairetic* activity by bringing that person into a relation that allows him to mirror or approximate it. The deficiency of a natural slave is, then, his failure to actualize the first-level capacity for *logos* he possesses... Those who are morally and deliberatively deficient owing to their consistent failure to use what they have are, for that reason, worthy of slavery and are, therefore, in Aristotle's terms, natural slaves.

Slaves deserve to be slaves because they have failed to use their choice, their proairetic abilities, rather than being stripped of any choice, which is one of the fundamental definitions of slavery. Drawing on a mistaken notion that Aristotle holds parallel sets of criteria for being a citizen and being a slave (2004: 93-94 = 2005: 21-25), Frank draws as Aristotle's conclusion: "When I make myself a citizen or a slave in virtue of my own activity, it is just to so treat me" (2004: 95 = 2005: 27).

But this is not what Aristotle says. Blaming the victim, of course, is such a commonplace that we might term it the First Law of Prejudice: A society justifies its exclusion of certain groups from full participation in society by depicting the members of these groups as needing constant paternalistic supervision and domination in precisely those areas from which they have been excluded (Parker 1998: 160). Jews are forbidden to own land, so Jews are "rootless cosmopolites". Blacks are forbidden most jobs, so blacks are lazy. Women's sexuality needs to be controlled, so women are lustful.

Aristotle does not in fact say that slavery is a reversible affair, that if the slave would just try harder he might become a full human. Rather the lack of a *bouleutikon* part of the soul in the slave and the lack of *proairesis* is an inborn natural defect. Aristotle is absolutely explicit on this point (1280a31-34). There is no city of slaves or other animals "because they have no share in happiness nor in a life lived according to deliberate choice (κατὰ προαίρεσιν)". Animals and slave are incapable of *proairesis* and *proairesis* is directly dependent on the deliberative faculty

¹¹⁰ — But perhaps but a necessary one, as in the case of the deficiency that makes the female; see above.

(*bouleutikon*); this is Aristotle's very definition of choice (*EN* 1112a15-17, 1113a9-14; cf. 1149b35). As Schlaifer pointed out long ago (1936: 193):

As to what share in reason the slave actually has, however, Aristotle is inconsistent within the limits of one sentence. He says [*Pol.* 1254b16-24]: ὅσοι μὲν οὖν τοσοῦτον διεστᾶσιν ὅσον ψυχὴ σώματος καὶ ἄνθρωπος θηρίου (διάκεινται δὲ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ὅσων ἐστὶν ἔργον ἢ τοῦ σώματος χρήσις, καὶ τοῦτ' ἐστ' ἀπ' αὐτῶν βέλτιστον), οὗτοι μὲν εἰσι φύσει δοῦλοι..., ἔστι γὰρ φύσει δοῦλος ὁ δυνάμενος ἄλλου εἶναι (διὸ καὶ ἄλλου ἐστίν), καὶ ὁ κοινωνῶν λόγου τοσοῦτον ὅσον αἰσθάνεσθαι ἀλλὰ μὴ ἔχειν. τὰ γὰρ ἄλλα ζῶα οὐ λόγῳ [αἰσθανόμενα] ἀλλὰ παθήμασιν ὑπηρετεῖ. [see above for translations]. In other words, he simultaneously grants to the slave a participation in reason and denies it to him utterly, making him a mere body. His entire thought on this point is hopelessly confused.

Frank continues her argument that since the slave deserves slavery through a refusal to make good choices (*proairesis*), "slavery thus benefits the person who consistently fails to engage in *prohairesis* activity by bringing that person into a relation [i.e. as the human property of a master] that allows him to mirror or approximate it". She adds: "This is not to impose upon the master any obligation to teach the slave how to engage in *prohairesis* activity"¹¹¹. We may ask, Why does it not?

We might agree with Aristotle that there are persons incapable of making informed decisions (children, the mentally ill or challenged, those suffering from Alzheimer's disease), and that such persons might be better off being guided by someone else (*Pol.* 1252a32, 1254b16-20; Brunt 1993: 378). We do not, however, conclude that they would be better off as slaves¹¹². Aristotle's own differentiation of slaves from children proves the point (1253b5-8, 1259b10-17, 28-32, 1260a9-12, 31-33). Children can be educated; women and slaves cannot. Children are only children for a time (they are unfinished, ἀτελής); but women and slaves are women and slaves forever¹¹³.

