

CHAPTER 2

ARISTOTLE'S INDIVIDUALISTIC FOUNDATION OF POLITICAL SOCIETY: SELF-INTEREST AND UTILITY

The State as Means for Individual Excellence

atque ipsa utilitas, iusti prope mater at aequi.

[«and even utility itself, virtually the mother of the just
and the equitable»].

Horace, *Satirarum*, I, 3, 98

The reason for every human association, according to Aristotle, is the Principle of Interest (*τὸ συμφέρον*). Man associates with man in any sort of way because of some advantage that he gains from such connexion. People collaborate, united after a fashion in the bonds of a communion, with a view to reaping some benefit from it, i.e., in the last analysis, to providing some of the requisites of life, or, at the limit, of the perfection of life. Thus, every particular association serves a particular interest and aims at some specific profit: for instance, people engage together in sea traffic by reason e.g. of some gain expected in seaborne commerce.

What holds true with particular associations, is valid also a *fortiori* in the case of *political* association, the integration, that is, of human existence in the nexus of a common principle of organization in an independent and sovereign social corpus, the State. In fact, the various specific associations appear to be parts of such political integration, or, in any case, to be subsumed under it: the interests they serve, and the corresponding advantages they provide, are circumscribed in time and content, *whereas political association (and citizenship) regards the full span of man's life*, his entire existence and well-being; it is a question of general, and very fundamental, profitability. Man-in-society aims at enhancing human life, to the direction and degree each individual is capable of [1].

The origin and *raison d'être* of State is analysed by Aristotle in his introductory, first book of the *Politics*. The method employed is explicitly genetic [2]. There are two basic human associations which

are elemental and natural: they bind together those that cannot exist apart in the objectively given order of reality, without, that is, altogether cancelling the fundamental terms of human condition in general. Thus, these combinations are necessary [3]. The *first* such association is the one holding between *male* and *female* with the essential purpose of procreation as reproduction (an instinctive drive, not primarily an intentional choice, in man as in all living beings, to generate an offspring similar to himself). The *second* basic association, and a comparably strong partnership, holds between the ruling individual and the ruled one, an affiliation whose purpose is to secure the preservation of man, his optimal continuation in existence. The natural foundation of the division presupposed is provided by the distinction between the *directive* and the *executive* types of humankind. Directive is the man whose mind penetrates the web of existence and whose intelligence, consequently, can see into the future developments of events and, by exercising providence, can plan and prescribe accordingly the best course of action in the circumstances; executive, on the contrary, is he who is able by appropriate endowment of bodily power and skill to carry through the necessary actions enjoined by the former. The one, therefore, is naturally suited to decide, manage and govern; the other to be governed, to receive and follow instructions and materialise the decisions. Between the directive and the executive type there exists a natural adaptation to the interest and profit of both: the one is indispensable to the other for the optimal response to the obtaining situation and its development; their association is instituted naturally for their mutual benefit. In an important sense their interests coincide [4].

In the condition of humanity which we are called by Aristotle to envisage according to the genetic method, there is yet no State, no city, not even village. We have to do with independent, isolated individuals and their first, necessary associations [5]. In the absence of a developed societal life, the distinction between the governing and the governed partner must be considered in its absolute sense: the dependence of the latter on the former (crucial to their common interest) has to be total and complete. There does not exist the web of

multiple, graduated relationships connecting people to each other in interlapping hierarchies of mental superiority in (various) wisdom(s). The directive associate is like pure mind, the executive like pure bodily strength and fitness; the one conceives and the other carries out into reality the former's conception: and these are by Aristotelian definition the archetypal master and slave, a social projection of the mind-body bipolarity in the individual man. In the fully grown society, there obtains a multidimensional continuum polarised by the essential types directive-executive: the director must be involved in some executive work albeit of a normally general and delineational kind, while conversely, as well, the executive has to employ knowledge, mental acumen and intellectual skill in order to grasp the full significance of the directions and set them on the optimal track of realisation, which moreover regularly involves directions issued to subordinate executive levels [6].

Taken at its extremest application, and in absolute terms, the distinction directive (creative, conceptive) - executive (imitative, implementive) becomes the master-slave relationship. Superadding this relationship to the male - female conjugation we obtain the elementary *cell* in human organization, the *household*. Thus, the two most fundamental relationships among human beings constitute the basic *unit* of social articulation. The *elements* assume their first *structure*, yielding thereby the elemental organic nexus. The elements, it is clear as well as explicit, and must be emphasised, are *individuals*. Moreover, the relationships structuring these individuals into social forms of increasing complexity are *relationships between individuals* as such and not as members of social organisations however simple. The attitude is, in this sense, firmly *individualistic*.

Male and female are inherent differentiations of human nature in its individualization. And such, also, are the aptitudes that constitute an individual as of the directive or the executive type. The overarching natural purpose of the association between the sexes is the continuation of humanity beyond any individual's extinction. The final natural purpose of the association between the above explained complementary poles in human action is the optimization of this

activity and the maximization of its effects and results. Nature aims at the optimal condition of being, function and efficacy in all existence, and, in particular, in human existence. This general Principle of Excellence requires (a) that human nature be preserved in individual existence but beyond the limitations of individual existence; and (b) that the individuals enter into such arrangements as maximise their optimal efficiency. These two conditions are elementally satisfied if human beings are connected according to the two Aristotelian fundamental ordering relationships.

In order for the connections to effect their naturally pre-ordained ends, they must last not only as perpetually obtaining *kinds* of arrangement between different individuals, but also as particular instances of such kinds holding between the same *individuals*. The connections must be sustained over a minimum time-span, if they are to be able to start yielding their proper work at all. The required relative permanence of the particular connections depends on the actually prevailing general conditions of human existence.

In the state of affairs envisaged genetically as obtained at the beginning of human existence, there are lacking even the simplest organs of institutional stabilization of societal integrations. Exposure to such eminently fluid environment necessitates maximal permanence of the elementary structures established for the first time as an indispensable condition for their adequate functioning in promoting the ends for which they are naturally instituted. Thus the protection required for the survival, growth and training of the offspring during a considerable part of his early life explains the durability of the family. Similarly, the abiding security needed for the effective working of the ruling / ruled combination in conditions of otherwise total framework absence and institutional vacuum, causes the permanence of the conceptive / implementive (and, at the simplest and extremest, the master / slave) bond between the appropriate particular individuals [7].

Taking a stable family nexus and compounding with it permanent ruling / ruled bonds, one obtains according to Aristotle a *household* as a basic cell of social and economic organisation. Ἐκ μὲν οὖν τούτων

τῶν δύο κοινωνιῶν οἰκία πρώτη [«from these two, then, associations, proceeds the primary household»] [8]. The second relationship (between master and slave) is as constitutive of a fully developed household as the first conjugal one. A family which does not include slave labour (implementive work executed by permanently bonded natural corporeal adjutants) is not a proper household. Οἰκία δὲ τέλειος ἐκ δούλων καὶ ἐλευθέρων [«Indeed a perfect household consists of free and slave persons»] [9]. This is so, because the family, as the elemental social organization, has an inherent *economic* function right from its inception. Economic activity presupposes the polarity between conceptive and implementive work (or action and labour); it therefore attains its perfection when the polarity becomes explicit. Economic activity is, according to this reasoning, incomplete if the antithesis remains implicit, when for instance both types of work are performed by the paterfamilias, or when the wife and mother plays partly the role of slave in domestic services, or, finally, if there are some beasts of burden supplying at the limit the requirement for executive, bodily work [10].

The combination of the two fundamental associations gives the elemental society cell, the household. But things in general, according to the profound Aristotelian teleology, are best defined with reference to their function and purpose (τὸ ἔργον and τὸ τέλος), the end they serve. Their matter, structure and form have significance in relation to the finality which they intrinsically satisfy; indeed, the reason of their very existence is their end, the aim which they are best adapted to accomplish. The immediate ends of the two basic associations are, respectively, procreation and sustainance, i.e. maintainance into being of the individuals and, through them and their sustained conjugation, of the human kind. *Provision for the wants of man is the cause of all association of man with man. The grand Principle of Interest* is always working in all communal bonds. The elemental community of the household is meant to provide for man's *everyday needs*, daily *recurring wants* such as the need for food and basic protection from the environment. The household is therefore such an institutional arrangement (the first into which man enters genetically and

naturally) which, combining the two fundamental associations, binds together an elemental community with the purpose of satisfying the needs of daily life. As Aristotle puts it succinctly: *‘Ἡ μὲν οὖν εἰς πᾶσαν ἡμέραν συνεστηκυῖα κοινωνία κατὰ φύσιν οἶκός ἐστιν* [«In fact, then, the household is an association formed according to nature for the satisfaction of daily recurring needs»] [11].

But man does not live only day by day. He has the capacity to live at any moment in the past and for the future. His existence relates essentially to a span of time, the more, indeed, extended, the more articulate the development his being is. Even under the simplest realization of his nature, man does not merely respond to present pleasure and pain in satisfying his wants or averting noxious influences. He can trace, to some extent (dependent on the degree of his attainments), the antecedents of any obtaining state of affairs with which he is confronted, and can also calculate, with varying degrees of efficiency, the coming evolution of events and the differential consequences of his action or inaction. *Thus, beyond immediate satisfaction or dissatisfaction, he can judge about advantages and disadvantages, about what is beneficial and what harmful, about things profitable and things unremunerative, about utilities and disutilities.* Man is guided in his actions not merely by present gratification of wants, but by his *interest* - something whose very essence implicitly involves a *term of time*, shorter or longer. We find again here operating the great *Principle of Interest* lying at the root of human life [12]. In fact, this is the purpose for which nature has endowed man with *reason*. For nature does nothing in vain [13]. Reason enables man to discern gain and damage, advantage and hindrance, profit and loss, benefit and harm, in short what is to his *interest*, or, alternatively, is *harmful* to him. And *therefore*, Reason signifies what is *just* and *unjust*, or *good* and *bad* generally. For the essential character of the good, according to the Ancient Greek mentality, is usefulness; and, correspondingly, bad is the intrinsically harmful. While justice and injustice regard fundamentally appropriation, namely *what is one’s own*, material or immaterial. The connection is that really and naturally one’s own is what is beneficial

to the entity in question; just as essentially alien is what is harmful [14]. Goodness and justice are thus intrinsically coimplicated with interest. And it is communion in these things, a common apprehension of interest, goodness (utility) and justice (rightful appropriation), that causes and sustains all association between men, the commonwealth of State as well included [15].

(Self) Interest really provides the solid foundation for all communal association - and not any assumed independent gregarious instinct, nor some genial altruistic motives of general sympathy towards other human beings. Interest we found working already at the fundamental human relationships and at the elemental association built upon these. There may seem now to exist a clash between the respective natures of household and interest. The *time* dimension essentially involved in the latter could appear repugnant to the elemental association, whose defining purpose consists in the optimal satisfaction of *daily* needs. But two relevant points help correct this *prima facie* picture. *First*, if the household exists to provide for the fulfilment of the necessary wants of man's *day to day* life, it aims to cater for these not on a single, particular day, but on a *permanent* basis; the *daily* needs are attended to, *day after day*. Thus a time period is implicit in the finality of household. *Secondly*, above and beyond such long-term needs which are at bottom merely recurring short-term needs (like the need for daily sustenance, whose satisfaction is succeeded next day by the same want), there are more properly long term interests necessarily involving present or temporary pain or disadvantage. Such is, e.g., the interest of acquiring some expertise or other human excellence which requires relatively long periods of apprenticeship; such interest does not relate to a properly recurring want but rather to a single sustained one, only once (if at all) fulfilled, and is accompanied by a constant endeavour and a considerable degree of exertion and other positive or negative pain or unpleasantness, most burdening especially at the initial phases of the process. By negative *dolour* or affliction I mean one that is caused by the fact of not pursuing at the time a more immediately pleasant or promising course of action. A *rational* choice in favour of such

veritable *long-term* interests presupposes the *present* sense of their relative importance, which again requires a system of differential valuations of qualitatively radically dissimilar and unhomogeneous assets and their respective utilities in satisfying wants, i.e. their respective pleasure - capabilities. The rationality of the selection, in terms of the individual self-interest, appears more precarious, if one considers that normally the end in question (with the reputed higher advantage and of the greater interest) cannot be apprehended specifically in such cases, as it has not been realised before by the subject in question. At most, he will have to rely on analogies with no precise valuational content. *If rationality of choice is to be strictly upheld, then to perceive at present the differential importance of truly long-term needs, man must construe them in a hierarchical gradation of more or less deep (or high) wants. Such hierarchy is only possible in an essentialist framework, if one takes as given, that is, human nature and its essential parts, functions and attributes.* We shall observe in various contexts the foundational work of essentialism, chiefly in establishing *rationally* basic doctrines of advanced (in our case) economics, which in the modern setting can only be understood *statistically* and, therefore, construed in the last analysis as accidental configurations of the given facts.

In the interest of a being is what is to *its advantage*. The Greek word *συμφέρον* covers the entire meaning-field of interest, advantage, benefit, profit, use; it literally means *carrying along together*, working with the subject in question so as to bring about together the same thing, contributing. Good, furthermore, in ancient Greek thought and life-experience, is basically what is beneficial to something, just as bad is what is harmful. Now to the advantage and benefit of a thing is ultimately what *sustains* and *enhances* its existence. To *sustain* its existence one must cater for the basic needs of its nature; to *enhance* its existence one must cater for the superior need of the perfection (so far as possible) of its nature. A thing with perfected its own inherent nature reaches the peak of its being, the maximal degree of its powers and their optimal activity. Thus what sustains and enhances the existence of something is what *satisfies* the primary and secondary

wants of its essential nature, meaning by primary wants those pertaining to its mere being, and by secondary wants such as relate to its well-being, i.e. its perfected being. Therefore, to the advantage and benefit of a thing is what is *useful* for its being and well-being. *The ancient Greek theory of Goodness is a Theory of Utility, only geared to human nature and its perfection.* We once more discover the fundamental significance of essentialism in supplying the rock basis on which to built an objective measure of human activity [16]. *The ancient theory of Goodness is an objective Theory of Utility,* and no moralizing «should-be-ism» or ethical imperativism. For the ancient mind these latter would be vain, utopian exercises in disutility.

Interest and Goodness are grounded on utility, on the capacity to satisfy first and second order wants of human nature. Justice itself is firmly embedded, as a real factor and working parameter, into the same framework. For it cannot but be just in the order of reality, that a thing maximises its being-potential to the differential degree it is by nature capable of. Consequently, it is also just that whatever satisfies the maximalization objective be employed. Utility to such end lies at the core of a realistic idea of justice. (Hence the Horatian dictum figured as motto to the present chapter [17]). It is equitable that the thing is not hindered in its natural endeavour to attain the highest possible (for it) realization (= perfection) of its own nature. In particular, it is just and equitable that it is not prevented from such accomplishment for which it is naturally constituted by an undue consideration of other thing's apparent rights. Rights extend in *rerum natura* thus far as the corresponding capabilities and powers, and so far only. The rest is human presumption and misguided interference.

It may be argued that such a view of optimising human potential and maximizing performance is untenable because it would create total chaos and retrogress human society to the primitive conditions of an absolute jungle, thereby *minimizing* achievement and result. The question is whether egoism is a dissolving or a binding factor in human societies; whether the relentless pursuit of self-interest on the part of each individual can create and sustain a system in optimal and stable equilibrium. One recognizes the essence of the crucial difficulty

in NeoClassical Economics: the existence, uniqueness and stability, or otherwise, of solutions of the equations regarding economic activity in General Equilibrium Theory.

Nature presents an exemplary model for the problem in question. A vast number of entities belonging to the widest range of species manifest their nature to the extent and in the intensity consistent with their inner capacities and the restrictions imposed exclusively by the similar propensity toward maximal manifestation displayed on the part of the rest. The system is totally unregulated, indeed anarchical. Yet it exists in a state of stable equilibrium, at least for large time-spans. Innumerable adjustments are being made and unmade every moment, individual things come and go perpetually, but the overall structure of relationships remains, on the whole, intact. Moreover, it is incomprehensible that another general state of stable equilibrium were possible as a real potentiality (as against a mere theoretical fiction). For what, in that case, could decide between the two in a closed system? Finally, the unmeditated, naive, conviction is that the cosmic condition represents on balance the best possible arrangement, in a sense to be sure, requiring articulate specification.

A system of entities endowed with definite *natures* admitting *various degrees* of perfection is a *natural* system. A nature is a formation of attributes structured in a certain way. Any character can be more or less perfectly manifested; however, the perfection of the nature in an individual of that nature is expressed by the aggregate perfection of its attributes *weighted* according to the structural relationships of its natural formation.

In a natural system, the entities aspire to the perfection of their respective natures, or, in other words to the same effect, to their *optimal self-realization*. A nature imparts an intrinsic drive toward its perfection in every individual possessing it. The individuality of an entity represents a particular manifestation of its definite nature, and thus a particular delimitation of its final perfection. *Under the conditions (and constraints) of its individuality*, an entity aims inherently towards the maximal perfection of its nature.

A condition of *stable equilibrium for a closed, natural system* is defined by the optimal self-realisation of all its members, by the maximal perfection of their respective natures consistent with the corresponding conditions of their individuality. For assuming that one member has not attained to the maximal perfection it is capable (as a particular individual of its nature) of, its natural drive towards it will have destabilising consequences (however small) for the entire system. It will also require the unproductive consumption of energy for its repression. In this sense, the optimal state of a closed, natural system is the state of the optimal condition of all its members.

It is evident, therefore, that the condition of *stable equilibrium* for a given closed, natural system must be *unique, if there exists*. In the context of ancient essentialism, *uniqueness* and *stability* are not the real problem regarding optimality in general *equilibrium*: these follow upon its existence. The whole issue of optimality in a system is reduced to the question of the existence of a state in which all the members of the system attain their optimal condition, i.e. *to the question of the real compatibility of their individual perfections*. And this is a *metaphysical* question, one, that is, concerning the constitutional principles of reality.

I have analysed the Platonic answer to this question elsewhere [18]. Aristotle's solution consists in the doctrine of absolute cosmic *teleology* [19]. Things and their natural kinds, individuals and their natures or essences, form a complex ladder of ascending ontological perfection ranging from totally unformed matter on the lower end and reaching to pure intelligence on the superior extremity. Every step in this ladder of being exists for the sake of the higher manifestations of existence, as their indispensable prerequisite. The finality of being is, in such a perspective, continuous: any break in the chain of existence, any vacuum in beingness, would cancel the ontological progress of perfection towards its higher ends; the system of being would collapse as unsustainable. And just as all actual forms of being are necessary for the complete unfolding of its finality, so there are none other required for the same. The actual variation of existence, down to its most underdeveloped and apparently redundant

specifications, is the necessary and sufficient condition for the attainment of the absolute perfection of being, namely pure intelligence.

The same pattern holds, *mutatis mutandis*, within the framework of a single species, of humankind, as this exists and operates in the cosmic setup. Essential variation now becomes gradation in perfection of the given nature. Natural subkinds exist corresponding to natural divisions of the kind in question: we have already noticed four such elementary groupings answering to the sexual (male - female) and the operative (directive - executive) fundamental distinctions in humanity. There are many other functional divisions corresponding to variations in aggregates of capacities. Again, all these differentiations from a coherent pattern, in which all really possible positions are actually occupied. The nexus, every single cell in it, and none but these concentrations of capabilities, exist for the purpose of realising perfect wisdom, i.e. in-depth knowledge of reality, or in other Aristotelian words, pure intellection. It is this finality which explains and justifies the obtaining of all other corporate and individual functionalities, down to the most downgraded servile status, this consisting, as has been outlined above, in an innate suitability to bodily exertion, in effective corporeality, which thus corresponds in the human spectrum to the material substrate of reality on the cosmic scale of existence [20].

In such an Aristotelian setting, to ask for the existence of general equilibrium or a state of optimality in human society (or in the World at large for that matter), is to question the finality of existence, the existence of a final end to which all being serves as means to its attainment. And this is to ask for the meaning of existence, the fact of which is immediately given in the ancient Greek experience, while even its content is securely grasped in reflection as supreme understanding. Just as in human nature, the organicity of the body-soul compound makes each and every part, faculty and process, down to the slightest chemical reaction, severally necessary and collectively sufficient conditions of the entire system's existence, while their respective best state constitutes the whole's well-being tuned to the

ultimate purpose of perfect knowledge; so in human society the various individuals and their intrinsic relationships constitutive of their several functional groupings form an articulate system whose optimality, really possible or actual, tantamount to the optimal condition of all its parts, is grounded on the genuine realisability or actuality respectively of its finality, again consisting in supreme wisdom; and so in the World as a whole, things and their natural kinds, their activities and passivities, synthesising and dissolutions categorised according to natural divisions, exist such as they are and not otherwise, for the ultimate purpose and final end of all being, namely, once more, for the manifestation of pure and absolute intellection.

What confers unity and cohesion to a system is the existence of absolute finality in it. Its structure must answer to the requirements of its final purpose. The system itself is the means of attaining its end, the means analysed however into a complex chain of proximate and ulterior finalities (means - end relationships) down to the level of (differentiated) immediate human motivation [21]. A well-organised society is, therefore, a system of human beings capable of attaining optimality, i.e. capable of realising the optimal condition of all its members according to their several, respective individual constitutions and constitutive capabilities.

It follows, *that self-interest is the grand principle of organization in human societies.* For there is an objective foundation for the *compatibility* of the various individual self-interests, provided by the *inherent, finality of every natural system* [22]. There is no way, within such a system, in which the optimal self-realisation and maximal performance of an individual may hurt or compromise the corresponding attainments of another. On the contrary, the simultaneous exertion of individuals towards their respective optimal state has the triple beneficial effect of: (a) instigating or intensifying the drive of self-interest in those mindless or lax in the pursuit of their proper realisation; (b) redressing abusive over-exertion on the part of any of them; and (c) correcting false perceptions as to one's own or another's objective position in the scheme of things. In an effective

free-for-all framework, the system (after a period of chain reactions in mutual, multiple adjustments) finds its natural equilibrium in the optimality of all its members. For a more than optimal achievement on the part of some, implies the less than optimal attainment on the part of others: the former situation creates instability of unmanageableness, while the latter generates instability of dissatisfaction. The two, that of excess and that of deficiency, correct each other once they are let free to compete in a natural system, one, that is, without artificial protections. Overshooting and underperformance are there automatically balanced. Such a balance, we shall see, lies at the core of (political) justice.

Self-interest impells man to form household and village, the former with a view to the satisfaction of his diurnal, recurring needs, the other for wants transcending everyday necessities of life [23]. Since now human nature is a definite, however complex, determination of being, its wants cannot but be delimited, however extensive. There must then obtain a human association which can secure, at least in principle, the satisfaction of practically *all* real human wants. Such an organisation, providing for the virtual *self-sufficiency* of its members is, according to Aristotle, by definition *the State*. This covers and caters, in fact, not only for the necessities of life as such, but also for the requirements of good life, of human *well-being*, of man's happiness. *Politica*, A, 1252b27-30: ἡ δ' ἐκ πλειόνων κωμῶν κοινω-
νία τέλειος πόλις ἤδη, πάσης ἔχουσα πέρασ τῆς ἀνταρκείας ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, γιγνομένη μὲν οὖν τοῦ ζῆν ἔνεκα, οὔσα δὲ τοῦ εἶ ζῆν.
[«Furthermore, the perfect association constituted out of many villages is already a city-state (urbanised political association as a State), when it reaches virtually the limits of self-sufficiency; this comes into being for the sake of (bare) living, but (in its nature) exists for the sake of well-living»] [24].

Since the basic distinctions underlying the household represent *natural* divisions of humankind, the constitution of the household (as the first self-sustainable cell of social organisation) is a *natural* process happening *by nature*. Need itself teaches that such is the appropriate association meant to cater for the everyday wants of human nature.