Rather than a (reversible) moral failure, the immutable condition of the slave is based on, and deliberately confounded with, the immutable condition of being female, and in general Frank's ignoring of women in Aristotle's thinking weakens her conclusions¹¹⁴. Slavery cannot be

111 — Frank 2004: 96 = 2005: 37 n. 49.

112 — Schofield 1990: 4: "It might be granted *argumenti causa* that there are persons who satisfy Aristotle's description of natural slaves, and even that slavery is the appropriate condition for such persons. But (the argument will go) it is a massive error or pretence to assume that in the actual world (for Aristotle, the contemporary Greek world) slaves *are* what he calls natural slaves".

113 — Homiak 1993: 9 = 1996: 125.

114 — Garver 2011: 19: "Slaves, in contrast to children but like women, are permanently incomplete".

reversible, for if it is, then the basis of mastery disappears. “For if they both [men and women, ruler and ruled] should share in gentlemanliness, why should the one rule and the other be ruled once and for all?”¹¹⁵.

XI. The Master Trope

Thus we have returned to the master – in the most literal sense – trope of western philosophy, which Aristotle announced early in the *Politics* (1251a5-16, 1254a26-1254b14). In the ladder of hierarchies, male is to female as soul is to body. Male is the spirit, impregnating female matter. Male imparts life and motion (*GA* 716a4-7, 727b31-34; 729b15-21; 765b8-766a36). Thus the male can usurp the female function of conception and birth. Male is culture; female is nature (Ortner 1974). And since male/soul animates female/body, we find in its purest form, the objectification or reification of woman (Nussbaum 1995). Woman is a *thing* to be animated:

Hope not for mind in women; at their best,
Sweetness, and wit, they are but mummy possess'd¹¹⁶.

As so often, philosophy meets pornography (one thinks of Diderot's *Les bijoux indiscrets*).

Aristotle's consolidation of the dominant theory shows “a characteristically Greek combination of polarized thinking and inadequate attention to empirical evidence” (Cartledge 2002: 83). Contrary facts are ignored, or else subject to convenient reinterpretation¹¹⁷. We witness the triumph of Theory over Fact (a running theme in the history of sexuality). Women must be inferior to men¹¹⁸. The appearances must be saved (Nussbaum 2001: 240-263).

115 — Brunt notes Aristotle's self-contradiction about slaves and *proairesis* and its consequences (1993: 362, 366): “If [slaves] can possess moral virtue, as might be expected of human beings who have a share in reason, how do they differ from free men (1259b 26-9)? If there is no difference, or only one of degree, Aristotle sees that his justification of slavery collapses (1259b 34-8)... Thus in effect, but without realizing it, Aristotle has reduced to vanishing point the difference in potential virtue between the natural slave and the natural master”.

116 — John Donne, “Love's Alchemy”.

117 — For example: the male (in all animals) is stronger and superior to the female. Hence, the fact that in ovipara and larvipara (parts of Aristotle's system of classification) the female is bigger and longer-lived is proof of their degenerate nature (*History of Animals* 538a22). Cf. Aristotle's apologies for nature's occasional slipups: n. 59 above.

118 — Three famous examples: 1. Women must have fewer sutures in their skulls, since men have bigger brains and so need more ventilation (*PA* 653a27-29, 653b1-3). 2. Women must have fewer teeth (*HA* 501 b19). That this is not so, Aristotle could have discovered, in Bertrand Russell's memorable phrase, “by the simple device of asking Mrs. Aristotle to keep her mouth open while he counted” (1950: 135). 3. (a personal favorite): Menstruating woman must turn a mirror dark (*On Dreams* 459b-460a). We find the last two repeated by Pliny the Elder four hundred years later (*HN* 7.71, 38.82). Mayhew (2004: 81-86, 90-91) attempts a defense of 2, and hopes to free 3 from

So the progress of Aristotle's thought is not abstract metaphysics giving rise to an interpretation of society; it is not psychology antecedent to political philosophy; it is not biological taxonomy as a foundation for anthropology. Rather, Aristotle creates a metaphysics and formulates a theory of the soul in order to uphold power¹¹⁹. Its momentary rhetorical purpose is shown clearly by the fact that such a division of the soul is contrary to Aristotle's stated practice. In *De anima* (433b1-4), Aristotle expresses considerable skepticism about the usefulness of exactly this sort of carving the soul into parts (Spelman 1983: 21). More obviously still – though little noted by Aristotle's apologists – the notion of a deliberative part of the soul, a *bouleutikon*, simply disappears¹²⁰. It plays no significant role anywhere else in Aristotle's psychology (see *de Anima* 341b8, 343b3, 434a7, 12). Once it served its function in keeping women and slaves in their place, Aristotle dumps it¹²¹.