There is therefore an instinctive push towards it in the individual, beyond any reflective appreciation on his part of his own interest. The same holds true for the formation of the village: still, it is necessities of life that are best secured in its fold, albeit within a broader temporal perspective transcending the present, daily needs. This is an extension of the same fundamental drive which created in the first place the household: the means are supplied for the fuller and more permanent satisfaction of the conditions necessary for human existence. But implicit in this drive is the overarching purpose of the perfection of this existence, of the finest blooming of humanity. The end of *well-being* does not accrue from outside to that natural mechanism working for the fulfilment of the necessary demands of *bare being*, but is the inherent final aim of the very same drive that starts with the genesis of a thing and ends with its perfection. *In this way the end of perfection is as natural as the initial drive itself to (maintainance in) existence.* To sustain being in actual existence and to accomplish its proper, excellent state of existence in perfection are part and parcel of the same law of order in reality. To secure the natural development from existence to perfection, from sheer being to well-being, to safeguard, so to speak, the full blooming of self-realisation, one must procure conditions of *self-sufficiency*. Being cannot complete itself in its full dynamism of existence unless it can attain the natural acme of its proper excellence; and it cannot do this unless the satisfaction of its inferior needs (those subordinate to its supreme flourishing) is adequately secured; and this again cannot happen save in the compass of established self-sufficiency. In self-sufficiency, the intrinsic desire of a thing for its highest intensity of existence finds the conditions for its natural consummation. The individual is, however, not by itself self-sufficient. It requires an appropriate environment of collective self-sufficiency in order to achieve its optimal self-realisation, esp. the natural pinnacle of intensity and fullness of perfection in existence. Polis (the city-state or urbanised society), being defined as that integrative organisation of human co-habitation which can ensure man's self-sufficiency, is therefore the end and final purpose of the more elementary formations which cater for life's necessities, daily or

more permanently. Thus the Polis (the State) is a *natural* human phenomenon, constituted *by nature*. *The end* (i.e. perfection) is always for the ancient Greek experience *natural: for that is the nature of a thing which is manifested at the peak of its existence, when all genesis, growth and development have spent themselves and its essence glows in perfection*. (What comes in the order of things after that peak has been achieved is *decay*, and is irrelevant, save indirectly, to the question of its nature). *The end* of being is its *perfection*; both notions are rendered by the same concept in ancient Greek, *τέλος* [25].

It is evident that for Aristotle urbanised society (*πόλις*) and the state (*πόλις*) is natural in the sense that it is the end result and the final purpose of a natural development whose motor power is an inherent, instinctive drive [26] in man impelling him to form such associations as first safeguard his (*individual*) *existence* and then help achieve his (*individual*) *perfection*. Aristotle, however, understands this general formulation in a concrete way. What is meant by maintaining that in the State the limits of self-sufficiency are contained, and that, therefore, it is in the State-framework that human perfection may be achieved (and *is* actually attained in the best social organization, *ἀρίστη πολιτεία*) is *not* that *every* human being will there reach the perfection of human nature. Such full realisation of human excellence is reserved for some privileged individuals, rich in endowments, fortunate in opportunities of timing and location, superior in accomplishments. What the state-organization is meant to provide is the appropriate framework for optimal self-realisation in the case of all its member (according to each one's capabilities), and for complete manifestation of humanity's ulterior potentialities in the case of some individuals, incarnations, so to speak, of human perfection. Thus, the sense in which the State encompasses self-sufficiency is that it makes it possible (through divisions of (productive) activity, functional structuring of the social nexus, automatic rationalization of internal processes and intense antagonism among its members and parts) for *some* individuals to become virtually self-sufficient, and, hence, to be able to reach the peak of human excellence (as excellence

of human nature in general) [27]. In Aristotle, always, essences are real focuses of stability in the flux of phenomena creating dynamic fields into which the mutations in the collocations of accidental properties are inscribed and explained; but these focuses require particular bearers, so to speak, in order to exist and operate. Such bearers are the individual entities of reality. In fact, essentialism is the indispensable prerequisite for the existence of multiple, particular poles in reality; with no distinction between essential and accidental characters, the entire reality must be a single, all-encompassing, individual entity. *Individualism and Essentialism go hand in hand.* Without essences there are no true individuals, but arbitrary delimitations in a web of fluctuating parameters.

On the other hand, the full blooming of an individual human being, and, therefore, the perfection of human nature, cannot be actually attained save in the framework of political society. Individually and on his own, man can hardly cope with even his ephemeral needs and all necessities of life. This is why he enters into association with other human beings, forming the nexuses of, first, the household and, then, (coping with his primary needs and securing his existence on a more permanent footing) the village. Much more does he lack the empowerment of autarcy with regard to his demand for *well-being*, if left on his own individually - or even in the context of the narrower association-patterns into which nature herself propels him. Thus, man can thrive only in the broader and fuller integration of political society, i.e. in the State. There (if properly constituted) everyone can reach the limits of his individual potentialities, and human nature may realise to the utmost its intrinsic capabilities of perfection in the case of some individuals, consummate exemplars of humanity. Thus the satisfaction of the lower order needs (those, that is, relative to sustaining bare existence), which is required in order for wants of higher rank (paradeigmatically, demands for well-being) to be able to seek their appropriate fulfilment, can only be secured not separately but in association of man with man. The broader and more articulate is the base of such association, the more adequate is the security in the satisfaction of lower order needs, the ampler field is

provided for the exercise of higher order natural aspirations in man. At the limit, enough surplus of energy is created, that it can be pooled together and channelled to the realisation of things transcending necessities of life and relating to the good life in terms of human happiness. *This limit corresponds, then, to the first actualisation of conditions of self-sufficiency for human nature (in the sense of allowing for the realisation of the full range of potentialities inherent in it, even the highest ones) and defines (urbanised) political society,* as organised and integrated in a State, which, for the Archaic and Classical experience presupposed by Aristotle, consists in the City-State, whereas for the oecumenical feeling of the Hellenistic and Roman eras, is represented in its completest form by the *Empire*.

It follows that the full development of human nature can only happen within the framework of a *social integral* (the State). In it human individuals can reach their optimal status, stretch, that is, out to their maximal self-realisation, each according to its internal capabilities and external opportunities. Hence, only in such an integral can human perfection be realised in individuals activating the highest potentialities of human nature. In this sense, the *social integral is presupposed by individual self-realisation* (individual excellencies and accomplishments, i.e. perfection). It therefore bears to the individual the relation that an organic *whole* has to its member-*parts*: the hand is not really a hand but in the integration of a living body. For things are defined by their proper potencies and action, *by the difference they make, or can make, to the real World*. A part that cannot function in the way that is essentially characteristic of it, is no real part: a hand unable to deliver as a hand is no real hand [28].

The priority of the social integral over the individual according to Aristotle constitutes clearly a logical, and not a temporal, precedence. The genetic account, we have seen, starts with the individual, proceeds to the primary associations (household, village) and ends with the full political society. This is a natural development that begins with the instinctive impetus to enter into associations safeguarding the satisfaction of the necessities of life, of needs relating to subsistence and maintainance of bare life - and subsequently leads

to the formation of political society providing for the fulfilment of demands for human well-being and happiness. The step from securing mere beings to allowing for well-being is taken so to speak imperceptibly, for, genetically, political society is formed as an extension of the process of safeguarding existence. But once effected, the transition instigates the natural drive to perfection by providing the framework for its realisation. These two aspects of the process are succinctly expressed by Aristotle in his above quoted dictum (*Politica*, A, 1253a29): γινομένη (sc. ἡ πόλις) μὲν οὖν τοῦ ζῆν ἕνεκεν, οὐσα δὲ τοῦ εὖ ζῆν «(urban society as State) comes into being for the sake of (bare) life, but exists really (when constituted) for the sake of good life». Once formed, as an extension of the primary associations and as a further step in the direction of better securing *their* priorities, the social integral releases the dynamism of its own nature which aims at creating the appropriate framework for the realisation of human excellence [29]. *Thus the individual is prior to political society absolutely, but posterior to it as a fully developed individual of human nature.* The logical precedence of the State integral over the individual is real once the individual is conceived under the condition of its optimal self-realisation as human being. The apparent incoherence in the very first pages of the Aristotelian Politics is thus raised and a consistent picture emerges [30].

Aristotle's grand point is that the natural final purpose of political society is *man's well-being*. This end is natural, and therefore man is powerfully inclined to enter into association with man, and finally to form political society, through an innate, instinctive drive towards societal integration of his life with that of other human beings. The effect of this drive is felt even without the necessity of one's another help in protection from mutual injuries. Man, Aristotle maintains, will enter into communal bonds of some sort with man, even in the absence of a real or perceived threat to his existence, but under the attraction and, then, motivation of his final end of happiness. The inherent drive is complemented by the conscious aim based on an estimation of common - and self-interest. But it is crucial to observe that the common interest does not refer to a determinate condition

which is the set purpose of all members of the community that it obtains for all and each one of them. Rather the common interest regards only each individual's maximal self-realisation - *such as it is capable of*. So that in point of definite content each individual's self-interest differs from that of others, and only the aim of optimality and maximalisation *in general* is really common. The common interest is an aggregate of different individual interests: only this aggregate in a well-functioning society is *integrable*; for the optimality of each individual, variable *though* this is - or, rather, *because* it necessarily varies in the field of the complete potentialities of human nature - is what constitutes the optimality of the given social integral, and even (indispensably) the manifestation of the supreme perfection of humanity in some individuals, as argued above in the framework of the Aristotelian theory of general equilibrium. When all the positions in the variational field of human excellence are occupied by various individuals, then their respective self-interests in their optimal realisations work automatically for the cohesion and optimality of their integral. When the distribution of human capacities and potentialities is complete (in the strong sense that all functional divisions in human activity are occupied so that efficiency and work can be maximized), then the general character of the common interest (namely, that every individual strives for his optimal self-realisation) becomes the integrating factor in the aggregate of the particular contents of the individual self-interests. But that the distribution is complete is equivalent to the objective necessity that all natural articulation in human nature actually obtains *in rerum natura*. In such a context, *individual optimization optimises automatically the societal integral*. The individual takes care of his own self-interest and self optimisation: and this by itself takes care in aggregation for the societal optimisation. In principle and primarily, the perception of interest concerns essentially well-being or, in other words, good life. If interest is also, as it is really, directed towards mere existence, i.e. bare being, this happens because there is involved actually after all in the very existence of a thing something of its optimality, a sparkle of its proper goodness and perfection; in life itself, in the mere fact of living,

there seems to obtain some happiness and some «natural sweetness» [31]. *Being cannot be without a vestige of well-being to sustain it* [32].

Aristotle distinguishes three types of association transcending the rank of Household and Village, and defined by their corresponding finalities (as it should be, in tune with Aristotelian teleology); he uses them as foils for the clearer understanding of political society which, he argues in an involved passage, is none of the three.

1) There is first the association of *individuals in possessions* (*in wealth* of any description - real estate, goods or money and credits), according to definite *shares* in their totality, and with a view to profits from the economic activity in which the corporate entity is meant to engage, the revenue being distributed to the shareholders proportionally to the amount of shares possessed by each one of them. The idea is of an enterprise, a partnership as an anonymous society.

2) Then, we have any sort of *alliance* between individuals with the purpose of mutual help and protection against the infliction of harm and the commission of injustice to any one of them. Such an alliance may be conceived to exist among individuals belonging to a single state - and constituting the foundation of their political association; or as holding between different states, in which case it is the individual members of these states that are again ultimately secured in general against injury.

3) Finally, the smooth operation of transactions in exchange of goods or services and, generally, in mutual utility, necessitates the institution of a common framework within which these transactions take place. For instance there may obtain treaties regarding importable goods or agreements concerning the legal resolution of commercial or financial disputes (*σύμβολα*). Such a framework of common activity entails some form of association among the economically interrelated individuals.

Aristotle argues emphatically against the assimilation of political union in a State to any of these three types of association. What binds political society together is neither a *partnership*, nor an *alliance*, nor *economic cooperation*. A State is not a *firm*, not a *coalition*, not an

economic union. Correspondingly the finality of a State is neither *wealth and revenue*, nor *security*, nor *economic integration*.

The argument against construing political association as a corporate partnership is that in such a case the principle of wealth should have been the sole organising factor of the political structure; thus oligarchy would be the best form of political constitution, where each would participate in the State-power proportionally to his wealth and revenue alone. The argument against identifying the State with either an alliance or an economic union rests crucially on the fact that the latter forms of association can exist without producing one State. Nor might one object reasonably that this happens because of the spatial distance between the allied or economically cooperating communities, and that local proximity when added to conditions of mutual protection and economic cooperation yields statehood. Even if (Aristotle pointedly explains) the walls of Megara were joined to those of Corinth, and treaties of common security as well as conventions of economic cooperation and social intermixture (such as rights of intermarriage) were holding between the two cities, still they would stay two and not become one so long as their respective ways of life and cultural contexts remained diverse; for these express their respective understandings of the end of life, of human excellence and perfection, of merit and value. So that while these conditions are indeed necessary prerequisites for the existence of full political association, yet they do not constitute its essential nature; which can, therefore, be only sought in such structural integrations of human coexistence that provide for the realisation of human perfection. *A State, Aristotle thus defines, is an association of households, villages and clans which exists, and exists in such a specific form, for the sake of a perfect and self-sufficient life, that is for the sake of the excellence and well-being of human nature as manifested in the appropriate individuals* [33].

The fundamental reason why man is intrinsically drawn into associating with man is lack of self-sufficiency. There is in human nature a constitutive impossibility of realising to any considerable degree its full potential if man stays alone, away from the company of

other human beings. Noone can optimally satisfy all the needs inherent into his nature, even under his limited individual spectrum of capabilities, unless in association with others. *A fortiori* human perfection cannot be realised in any individual if this is to live isolated from the lifes of other humans. Life's excellence (complete or partial, full or relative) cannot be attained but in the integration of many individual lifes. The integration of such particular lifes as severally fill all the positions in the variational field of human capabilities, and thus mutually suport each other and their respective excellencies as well as, crucially, the realisation of supreme perfection in some distinguished individual lifes - such integration constitutes precisely political society as a State. *Starting with individuals, more and more complex human association creates the indispensable framework for fuller and fuller realisations of human nature, up to the point where supreme human perfection becomes really actualisable: the organisational breadth and depth of societal structure under which the natural end of human existence, namely perfect human excellence, is reached, at least as an active possibility, is a State as the integral of political association. The want of self-sufficiency in the individual for his optimal self-realiation, causes the formation of associations with the purpose of achieving finally in a societal integral the conditions of self-sufficiency indispensable for his own individual perfection which are denied to its separate and isolated existence. Self-interest establishes the collective setting as means for individual optimality. Egoism is the root and principle of social existence [34].*

NOTES

- [1] Aristotle, *NE*, VIII 1160a8 sqq.: αἱ δὲ κοινωνίαι πᾶσαι μορίοις ἐοίκασι τῆς πολιτικῆς· συμπορεύονται γὰρ ἐπὶ τινι συμφέροντι, καὶ ποριζόμενοί τι τῶν εἰς τὸν βίον· καὶ ἡ πολιτικὴ δὲ κοινωνία τοῦ συμφέροντος χάριν δοκεῖ καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς συνελθεῖν καὶ διαμένειν· τούτου γὰρ καὶ οἱ νομοθέται στοχάζονται, καὶ δίκαιόν φασιν εἶναι τὸ κοινῆ συμφέρον. αἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλαι κοινωνίαι κατὰ μέρη τοῦ συμφέροντος ἐφίενται, οἷον πλωτῆρες μὲν τοῦ κατὰ τὸν πλοῦν πρὸς ἐργασίαν χρημάτων ἢ τι τοιοῦτον, συστρατιῶται δὲ τοῦ κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον, εἴτε χρημάτων εἴτε νίκης ἢ πόλεως ὀρεγόμενοι, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ φυλέται καὶ δημόται. [ἔνιοι δὲ τῶν κοινωνιῶν δι' ἡδονῆν δοκοῦσι γίνεσθαι, θιασωτῶν καὶ ἐρανιστῶν· αὐταὶ γὰρ θυσίας ἔνεκα καὶ συνουσίας.] πᾶσαι δ' αὐταὶ ὑπὸ τὴν πολιτικὴν ἐοίκασιν εἶναι· οὐ γὰρ τοῦ παρόντος συμφέροντος ἡ πολιτικὴ ἐφίεται, ἀλλ' εἰς ἅπαντα τὸν βίον. [«Now all associations appear to be parts of political society; for people engaging in them move together with a view to some interest and to providing some of the requisites in life. And similarly political association (in a State) seems to have been initially instituted and subsequently preserved by virtue of interest; for it is this that the legislators consider, maintaining in fact that justice is the common interest. But all other (particular) associations aim at partial interests (advantages); for example, navigators have a seaborne interest regarding the business of commerce or something like that; troops have a war interest, desiring wealth, or victory or a city; and similarly with the members of tribal or local communities. All these associations, however, appear to fall under the political society; for political association does not aim at the present advantage, but has a regard for the entire life of man»]. The bracketed sentence is probably out of place there and should best be located just after ἅπαντα τὸν βίον. This and the sequel refer to

associations whose end is pleasure, recreation and enjoyment. They are not, of course, to be opposed to «all associations» mentioned in the text above and functioning with a view to interest and advantage, but rather to be distinguished as serving a specific kind of interest.

The immediate context (chapter IX of Book VIII) for this discussion is provided by the highly significant Aristotelian view that friendship and justice are correlated within the framework of human association (1159 b25 sqq.). An association binds its members together in some form of friendship, while justice in it is determined with reference to the particular societal interest. And conversely, concrete friendship implies some kind of association between the friends in the pursuit of a common interest, which again provides substance to the general notion of justice as applicable to the internal functioning of the specific association in question.

- [2] For the genetic method, v. *Meteorologica*, Δ, 389b24 sqq. And cf. Isocrates, *De Antidosi* §180.
- [3] «Society begins in Necessity» as Newman put it (*The Politics of Aristotle*, Vol. II, p. 104).
- [4] *Politica*, A, 1252a 24 sqq.: εἰ δὴ τις ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὰ πράγματα φύομενα 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 γενέσεως ἕνεκεν (καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐκ προαιρέσεως, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ζῴοις καὶ φυτοῖς φυσικὸν τὸ ἐφίεσθαι οἶον 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 ποιεῖν ἀρχόμενον καὶ φύσει δοῦλον· διὸ δεσπότη καὶ δούλῳ ταῦτ' ἀμφότερα συμφέρει. [«Now if one will observe how things are coming into existence by nature in the beginning (the natural origins of things and their initial growth in existence), as in all other matters, so in the issue at stake, this is the best way to theorise. By necessity then, they are in the first place (and according to the nature of things) combined who cannot subsist apart, like, on the one hand, female and male for purposes of procreation (and this does not proceed by deliberation and choice, but, as in the other animals and plants, it is natural to aim at leaving behind a being similar to oneself - at reproducing oneself); and, on the other hand,

the naturally ruling and the naturally ruled one, this for purposes of preservation. For that which is capable of predicting (the future course of events) and taking care providentially (accordingly) is by nature the governing part and by nature the mastering one, while that which is able to act bodily in accordance with the other's directions is the governed partner and by nature slave; and this is why master and slave have the same interest»].

The relationship between master and slave (or the directive and the operational types respectively) corresponds to the soul-body connection in the compound human nature. Cf. e.g. Isocrates, *ad Demonium*, 40: *πειρῶ τῷ μὲν σώματι εἶναι φιλόπονος, τῇ δὲ ψυχῇ φιλόσοφος, ἵνα τῷ μὲν ἐπιτελεῖν δύνῃ τὰ δόξαντα, τῇ δὲ προορᾶν ἐπίστη τὰ συμφέροντα.* [«Endeavour, on the one hand to eagerly bear bodily toils, and on the other to be a lover of wisdom (a philosopher) in soul, so that you may be able to execute what appears to you the best course of action with the body, while you will know how to foresee advantages with the soul.»] (Isocrates enjoins here the cultivation of both types in the same individual, but this is relative, and a maxim of commonplace morality). Cf. also his *de Antidosi*, 180. Plato had postulated as the maxim of greatest significance in human relations that he who knows should lead and rule in every department of life, while he who is ignorant in deep insight must follow, even if he is himself in charge of a work. Plato, *Laws*, 690b: *τὸ δὲ μέγιστον, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀξίωμα ἕκτον ἂν γίνοιτο, ἔπασθαι μὲν τὸν ἀρχιτέκτονα κελεῖον, τὸν δὲ φρονούντα ἡγείσθαι τε καὶ ἄρχειν.* [«And, as it appears, the greatest maxim is the sixth, bidding the chief operative to follow, while the wise man must lead the way and rule»]. This is to the advantage of the latter, as well. For as Democritus had expressed aphoristically (apud Stobaeus, *Frorilegium*, 44.14) *κρέσσον ἄρχεσθαι τοῖσιν ἀνοήτοισιν ἢ ἄρχειν* [it is better for the man short of intellect to be ruled rather than to rule⁷]. Cf. also Poseidonius apud Athenaeus, 263c-d, and the abstract of the Peripatetic economic and political doctrine given in Stobaeus, *Anthologium (Eclogae Ethicae)* II, 7 (vol. II pp. 148-152 Wachsmuth).

[5] Menger was right to protest against those who interpreted certain well-known Aristotelian maxims, highlighting a holistic understanding of developed society, as implying aboriginality of social structures culminating in the state-order. V. esp. in his *Investigations into the Method of the Social Sciences* (tr. by Fr. J. Nock 1963¹, 1985², 1996³),

Appendix VII, pp. 207-9, *The Opinion Ascribed to Aristotle that the State is an Original Phenomenon given Simultaneously with the Existence of Man*. Of course Menger upheld an organic construal of the societal nexus, just as Aristotle did, but this is a very different thing, as he explicitly emphasised, from the fancy that would cancel the atomistic origin and foundation of social structures. He clearly saw that the individualistic elementation on the one hand and organic development of society on the other are far from inconsistent positions, they are really complementary aspects of one and the same reality. This is a crucial point, reverberating in manifold ways through all fields of ancient social, economic and political theoretical analysis and actual situation. A similar account of Platonism I have articulated in a paper delivered to the Eighth International Conference on Ancient Greek Philosophy, Athens - Samos 1996 (unpublished).

- [6] On the other hand, the essential types are not for Aristotle (here as everywhere) *ideal* types with no real manifestation. On the contrary they are crucially exemplified *in rerum natura*. For instance in all types of constitution but the democratic ones, the governing and the governed classes are separate and uncommunicable. This holds true, *a fortiori*, in the Aristotelian best polity, genuine aristocracy (or meritocracy). In such political organizations of society, and concerning matters of the commonwealth, the select few direct and the rest obey. This is also, further, the norm with regard to every science, art and artisanship; the accomplished *master* commands implicit respect and obedience: those who follow his instructions without properly understanding them are, in a sense, his (partial) *slaves*.

We must dissociate from the Aristotelian notion of slavery the incidence of *coercion*, of *violence* exercised to keep the slave dependent. (Aristotle even speaks of *ἐπιστήμαι δοῦλαι*, servile sciences, as opposed to an *ἀρχικωτάτη*, most principal and governing one, *Metaphysics*, 996b11). *Natural* slavery, according to Aristotle, is beneficial to the slave by nature. Indeed his mental faculties are expected to be just strong enough to perceive their grave shortcomings and the profit to accrue from his subjugation to the man of superior intellectual endowments. Such gain for the slave is not, of course, without recompense to the master: he can *achieve* more, and better, than he would have been able to *execute* by himself. To such a relationship the natural slave is supposed to be able to enter on his own accord. The reason for which we do not speak as a slave

of the man who blindly follows his doctor's or banker's instructions is not because there is no coercion and violence exercised in these cases (although there can still be operating enormous pressure), but because the obedience is circumscribed within a certain sphere (medicinal and financial correspondingly in the above examples) and can, furthermore, be terminated (within certain limits) at the follower's discretion. The unconditional surrender, virtually for life, of all directive functions in significant human actions on the part of an individual constitutes slavery, natural if he is basically bereft of the capacity for successful direction in his own affairs, enforced otherwise.

Aristotle considers menial workers and mechanical artisans as akin to slaves (if not effectively belonging to subsets of the slave class). Work that can be done satisfactorily without a significant minimum of intellectual involvement is slave work: it is in effect executive action, fit for servants who follow instructions. Thus in *Politica* Γ, 1277a33 sqq.: ἔστι γὰρ ἀρχὴ δεσποτική· ταύτην δὲ τὴν περὶ τὰ ἀναγκαῖα λέγομεν, ἃ ποιεῖν ἐπίστασθαι τὸν ἄρχοντα οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον, ἀλλὰ χρῆσθαι μᾶλλον· θάτερον δὲ καὶ ἀνδραποδῶδες. λέγω δὲ θάτερον τὸ δύνασθαι καὶ ὑπηρετεῖν τὰς διακοινὰς πράξεις. δούλου δ' εἶδη πλείω λέγομεν· αἱ γὰρ ἐργασίαι πλείους. ὧν ἓν μέρος κατέχουσιν οἱ χερνήτες· οὗτοι δ' εἰσὶν, ὥσπερ σημαίνει καὶ τοῦνομ' αὐτούς, οἱ ζῶντες ἀπὸ τῶν χειρῶν, ἐν οἷς ὁ βάνουσος τεχνίτης ἐστίν. [«For there is the authority of the master, concerned with necessities such as are unnecessary for the director (ruler) to know how to do but only how to make use of them. For the other alternative [i.e. to (know how to) perform them] is servile. I mean by the other alternative to be able to do a servant's work. Indeed there are many kinds of slave, for the (slave) work is diverse. One part is occupied by the menial workers. These are, as their name implies, people who earn a living from the work of their hands [those that perform bodily labour], in which category the mechanic also belongs»].