Here then is Fortenbaugh's conclusion (1977: 139 = 2006: 246):

But it would be a mistake to think that Aristotle's view is simply the creation of a prejudiced male or, more charitably, the product of an overly keen biologist. On the contrary, it is a thoughtful view that well illustrates how investigations within one sphere of philosophical inquiry can determine developments within another. Aristotle investigated

ideology; see Dean-Jones 1994: 81-82. I add an example deeply embedded in the Greek cultural encyclopedia: Everyone knows that women are hornier in summer, men in winter. Aristotle (*HA* 9(7).542a32) shares this well-known fact with Hesiod (*Op.* 586), Alcaeus (347a), one of his own followers ([Arist.] *Prob.* 4.25, 879a27-36; 4.28, 880a12-22); and Pliny (*HN* 10.172). One would think that this idea could have been disproven by personal observation without having to ask Mrs. Aristotle.

119 — Spelman 1983: 26: "Aristotle took a short-cut in his journey from his metaphysics, from his philosophical psychology, to his political theory: he built the particular relationships of authority he wished to justify on the basis of the metaphysics, into the metaphysics itself". Contrast the approach of Adkins (1984: 41-42): "Where, we may ask, did Aristotle get the information that slaves do not have the faculty of deliberation, to *bouleutikon*, while women possess it in a form that remains inconclusive?... Aristotle observes what free men, free women, and slaves characteristically do/are able to do in fourth-century-and earlier-Greece. 'Metaphysical biology' [a reference to MacIntyre's *After Virtue*] seems an inappropriate term: the direction of thought is not from a metaphysical biology independently arrived at to an appropriateness of *ergon*-function, but from an observation of *ergon* (behavior) to an explanation in terms of *psuche*". I can agree with the first part of the final sentence, but not the last: *ergon*, despite Adkin's argument is not "behavior"; *ergon* is social function (e.g. *EN* 1097b25-a18, etc.). This is Aristotle's teleology in action: a different *ergon* is the basis for a different *arete* and hence *physis* and hence mind (see Adkins' own remarks at 1984: 41-42, 47). Equally important is the erasure by slash of the vast difference between "do" and "are able to do". Adkins here seems to share the need to see Aristotle as a inductive observer of nature with Fortenbaugh (1977), Brunt (1993: 379), and Schofield (1990: 11): Aristotle merely looked at the emotional women of his world (or on stage), marked the lazy slaves and drew his own profound conclusions. For how endemic was the conception of women's and slaves' minds in Greek thinking, see Just 1985.

120 — Contrast the use to which Aristotle puts the rational and irrational parts of the soul, e.g. *EN* 1102a28-3b5, 1138b39-39a15, etc.

121 — Contrast *HA* 488b24: all human beings are deliberative creatures as opposed to animals. Deliberation is an important part of human mental activity but it is common to all humans and does not have a separate location in the soul: *EN* 3.3 1112a18-13a14.

emotional response and drew a fundamental distinction between reason and emotion. He then applied this distinction to the field of political theory, formulated a bipartite psychology and used this psychology to explain the role of women in society.

The idea that Aristotle might have been influenced in his “investigation of emotional response” by preconceptions and prejudice seems not to have occurred.

Rather, Aristotle saw a hierarchical society and invented differences which could be used to preserve it. He did not “explain” the roles of women and slaves in society, he justified them. Fortenbaugh is right, however, in one thing. This is not an uncritical response; it is something worse. It is the intellect in the service of injustice¹²².

XI. Conclusion

Philosophy is not a purely intellectual exercise; it is also a call to moral action. As Aristotle has taught us, philosophy is a tool to be used to determine whether a society is just or not. His doctrine of the natural slave and his climatic explanation for the natural was used from the beginning to justify slavery in the New World culminating in the great debate at Valladolid between Sepúlveda and Las Casas in 1550-51¹²³.