Judged exclusively from the type of work performed, mechanical menial workers are slaves: their contribution is fundamentally a matter of bodily strength and corporeal capacity without *significant* involvement of the mental powers for conceiving, inventing and planning. Aristotle always emphasises that a servile task is one properly that requires corporeal powers. Thus, also, *Politica* A, 1258b38: δουλικώταται (sc. ἐργασίαι) δὲ ὅπου τοῦ σώματος πλεῖσται χρήσεις [«and most servile labour takes place where there is maximal use of the body»]. The tendency to differentiate freedom from slavery according to the kind of work involved

alone was widespread in classical antiquity. A captive Spartan youth, being demanded to perform some particularly humiliating service, replied: *οὐ δουλεύσω*, I shall not become slave (Plutarch, *Apophthegmata Laconica* §35, 234B-C; Philo *Quod omnis probus sit liber*, 17 p.882c; Seneca *Epistulae Morales*, 77, 14; Arrianus, *Dissertationes Epicteti* I, 2, 8). Aristotle habitually couples *δουλικόν* (servile) and *θητικόν* (characteristic of a wage-labourer), e.g. *Politica* Θ, 1337 b21. Cf. *ibid.* Θ, 1341 b13; *Ethica Nicomachea* Δ, 1125 a1. It is not a fair objection to urge that (especially according to Aristotelian theory which is squarely opposed to any Cartesian-type segregation of the spiritual from the material in man or nature) there is no pure bodily action, just as there is no pure mind existing *in* the World. In fact, the most slavish action presupposes a minimum of attention, and even dexterity, in order to be carried through successfully. And conversely, the boldest flight of thought are firmly embedded, if keeping track of truth, in the stream of experiences filling the integrated apprehensive apparatus of the compound man during his full psychosomatic life. In fact, Aristotle ascribes to the slave his portion, albeit small, of virtues, i.e. of human excellences in the soul like temperance and courage; *Politica* A, 1260 a34 sqq.: *ὥστε δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ἀρετῆς δεῖται μικρᾶς* (sc. *ὁ δοῦλος*), *καὶ ποσαύτης ὅπως μῆτε δι' ἀκολασίαν μῆτε διὰ δειλίαν ἐλλείψῃ τῶν ἔργων*. [«Hence it is evident that (the slave) stands in need of some little virtue, with a view not to be shown unequal to his work either because of licentiousness or of cowardice»]. The idea is that everybody partakes in the same excellences of the human nature, but each one to the degree required by his activity (e.g. *Politica*, A, 1260 a2 sqq.; a14 sqq.); or rather, to put the point in the right causal order, one's activity corresponds to the degree and completeness of his command of virtue-excellence. *Real* (not *ideal*) types do not consist in absolute abstractions of isolated characteristics, but represent naturally complex constellations of characters under a *dominant* trait, such indeed structurings as possess maximal explanatory power in understanding reality. Slavery for Aristotle is such a real type of human condition.

However, although there is essential affinity between menial work and servile service, the menial worker, strictly speaking, is not necessarily a slave in all societal organizations. The basic similarity of the kind of work involved was straightforwardly projected as identity of socioeconomic status for the non-alien people performing it only in some archaic societies - a situation that has left its traces in developed societies like the

classical Athenian; *Politica*, Γ, 1278 a6 sqq.: ἐν μὲν οὖν τοῖς ἀρχαίοις χρόνοις παρ' ἐνίοις ἦν δοῦλον τὸ βάνανσον ἢ ξενικόν, διόπερ οἱ πολλοὶ τοιοῦτοι καὶ νῦν. [«Indeed, in ancient times the mechanic menials were in some states slaves or aliens; this is the reason why many of them are such even now»]. Military states in particular were prone to relegate all mechanical menial work to servile status and function (cf. Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, IV, 3; Plutarch, *Lycurgi et Numae inter se comparatio*, II); it was thought liable to subdue the high spirits of the young man and thus to compromise his valour. Aristotle endorses for his best polity the ancient practice: no resident menial mechanic should be citizen of the State with plenary rights. *Politica*, Γ, 1278a8: ἡ δὲ βέλτιστη πόλις οὐ ποιήσει βάνανσον πολίτην [«but the best polity will not enlist a menial mechanic as a citizen»]. He simultaneously recognises that in most actual constitutions citizenship and freedom are compatible with mechanical artisanship, with the carrying out of instructed work aimed at satisfying directly and proximately first-order human necessities (τὰ ἀναγκαῖα). In this common state of affairs slaves and free men providing the same kind of servile work are distinguished in that the former function on behalf of one and the same man (their master), whereas mechanics and menial workers do the same for all members of the community, i.e. for anybody interested to employ their service or use their work. *Politica* Γ, 1278 a11 sqq.: τῶν δ' ἀναγκαίων οἱ μὲν ἐνὶ λειτουργοῦντες τὰ τοιαῦτα δούλοι, οἱ δὲ κοινῇ βάνανσοι καὶ θῆτες. [«And in connection with necessary services, those who provide them to one and the same person are slaves, while those who offer them to all are mechanics and menial workers»]. Public slaves are no real exception (*pace* Newman, *op.cit.* vol. III, p. 176): they render service to the community as a whole and a single political entity, not to each and all the members of the community as diverse individuals.

Τὰ ἀναγκαῖα (things necessary, necessities) in such contexts signifies not so much absolute necessities (like food), but rather goods and services satisfying first order wants of human nature as prerequisites for the gratification of higher order demands. The antithesis between *ἀναγκαῖα* and *καλὰ*, between things necessary and things «nice» (beautiful, noble), is a standing, particularly elucidating Aristotelian theme. *Τὰ ἀναγκαῖα* are in effect necessary conditions and prerequisites for the realisation of superior objectives. To such necessary services and productions the servile status is by nature best suited. *Politica* A, 1260 a33: ἔθεμεν δὲ πρὸς τὰ ἀναγκαῖα χρήσιμον εἶναι τὸ δοῦλον. [«We have posited that the servile nature is useful for the necessary works»]. Provision for the necessities

requires primarily bodily service and can most effectively be done by the *following* of instructions on the part of those endowed by nature for corporeal work. *Politica* A, 1254 b25: ἡ γὰρ πρὸς τὰναγκαῖα τῷ σώματι βοήθεια γίνεται παρ' ἀμφοῖν, παρὰ τε τῶν δούλων καὶ τῶν ἡμέρων ζώων. [«Help rendered with the body in connection to the necessities is the peculiarity of both, slaves and domesticated animals»]. (Of course, Aristotle emphasises the differences between the two, as well, stemming from the basic fact that a human being can always *follow* reason, even if he is defectively equipped to *originate* it). The bidding involved in the implementation of necessities, does not pertain to things nice (noble). *Politica* H, 1325a25: ἡ γὰρ ἐπίταξις ἢ περὶ τῶν ἀναγκαίων οὐδενὸς μὲτέχει τῶν καλῶν. [«For the command regarding necessities partakes to nothing beautiful»].

The free menial worker and mechanical artisan does the same *kind* of work with a slave, but does not have a single master. Correspondingly, he is not involved in the execution of any and every kind of «necessary» work indiscriminately like the slave, but is occupied with a single job. *Politica* A, 1260 a41: ὁ γὰρ βάνουσος τεχνίτης ἀφωρισμένην τινα ἔχει δουλείαν [«for the mechanic has some circumscribed slavery»].

Aristotle pushes, as we have noticed, the distinction between the (intellectually) conceptive and the (corporeally) implementive types of work and worker to the limit. The servant is, at bottom, an *instrument*, in fact an instrument of instruments; *Politica*, A, 1253b32-3: καὶ ὁ δοῦλος κτήμα τι ἔμψυχον (sc. ἐστί), καὶ ὡσπερ ὄργανον πρὸ ὄργανου πᾶς ὑπηρέτης. [«and so the slave is a kind of ensouled possession, and every servant is like an instrument before instruments»]. More accurately, there is a distinction between instrument in *sensu latiore* and instrument in *stricto sensu*, which explains the felt inappropriateness of calling servants, wage-labourers and slaves mere instruments - and this has nothing to do with «moral» dignity. What are being called ordinarily instruments are instruments in the *making of things* not, primarily, in the *doing of actions*. The shuttle is strictly speaking an instrument in that there is produced through its use something over and above the use itself in which it is put; on the contrary, nothing comes out of the use of a garment or a bed as such, save the use itself. The former is an example of a *productive* instrument, the others of an active *possession*: *Politica*, A, 1254a1-5: τὰ μὲν οὖν λεγόμενα ὄργανα ποιητικὰ ὄργανά ἐστι, τὸ δὲ κτήμα πρακτικόν· ἀπὸ μὲν γὰρ τῆς κερκίδος ἕτερόν τι γίνεται παρὰ τὴν χρῆσιν αὐτῆς, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς ἐσθῆτος καὶ τῆς κλίνης ἡ χρῆσις μόνον. [«what are

being then called commonly instruments are instruments of production, whereas possession is an instrument of action; for from the shuttle there comes into being something else beyond its use, while from a garment or a bed there is only their use]. Possession in exact sense is that from which there comes about a *flow of direct utility* in use. To strictly possess is to command the flow of the direct utility of an article, to be able to enjoy at will its direct use. Possession thus is something *consumed in use*. An instrument of production on the contrary is not an article of consumption in use, but a thing that its use brings into existence another thing of indirect or direct utility. In a strict sense therefore an instrument of production is not owned in the same way with an instrument of consumption: the latter is one's own in a fundamentally more intimate way than the former. In his account of the nature of wealth, Aristotle makes it consist of a «mass of instruments» (to speak with J.S. Mill's Preliminary Remarks to his *Principles of Political Economy*); v. *Politica*, A, 1256b27 sqq., esp. 36-7: ὁ δὲ πλοῦτος ὀργάνων πλῆθος ἔστιν οἰκονομικῶν καὶ πολιτικῶν [«wealth, then, is a multitude of instruments useful in the household and the political society (the State)»]; meaning (as he explains a few lines before, b28 sq.), by such instruments, things necessary and useful for life (and good life) in the association of the household and the State. In this sense wealth coincides with possession (*κτῆσις*), which is explained in 1253b31-2 as πλῆθος ὀργάνων (multitude of instruments). The sense remains ambivalent as between the broad and the strict acceptance of the term «instrument»; thus, the tendency is to differentiate accordingly between wealth as consumptive articles (goods used directly in the satisfaction of human needs) and wealth as including also productive instruments (goods used primarily in the production of other goods). The differentiation takes its emphasis from the sharp Aristotelian distinction between production (*ποίησις*) and action (*πρᾶξις*); v. 1254a5 sqq. Plato, without such absolute distinction, considers an instrument always as an instrument of production, *Politicus* 287e: ἀεὶ γενέσεως αἰτία πηγνυται, καθάπερ ὄργανον [«is always formed for reasons of generation, like an instrument»].

Κτῆμα (Property or Possession) then is according to Aristotle strictly ὄργανον πρακτικὸν καὶ χωριστόν, a separable instrument of action (1254a16-7): separable, for it is not like the hand; of action, because its utility is exhausted in its use, without an independent result over and above this use: it is a service of life, and life is action, not production (1254a7). The slave is thus a servant in what regards human life, i.e. in

connexion with action, and not of production (a8): we draw a flow of (multiple) services from him. He is therefore a possession, although a human being (a16); he is an ensouled possession, *κτῆμά τι ἔμψυχον* (1253b32), like an automatic machine endowed with the principle of self-movement (1253b33 sqq.).

There seems, however, to be a lacuna in the Aristotelian position. For what of slaves employed in production (agricultural, manufacturing or trading)? Are not they instruments of production as against those offering direct services to the master? Their function does not terminate and is not exhausted in their use alone. It seems however that, for Aristotle, servility is primarily the source of a flow of services offered in the use of a slave, and secondarily, by extension, a means in the production of further goods. Just as the hand, or other active member of the human body, is primarily an (inseparable) consumptive good functionally defined by the services provided in its use, and then secondarily also instrument productive of other implements and utilities. In any case, this analysis does not impinge on the distinction between planning and directing on the one hand, and executing and following on the other as a fundamental typology of man's status and function. It rather enhances it by construing the second pole of the antithesis as instrumental in nature, whether productively or possessively (whether in its external result or in the services rendered by its use).

Aristotle's fundamental distinction between directive and executive moments in human activity, and the consequent (real) typology of managerial and implementive work, correspondingly of leaders and performers, is of paramount importance. There is on the one hand inventiveness and creativity, consisting in the clear perception of ends and the efficient adaptation in thought of appropriate means towards the former's realisation; and on the other, we have the faithful and adequate following, in its general articulation and its diverse divisions, of the planned pattern of action which conduces to the end in question, and which is the net result of the conceptual work previously accomplished: an architectural design is laid out, so to speak, intellectually constructed, for the achievement of an end; it is then effectuated. If the end is an inferior one, its actual realisation belongs to the necessities which are best left to be carried out by men whose natural capacities and acquired cultivation are just sufficient to enable them to follow instructions with attentive bodily action. In such cases indeed, man's activity is little more than disciplined corporeal movement in so far as the agent is concerned;

but in implementing a plan devised by the «architectonic» intellect, the work is, in itself, a piece of human enterprise however «necessary». Only the mental factor, in its full sway, is external to the executive process.

Aristotle construes the distinction employed in defining the master-slave relationship, in still more general level of significance. In all things that consist in an integration of varied elements, let this be of whatever kind, there exists an inner distinction between the ruling factor and the ruled parameters. Thus, most explicitly, in *Politica* A, 1254 a21 sqq.: τὸ γὰρ ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι οὐ μόνον τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν συμφερόντων ἐστί. καὶ εὐθύς ἐκ γενετῆς ἕνια διέστηκε τὰ μὲν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄρχεσθαι τὰ δ' ἐπὶ τὸ ἄρχειν. καὶ εἶδη πολλὰ καὶ ἀρχόντων καὶ ἀρχομένων ἐστίν ... ὅσα γὰρ ἐκ πλειόνων συνέστηκε καὶ γίνεται ἕν τι κοινόν, εἴτε ἐκ συνεχῶν εἴτε ἐκ διηρημένων, ἐν ἅπασιν ἐμφαίνεται τὸ ἄρχον καὶ τὸ ἀρχόμενον, καὶ τοῦτο ἐκ τῆς ἀπάσης φύσεως ἐνυπάρχει τοῖς ἐμφύχοις· καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς μὴ μετέχουσι ζωῆς ἔστι τις ἀρχή, ὅσον ἁρμονίας. [«for ruling and being ruled are not only necessary but advantageous as well. In fact, some beings are differentiated, right from their inception, others meant to be governed, others to govern; and there are many kinds of ruling and being ruled... For all entities that are constituted from many elements which become some one common thing, be they integrated from continuous or discrete constituents, in all these is manifested the ruling factor and the parameters ruled. And this distinction is inherent in beings endowed with soul as a consequence of its obtaining in nature at large. For even in inanimate things there is some principle (of integration), like in the case of harmony»].

In view of this pervasive significance of the antithesis between directive (intellectual) and executive (corporeal) work for Aristotle, it is outlandish to maintain the unity of conception and execution in work as a fundamental Aristotelian tenet, in the way J.B. Murphy does in his *The Moral Economy of Labor - Aristotelian Themes in Economic Theory*, 1993. Murphy deduces from such pseudoAristotelianism some utopian lines of reform for the future of economic activity bearing on the «dignity of work», but the project rests ultimately on a thorough confusion regarding key Aristotelian concepts like activity (*ἐνέργεια*), know-how (*τέχνη*), practical wisdom (*φρόνησις*), end (*τέλος*).

- [7] It is highly significant that for the Platonic philosophical mind the family connection should be completely dissolved for the governing classes of society in the exemplary state. Thus, the same coexistence side

by side of both lasting and transient male / female conjugations are recommended for society as that obtaining actually between permanent and temporary management / workforce (commanding / effectuating) associations. Free and slave labour complemented each other in ancient economic activity. Plato thought that family and communal nurture of the offspring should also both characterise (different sectors of) society. Still the servile or hired work do not pertain exclusively to specific social groups, whereas family is restricted to the governed classes.

Aristotle, on the other hand, has nothing to do with such revisionist planning in human society: family remains as sacrosanct, as under the aboriginal conditions of extreme danger to the progeny at their first phase of existence.

- [8] *Politica*, A, 1252b9-10. To the two fundamental associations mentioned here, a third one is added in the third chapter of the first Book of Politics (1253b4-12) consisting in the relation between father and children. But this is derivative upon the first, conjugal, one.- *Πρώτη* in the above quotation could be syntactically ambiguous: it may mean either that the household is the *first* institution generated by the combination of the two elemental associations, or that the *primary* (or the *simplest* form of) household is so constituted. Newman (*op.cit.* Vol. II p. 111), following Dittenberger (*Goettingen Gelehrter Anzeiger*, Oct. 28, 1874, p. 1373) adopts the former construal (translating: «from these two associations, then, proceeds first the household»), while others opt for the latter, considering a subsequent and completer form of household to be realised when children have come into being and the third, paternal, relationship has obtained. But as explained in the sequel, Aristotle explicitly speaks of a perfect form of household (*οἰκία τελεῖα*) as such an one in which the master / slave relationship is fully realised (1253b4; v. n. [10]). On the other hand, it is standard Aristotelian jargon to differentiate between X primary or direct and X developed or secondary or mediate; e.g. *ἐντελέχεια πρώτη* (*De anima*, B, 412a27, b5) *πόλις πρώτη* (*Politica*, Δ, 1291a17). In this sense, *οἰκία πρώτη* would signify the simplest (but also perfect) form of household realising the two elemental associations (plus the paternal relationship which accrues normally upon the first), as distinguished from complex and evolved households (including a sum of many basic ones held under a single sway) like the one in which married children cohabit and cofunction with the original

paterfamilias under his authority. In fact, as Aristotle points out, this is the origin of the tribal associations (γένη).

[9] *Politica*, A, 1253b4.

[10] Immediately following the statement as to the constitution of the primary household (n. [8]). Aristotle adds (1252b10 sqq.): καὶ ὀρθῶς Ἡσίοδος εἶπε ποιήσας “οἶκον μὲν πρότιστα γυναικά τε βοῦν τ’ ἀροτῆρα”. ὁ γὰρ βοῦς ἀντ’ οἰκέτου τοῖς πένησίν ἐστιν [«and indeed Hesiod was right when he composed the verse «first of all a home, and a wife, and a steer for ploughing» (*Opera et Dies*, 405); for cattle is a substitute for servants to the poor»] (cf. Aelian, *Varia Historia*, V, 14). For Aristotle, Hesiod discerned the two fundamental associations involved in a household and the two corresponding basic aims served by it: *procreation* and *sustenance*. The household implies intrinsically economic activity, be it agricultural in Hesiod’s early and mountainous Boeotian Ascra or manufacturing and trading under more developed conditions.- Hesiod’s real meaning in the passage quoted by Aristotle is that a female slave could be handy in rural work as well (v. *ibid.* next line, 406, undeservedly questioned).

[11] The purpose of conjugal connection is reproduction; the end of the subordination of the labourer to the manager (of the dependence of the implementive type on the conceptive and initiative one) is preservation (v. *supra*, n. [4]). Forming a unit consisting of male - female (with children) - slaves structured according to these basic associations, we secure the satisfaction of human daily wants (sustenance, repose, sleep, protection, pleasure). Such a formation, besides, is thoroughly natural: man institutes it acting instinctively, although these instincts are full of objectively intentional finality. A guaranteed satisfaction of all daily needs in this protosocietal communion preserves and reproduces its members. Reproduction and preservation for its members is effected through the satisfaction of their daily wants. Far from differing «somewhat» from the view in 1252a26-34 (Newman *op.cit.* vol. II p. 112), the definition in 1252b13 coincides perfectly with it. In fact, the more general descriptions of the finalities inherent in the fundamental associations, are specified more explicitly in the finality belonging to their concrete combination in the household, exactly as it should be according to Aristotelian methodology.

Τὰ καθ' ἡμέραν are needs that have to be satisfied on a daily basis, the very necessities of life. So in B, 1265b41 Aristotle speaks (with reference to the Spartan Constitution) of *κατά τε τὰ συσσίτια καὶ τὸν ἄλλον βίον τὸν καθ' ἡμέραν* [«with regard to the public meals and the other facts of daily life»]. And in E, 1313b20, *πρὸς τῷ καθ' ἡμέραν ὄντες* means «absorbed in the daily needs». Plato had utilised the same expression with the same meaning in the same context (the policies of a tyrant): *Republic*, 567a, *πρὸς τῷ καθ' ἡμέραν ἀναγκάζονται εἶναι*. Strabo explicitly conjoins *ἐφήμερα* with *τὰ ἀναγκαῖα τοῦ βίου* (VII, p. 311C).

- [12] In sharp contrast to such uncompromising emphasis on (private) interest as the real reason for every human association (including the general commonwealth of the State), lies a strong current of modern thought which sees the human predicament in the alleged opposition between *altruism* and *egoism*, between *sociable* and *self-interested* motives of human conduct. Thus, characteristically, Kant, in his *Ideen zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, considers the State labouring inherently under the antagonisms created by the existence in man of both tendencies to social union and drives disruptive of such harmony, of both general sympathies and private interests (Kant, *Werke*, vol. VII p. 321 sqq.). Classical thought was immune to such utopian «moralising». What the Sophists expressed in bold language, Plato and Aristotle articulated elaborately, namely the absolute prevalence of the Principle of Interest in human (and indeed *cosmic*) affairs. For an account of the Platonic position on the matter, v. my paper referred to above, n. [5].
- [13] The full statement, corresponding to a pervasive Aristotelian tenet, runs: *οὐδὲν μάτην* (also *οὐδὲν ἀτελές* or *ἀλόγως*) *ποιοῦσιν ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἡ φύσις*. *De Partibus Animalium* B, 658a9; Γ, 661b24; *De Generatione Animalium* B, 741b5; 744a36; *De Caelo*, A, 271a33; B, 291b14; *Politica*, A, 1256b21; and in the present connection 1253a9. *In vain* means to no purpose, without a specific end in view.
- [14] It might appear that, here as elsewhere, the so-called *naturalistic fallacy* is committed - a habitual indictment against Ancient Greek Thought. Reasonings like the above, it is argued, confuse questions of fact (how things are) with questions of value (how things ought to be). In fact, the robust realism of the Ancients would never admit such a dichotomy (as

analysed for instance typically by Hume). Things cannot be claimed meaningfully that they *should* be in such and such a way, unless this way is somehow involved in their reality, indeed embedded at some level of their factuality. Otherwise, the Ancients would have maintained (have they been aware of the charge and having been made to comprehend it properly), one commits what I may call the *utopian fallacy* - projecting one's subjective phantasies of what is best onto the level of objective reality. For the Ancient mind, a value is simply, in reality, a more profound fact, a fact of less apparent, more pervasive character. *The modern chasm between fact and value is thus bridged by the essence (or nature) of things*. A being's essence is precisely what the thing is, so to speak, meant to be, what is expected of it to be, what is the significant point of its existence. In the pregnant Aristotelian formula, it is the $\tau\acute{\iota} \eta\upsilon \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$, *what it was (for it) to be*. The implications of this clarification are enormous.