We must learn from him¹²⁴. I have no wish to flog a dead Aristotle¹²⁵. I am more interested in living foes of freedom.

We must ask and answer Aristotle’s rhetorical questions. “For if there is [a single virtue], how will [slaves] differ from free persons?”. Aristotle’s first rhetorical question gives us a program for feminist research and scholarship. Since he bases his justification for slavery and the subordination of

122 — Havelock 1957: 340: “The *Politics* is an arid treatise, intensely condensed and codified, the work of a mind that has now perfected its own self-analysis and brought every one of its prejudices and moods to total abstraction”.

123 — For Aristotle in the New World, see Hanke 1959, Pagden 1982, Grafton 1992: 136-38, Brunstetter 2010, and the bibliography at Millett 2007: 179 n. 3.

124 — One thing we can learn is to stand his arguments on their head. Aristotle argues that Europeans in cold climates are natural slaves (1327b18-31; Heath 2008: 253-58 for the rather tenuous argument). Though he does not there specify the nations, “He is probably thinking the Scythians, Thracians, and Illyrians among other European races cp. Xen. *Cyrop.* 1.1.4” (Newman 1887-1902, 3: 365), who conveniently already furnished Athens with slaves. Aristotle therefore proved *scientifically* the racial inferiority of the Aryan races (in the case of the Scythians, who spoke an Iranian language, Aryans in the linguistic sense as well). Heath (2008: 244 n. 40) makes the point neatly: “Since the theory entails that I (as a Northern European) am a natural slave and may be enslaved without injustice, it should be needless to labour the point that I am not remotely tempted to accept the theory or to defend it in any larger sense”.

125 — Nor am I holding up Plato as apostle of freedom. He has Socrates in *Rep.* 9, 590c-d make much the same argument as Aristotle that the person in whom the best part of the soul was naturally weak might be better off as a slave to the better man. Yet, the contrast is interesting, for Plato’s remarks are clearly a metaphor, not a justification for slavery.

women on the notion of the “female by nature”, we are called to challenge that very notion. It is our task, therefore, at all times and in all places, to show how the notion of female (and hence male) is *not* rooted in nature but culturally determined. We must challenge at every turn all unquestioned assumptions of what is *naturally* “male” and “female”. This includes the currently popular forms of mystification called sociobiology and its new incarnation as evolutionary psychology, which inaugurated the new millennium with *A Natural History of Rape*¹²⁶.

Aristotle's second question in turn gives us a program for social action. “For if they both [men and women, ruler and ruled] should share in moral excellence, why should the one rule and the other be ruled absolutely”. If virtue is one, a single thing for all people, then we have a moral obligation to educate and help all human beings to achieve the highest excellence¹²⁷. Equally, we have a moral obligation to demand the highest moral excellence from everyone. Aristotle calls forth the best from us all. Let his be the last words.

τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθὸν ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια γίνεται κατ' ἀρετήν.
-EN 1098a16-17

The human good is action of the soul in accordance with virtue.

126 — Thornhill, Randy and Craig T. Palmer. 2000. *A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases of Sexual Coercion* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press). Arnhart (1994) offered “A Sociobiological Defense of Aristotle's Sexual Politics”. Fine (2010) gives an excellent popular overview of the latest rounds in the seemingly endless series of attempts to anchor our society's view of female inferiority in nature.

127 — Newman 1887-1902, I: 286-87: “If Aristotle had said that the State exists not only for the realization of the highest quality of life, but also for the development in all within it of the best type of life of which they are capable, he would have made the elevation of the mass of men one of its ends. But this he hardly seems to do”. Shields 2007: 372: “This list of internal tensions and instabilities could be extended *ad nauseam*, though its point is already clear. Aristotle's contention that there are natural slaves justly subordinated for their own benefit is a desperate measure and in some ways simply bewildering. Moreover, it seems plain that Aristotle's defence of slavery is disappointing in a significant, if local, way: if human happiness is objectively given by the demands of human flourishing, which is in turn to be explicated by species-wide essential attributes, then all members of the human species are on equal footing with respect to the prospects of virtue and justice. If Aristotle found received forms of oppression congenial, whether of women or of slaves, then he also failed to respect the dictates of his own ethical and political theories.

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