The transparency of the Ancient Greek formulation of the problem and its solution may be contrasted to the embarrassment evident in modern positions reflecting an awareness of the error and impracticability of a sharp division between fact and value, between theory of reality and ethical (evaluative) system, between ontology and deontology in the last resort. Consider for instance Myrdal's radical conversion in 1932, as described by himself in the preface to the English edition (1953) of his book (originally in Swedish, 1930), *The Political Element in the Formation of Pure Economic Doctrine*, p. vii: «But throughout the book there lurks the idea that when all metaphysical elements are radically cut away, a healthy body of positive economic theory will remain, which is altogether independent of valuations. Political conclusions can then be inferred simply by adding to the objective scientific knowledge of the facts a chosen act of value premises. The implicit belief in the existence of a body of scientific knowledge independently of all valuations is, as I now see it, naive empiricism ... valuations are thus necessarily involved at the stage when we observe facts and carry out theoretical analysis». But *values* projecting, *in fact*, deeper layers of reality, more, if possible, objective than the factuality of the given in empirical phenomena, they are objects of knowledge and theoretical analysis like any body of facts. It is a terminological question whether we shall label such knowledge scientific, philosophical or metaphysical, provided it satisfies the conditions of an inside view of truth, i.e., preeminently, enhanced power of prediction.

- [15] The important passage is in *Politica*, A, 1253a9-18: οὐθὲν γάρ, ὡς φημὲν, μάτην ἢ φύσις ποιεῖ· λόγον δὲ μόνον ἄνθρωπος ἔχει τῶν ζώων. ἢ μὲν οὖν φωνὴ τοῦ λυπηροῦ καὶ ἡδέος ἐστὶ σημεῖον, διὸ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὑπάρχει ζώοις (μέχρι γὰρ τούτου ἢ φύσις αὐτῶν ἐλήλυθε, τοῦ ἔχειν αἰσθησιν λυπηροῦ καὶ ἡδέος καὶ ταῦτα σημαίνειν ἀλλήλοις), ὁ δὲ λόγος ἐπὶ τῷ δηλοῦν ἐστὶ τὸ συμφέρον καὶ τὸ βλαβερόν, ὥστε καὶ τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ ἄδίκον· τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα ζῶα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἴδιον, τὸ μόνον ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ καὶ δικαίου καὶ ἀδίκου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων αἰσθησιν ἔχειν· ἢ δὲ τούτων κοινωνία ποιεῖ οἰκίαν καὶ πόλιν. [«For, as we maintain, there is nothing that nature does in vain. Thus it is only man among the animals that possesses reason. For voice in itself is a sign of the painful and the pleasant, and on this account it is found in the other animals as well (for their nature has developed so far as to acquire the perception (awareness) of the painful and the pleasant, and to signify such feelings to each other); but reason exists in order to signify the advantageous and the harmful, and, consequently, the just and the unjust. For this is the specific characteristic of human beings in contradistinction to the other animals, that humankind alone possesses an awareness of good and bad and just and unjust and of the other (virtues); and precisely communion in such concerns produces the household and political society (the State)»].

The purpose of the argument is to explain why man is a «political» animal more than any notable gregarious animal kind. «Political» means entering into the full state-nexus, constituting the citizenship relationship. But the same general causation that makes man form the state, is also operative in the constitution of all other particular associations which are eventually absorbed as parts into the all-inclusive organism of the state (and this is why Aristotel refers to the household as well as to the state in his argument). The grand line of the argument runs thus: (a) Man is endowed by Nature with reason. (b) Since Nature does nothing in vain, there must be a finality behind this endowment. (c) Reason discerns interest, advantage, good (useful), just (having one's own) and similar attributes of things and situations in their relationship to man. (d) Man enters into associations with man according to the Principle of Interest. (e) Man is therefore by nature associable, and, ultimately, political, as the state is the more general commonwealth.

Two points require perhaps a passing word of explanation.

1) Reason (*Λόγος*) is in Greek both the (spoken or written) discourse and its rational articulation. Thought is intrinsically bound to its

linguistic expression and, conversely, the language is imbued with the meaning of thought. Neither can exist apart from the other. Language without thought is merely a series of signs (spoken (voice) or written) carrying at most emotive content falling under the category of feelings of pain and pleasure. Thought without language is, on the other hand, a confused groping along an emotive pulse bereft of articulate meaning. In Aristotelian terminology, voice (the sound signs being more fundamental than the written ones) is matter to rational elocution (λόγος, reason). *De Generatione Animalium* V, 786b21. For a rounded formulation of the point cf. Plutarch, *de Anima Procreatione in Timaeo*, 27, 1027A: *ὡς δὲ φωνή τις ἐστὶν ἄλογος καὶ ἀσήμαντος, λόγος δὲ λέξις ἐν φωνῇ σημαυτικῇ διανοίας* [«as voice (in itself) is irrational and insignificant, rational discourse (reasoned statement) is word of the intellect in meaningful voice»]. The Stoics, in particular, elaborated on the complexity of signification in their Theory of Meaning.

2) Reference to the virtues (*καὶ τῶν ἄλλων*, 1253a17) may appear to «moralise» Aristotle's point. But ancient «moral» virtues are excellencies of the soul amounting to meritorious skills in coping optimally under general kinds of circumstances. In example, valour (courage) is such an accomplishment in a man that makes him capable of facing in the best way adverse, fearful situations. I have expounded this understanding of virtues in relationship to Platonic Theory in my paper referred to in n. [29] *infra*. The Aristotelian context renders the point more apparent. *A virtue is a habit of right response between two opposite failures.*

[16] Cf. n. [14].

[17] Horace, *Satirarum*, I, 3, 98:

atque ipsa utilitas, iusti prope mater et aequi

[«and even utility itself, virtually mother of the just and the equitable»]. As he explains a few lines later, nature could not distinguish independently the just from the unjust so well as (and without reference to) the natural division between things good (useful, beneficial) and bad (useless, harmful), between things sought for and shunned, *ibid.* 113-4:

*Nec natura potest iusto discernere iniquum,
dividit ut bona diversis, fugienda petendis*

[«And nature cannot distinguish the just from the unjust,
as she divides goods from not goods, things to be avoided
from such as are to be sought after»].

Horace reflects proximately the Epicurean doctrine. We know of it in effect from the aphoristic formulations in *Principal Doctrines* (*Κύρια Δόξαι*) XXXI - XXXVIII. *The just, as it emerges in general according to the nature of things, is a pact concerning the (mutual) interest not to inflict and suffer harm one to, and by, another.* XXXI: τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιόν ἐστι σύμβολον τοῦ συμφέροντος εἰς τὸ μὴ βλάπτειν ἀλλήλους μηδὲ βλάπτεσθαι [«the just of nature is a (contractual) token (tally or pledge) of the interest (advantage or utility) not to cause harm to one another nor to suffer (harm in the hands of one another)»]. Such being the general essence of justice, it is evident that although it possesses a natural and objective form, it does not exist by itself in reality as a universal law of natural order, independently of the contractual will materialised in corresponding associations. Communions of individuals in different places large or small, may constitute a pact proscribing infliction or suffering of harm in the hands of its members among themselves: this provides the basis of justice. XXXIII: οὐκ ἦν τι καθ' ἑαυτὸ δικαιοσύνη, ἀλλ' ἐν ταῖς μετ' ἀλλήλων συστροφαῖς καθ' ὀπηλικούς δήποτε αἰεὶ τόπους συνθήκη τις ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ βλάπτειν ἢ βλάπτεσθαι. [«justice was not something existing by itself (in *rerum natura*), but it is some compact, emerging in mutual converses between men and in their dealings with one another taking place in whatever locations of any extent for any duration, with the purpose of eschewing causing or receiving harm»]. Thus there is no distinction between just and unjust in animals who would not, or in tribal nations who could or would not, make the requisite pact regarding the avoidance of harm (XXXII). On the other hand the general nature of the just provides the common framework which is filled by different contents, depending on the specificity of the place and of the other causal factors which determine the particular pact entered upon. XXXVI: κατὰ μὲν <τὸ> κοινὸν πᾶσι τὸ δίκαιον τὸ αὐτό· συμφέρον γάρ τι ἦν ἐν τῇ πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνίᾳ· κατὰ δὲ τὸ ἴδιον χώρας καὶ ὄσων δήποτε αἰτίων οὐ πᾶσι συνέπεται τὸ αὐτὸ δίκαιον εἶναι [«with respect, thus, to its common (nature) the just is the same for all (who enter into the appropriate pact); for it was some utility (interest) in their reciprocal association; but with reference to the individual peculiarity of the land and of any other (relevant) causal factors, it does not follow that for all (who enter a pact of justice) the same determinate arrangement is just»].

Justice originates in a pact. The Epicurean theory of justice is not, nevertheless, a contractual one. Not any terms can be agreed upon by the members of an association as just, but only those that *both* are *considered*

to be in the *interest* of the contractors by the contractors themselves, and will be proven in the act to be so. Thus we have to do with a theory of positive justice, only one governed by objective *utility*: the terms of the contract must be advantageous to the contracting parties, they must be useful in satisfying the needs of mutual intercourse occurring in the association whose code of justice they define. XXXVII: Τὸ μὲν ἐπιμαρτυρούμενον ὅτι συμφέρεϊ ἐν ταῖς χρείαις τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνίας τῶν νομισθέντων εἶναι δικαίων ἔχειν τοῦ δικαίου χάραν <δ>εἶ, ἐάν τε τὸ αὐτὸ πᾶσι γένηται ἐάν τε μὴ τὸ αὐτό· ἐὰν δὲ <νόμον> μόνον θῆται τις, μὴ ἀποβαίνῃ δὲ κατὰ τὸ συμφέρον τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνίας, οὐκέτι τοῦτο τὴν τοῦ δικαίου φύσιν ἔχει. [«Among things posited and decreed as just, that whose utility in the needs of the reciprocal intercourse and mutual association between men is proven on examination, must possess the place of justice, be it common to all (men), be it not. But if the law (of justice) is enacted, yet it does not work out to the advantage and in the interest of the reciprocal intercourse and mutual association between men, then this cannot possess the nature of justice»]. Epicurus explains that the utility of the law of justice may change over time; and that the positively just is naturally just only so long as it *actually* represents a utility to the network of intercourses taking place within the association whose sense of justice it embodies (XXXVII sequel). He goes so far as to maintain that if what was thought to be (naturally) just and was therefore enacted as (positively) just, is proven *subsequently* by the test of application to reality in actual practice (ἐπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων) inutile without any concomitant significant changes in the conditions and circumstances of human activity, then that (positively) just was not really just even at the time of its positive validity, before, that is, it was changed as a result of the proof *in actu* of its *disutility* (XXXVIII).

Despite appearances, the Epicurean position is not all that alien to the Aristotelian theory of justice. We saw that for Aristotle the Principle of Interest lies at the foundation of every human association; and that justice has meaning in relation to some societal bond and to the utility which is realised and secured through the association in question. However, Aristotle considered some associations, such as those answering to the fundamental human relationships, as instinctive rather than deliberate, as necessary rather than genuinely compactual. Yet even here he would admit an *implicit* consensus characterising them, to the extent at least that every association exists for the *relative* advantage of all its associates.

On the other hand, also, Aristotle deduces a theory of state as the most general and complete association, the political one, and correspondingly (as we shall analyse in the sequel) a universal content of (political) justice transcending the accidental variations in nonessentials of customs and positive legislation with regard to what is just. Political justice is justice *stricto sensu*, distinguished from that ample signification which is coextensive with virtue in general (*Ethica Nicomachea*, V, 1); this strict and political justice is analysed in NE V, 2-5. Justice correlated to other, more restricted, forms of association, is justice of a sort or justice by similarity (NE V, 1134a28-30: *δίκαιόν τι* or *δίκαιον καθ' ὁμοίότητα*), a metaphorical or analogical kind of justice, like that pertaining to the correct functioning of the despotic, paternal or conjugal relationship (NE, V, 1134b8-18).

Strict political justice has, according to Aristotle, a natural and a positive component; NE, V, 1134b18: *τοῦ δὲ πολιτικοῦ δικαίου τὸ μὲν φυσικόν ἐστι τὸ δὲ νομικόν* [«now of political justice one part is natural, the other conventional»]. *Νομικόν*, signifying legislative, bears in this connection always the full impact of its derivation from *νομίζω*, *consider*, *take as*, and then *posit*, *enact*. The important point is the principle of the division between the natural and the positive or conventional for Aristotle. Natural is what belongs to the nature of things and is thus valid everywhere and in all cases, not depending on man's *opinion* about it, whereas positive is a determination which is indifferent in the nature of things whether it is one way or another, but which, once posited and enacted, becomes relevant and material. NE, V, 1134b19 sqq.: *φυσικὸν μὲ τὸ πανταχοῦ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχον δύναμιν, καὶ οὐ τῷ δοκεῖν ἢ μή, νομικὸν δὲ ὃ ἐξ ἀρχῆς μὲν οὐδὲν διαφέρει οὕτως ἢ ἄλλως, ὅταν δὲ θῶνται, διαφέρει*. [«natural being what has in all cases the same force not gaining it by being believed or not, whereas positive is that which, while in the original state of things it makes no difference whether it is thus or otherwise, yet, when people have instituted it, it makes a difference»]. Aristotle's examples of the latter part of justice is the amount of ransom ordained for prisoners of war, the appropriate animal sacrifice on particular occasions, law-enactments concerning particular matters, and all decree-like legislation (NE, V, 1134b 21-24). Aristotle goes on then to comment on the (sophistical) idea that all justice is conventional because of the variation observed among men in respect of the rules of justice (NE, V, 1134b24 - 1135a5). His refutation of this view rests ultimately on his (metaphysical) essentialism. Although in all human affairs (as in all

matters pertaining to the sensible world) there is mutability ingrained, nevertheless, even so, some things in this flux are natural, others not - even assuming for the sake of argument that both these categories cover things changeable in the same way. In other words, even under the extreme condition that things natural can be otherwise than they are just like things accidental, yet what is natural in human relationships can be distinguished from what is positive and conventional, just as we must maintain that the right hand is by nature stronger, even if all men can become ambidextrous.

The real difference, then, between the Aristotelian and the Epicurean positions on the theory of justice regarding its natural or positive character (besides the issue of the more instinctive or deliberate character of the association providing the foundation of justice and, consequently, the implicit or explicit nature of the compact instituted between the associates, as noted above) comes to this: that for Epicurus what is natural in justice is the general form of the compact concluded, namely that inflicting (and thus receiving) harm be totally surrendered as an operative factor in civil association, while how harm is specified and estimated depends on the actual association considered; for Aristotle on the contrary, all essential attributes of the just are deducible from the general conditions of political association with natural necessity and thus normative potency, while only things in themselves indifferent, yet requiring determination for the completeness of the nexus of justice, depend on the accidents of the particular (political or other) association in question.

It should be noted in this connexion, *first*, that the compactual is not equivalent to the positive, in the sense of this latter in which the validity of a determination depends *exclusively* on the fact of its being decreed: one can enter into a pact on *natural* terms. *Secondly*, Aristotle argues explicitly against the view which would make the State a security alliance between its members for their mutual protection against the violation of each other's integrity; this, too, is part of the State's function, but the defining finality of political society is much higher, and, correspondingly, the essential nature of (political) justice transcends (but also includes) the safety of the individuals from reciprocal injury and damage suffered in the hands of each other. V. on the issue n. [33] and Appendix B.

The introduction and articulation of, and sharp focusing on, the distinction *φύσις* / *νόμος* (and of the consequent emphasis on the fundamental difference between what is valid by nature and what is so by

- the *fiat* of law) occurred in the intensely dynamic setting of High Classicism (5th century BC): it was the work of the Sophists, which represented the intellectual drive of that fertile era. On a characteristic sophistic understanding of justice, cf. *infra*, Chapter 5, n. [33].
- [18] V. my paper referred to *supra*, n. [5].
- [19] For an account of the fundamentals of Aristotelian teleology, v. A.L. Pierris, "*Όρος Πολιτείας and Τέλος Πόλεως: Political Constitution, Social Structure and End of Life in Aristotle's Politics*", esp. Appendix on *Immanent and Transcendent Teleology*, in K. Boudouris (ed.), *Aristotelian Political Philosophy*, 1995, Vol. I, pp. 136-142.
- [20] For an analysis of the Aristotelian state (*πόλις*) in this perspective, v. my paper referred to in previous note; also A.L. Pierris, *Cause and Nature of Constitutional Diversity in Aristotle's Politics*, in K. Boudouris (ed.), *op.cit.*, 1995, Vol. II, pp. 125-159.
- [21] This has far-reaching implications specifically for the Theory of Firms, and Corporate Entities of every description, besides Social Theory in general. We have here to do with systems of higher human creative rationalisation, which must follow, in order to be successful and not become degraded to mere artificialities, the principles, structures and courses of natural integrals. The Aristotelian fixation with finality is pregnant with consequences (objective and methodological) in every field of inquiry.
- [22] And this is what a completely man-made system newly erected must principally observe: to be structured by a graduated means-end natural relationship, culminating with an overarching final purpose.
- [23] Villages are, according to Aristotle, originally colonies from single households, and this network of immediate and indirect projections from a household represents in the nature of things the genetic development of a village (*Politica*, A, 1252b16 sqq.). The children and children's children in a patriarchal household when multiplied and reach a mature condition *may* start new households of their own and in this way they create the second natural communion, an extension of the former and first household association, that of a village (*ibid.*). As the ties binding together

the heads of these households are those of brotherhood in the first place, members of a village were sometimes referred to as *ὀμογάλακτες*, partakers of the same (maternal) milk, persons suckled with the same milk. Like the *γεννηται* of the lexicographers (v. Photius s.v. *ὀμογάλακτες*) they were clansmen or tribesmen (cf. Philochorus FGH 328 F35). A village thus is genetically a clan living together in separate households on the same land.

This account exists already in Plato, *Laws*, 776a; cf. 680a sqq., where the same expression (*τοὺς παῖδας καὶ παίδων παῖδας ὃ λέγομεν*, 681b) occurs as in Aristotle. Cicero expounds and elaborates the same view in *De Officiis*, I, 17, 54. Cf. Demosthenes, *In Macartatum*, 19.

A village has thus a clan-origin. Aristotle explains through this genetic account of the village, the prevalence of kingship in early city-states and in the tribal organisations of barbaric (i.e. non-Hellenic) nations (*ἔθνη*) (*Politica*, A, 1252b19 sqq.). Since the household is ruled in royal fashion by the father of the family, so does the village because of the underlying kinship among its households. The paterfamilias of the original household, reigns over the colony of derivative households. Furthermore, as all higher-order human associations stem from the household, their governance tended initially to reproduce the patriarchal rule of the paterfamilias; the same tendency works permanently in communities where the household connexion is most vibrant, that is, in nonurbanised societies organised around rural habitations or according to tribal patterns. It is important to note that such *national* organizations of society, being sporadic in nature and consisting in disperse habitation, are for the ancient mind, and for Aristotle in particular, contrary to true *urbanised* and civilised communities.

- [24] In Aristotle, the distinction between being and well-being (in general as well as in the specific forms of existence) is not so much a difference in essential attributes - for well-being is the perfection of being and thus, in a sense, essentially the same with it -; but rather it points to the distinction between things necessary for the sheer existence of an entity and higher things characterising the full blooming of its being. It is thus standardly the distinction between *ἀναγκαῖα* and *καλά* (necessities and «beauties» of life) that is being focused upon. Thus in *Politica*, H, 1329b27-30, things necessary come first, and when these have been secured, there is place for the development of life's beautification and perfection: *τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἀναγκαῖα τὴν χρεῖαν διδάσκειν εἰκὸς αὐτήν, τὰ δ' εἰς εὐσχημοσύνην καὶ*

περιουσίαν, ὑπαρχόντων ἤδη τούτων, εὐλογον λαμβάνειν τὴν αὔξησιν [«For need itself, we assume with good reason, teaches whatever is necessary; while things addressing abundance and refinement take in all likelihood their growth upon the satisfaction of the necessities»]. Cf. for the idea further *Topica*, 3, 118a6 sqq.; where superabundance is associated to things noble and beautiful (τὰ καλὰ); also *Politica*, Δ, 1291a2 sqq. Democritus already had utilised the distinction by arguing for the relatively recent origin of music on the ground that it did not owe its origin to necessity but emerged as a superfluity, things necessary being discovered first (Philodemus, *de Musica*, 4 col. 36 Kemke p. 108). Plato refigured the Aristotelian thesis; *Republic*, 369d-371b.

- [25] *Politica*, A, 1252b30 - 1253a3 (immediately following the above quoted passage in the text which defines the Polis, the political state-association): διὸ πᾶσα πόλις φύσει ἐστίν, εἴπερ καὶ αἱ πρῶται κοινωνίαι. τέλος γὰρ αὕτη ἐκείνων, ἣ δὲ φύσις τέλος ἐστίν· οἶον γὰρ ἕκαστόν ἐστι τῆς γενέσεως τελεσθείσης, ταύτην φασὲν τὴν φύσιν εἶναι ἐκάστου, ὡσπερ ἀνθρώπου, ἵππου, οἰκίας. ἔτι τὸ οὐ ἔνεκα καὶ τὸ τέλος βέλτιστον· ἣ δὲ αὐτάρκεια καὶ τέλος καὶ βέλτιστον. ἐκ τούτων οὖν φανερὸν ὅτι τῶν φύσει ἢ πόλις ἐστίν, καὶ ὅτι ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῶον etc. [«and for this reason (namely that the urbanised society as a state is an integration of villages providing the framework for the realisation of human autarcy) the city-state is a natural growth, given that the primary associations (i.e. the household and the village) are similarly natural. For the city-state is the final end of those associations, and nature is an end. For such as a thing is when its coming into being has been consummated, such we say that it is its nature, alike for man, horse, house. Furthermore that for the sake of which (other things exist) and the end is best; but self-sufficiency is both end and best. From these considerations it is evident that the state-organisation belongs to the things that exist by nature, and that man is a political animal by nature»].

For a sustained, multidimensional analysis of the finality as perfection (the ancient Greek τέλος), v. my book (in Greek) *A.A. Πιερρήσ, Περὶ Τέλους, Φιλοσοφικὴ Τετραλογία*, 1996.

- [26] An impulse it is called by Aristotle; *Politica*, A, 1253a29: φύσει μὲν οὖν ἡ ὄρμη ἐν πᾶσιν ἐπὶ τὴν τοιαύτην κοινωνίαν [«the impulse in everyone towards such association (namely the state organisation centered around urbanised society) is thus by nature»].

[27] For an analysis of this natural «aristocracy» in Aristotelian political thinking, v. my paper mentioned in n. [19].

[28] *Politica*, A, 1253a 18-29: καὶ πρότερον δὲ τῆ φύσει πόλις ἢ οἰκία καὶ ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἐστίν· τὸ γὰρ ὅλον πρότερον ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι τοῦ μέρους· ἀναιρουμένον γὰρ τοῦ ὅλου οὐκ ἔσται πούς οὐδὲ χεῖρ, εἰ μὴ ὁμωνύμως, ὡσπερ εἴ τις λέγει τὴν λιθίνην· διαφθαρεῖσα γὰρ ἔσται τοιαύτη· πάντα δὲ τῶ ἔργῳ ὄρισται καὶ τῆ δυνάμει· ὥστε μηκέτι τοιαῦτα ὄντα οὐ λεκτέον τὰ αὐτὰ εἶναι ἀλλ' ὁμώνυμα· ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἡ πόλις καὶ φύσει καὶ πρότερον ἢ ἕκαστος, δῆλον· εἰ γὰρ μὴ αὐτάρκης ἕκαστος χωρισθείς, ὁμοίως τοῖς ἄλλοις μέρεσιν ἕξει πρὸς τὸ ὅλον· ὁ δὲ μὴ δυνάμενος κοινωνεῖν ἢ μηδὲν δεόμενος δι' αὐτάρκειαν οὐθὲν μέρος πόλεως, ὥστε ἢ θηρίον ἢ θεός. [«And in the nature of things the state is prior to the household and to each one of us. For the whole is necessarily prior to its parts: since if the whole is ruined, there will be no more foot or hand, save homonymously (i.e. using the same word in a different, if correlated, sense), like if someone speaks of a stone (foot or hand); for when (the foot or hand) is destroyed it is like a stone one. Everything is defined by its proper action and potency. Therefore if things do not function in their proper way, they should not be spoken of as (really) the same, but only as (mere) homonyms. It is thus evident that the state is both a natural growth (as has been analysed above) and prior to the individual man. For if the individual is not self-sufficient once isolated (from the social integral), it will bear a relation to the whole similar to the one the other parts bear to it. And hence he who cannot enter into the social nexus or he who has no need to do that by virtue of his (independent) self-sufficiency, is no part of the State - he is then either a beast or a god»].

Aristotle utilises repeatedly the argument that a limb severed from the body of which it constitutes an organic part, or otherwise bereft of the psychic force or spiritual tension that keeps the whole together as a living being, is no longer a real limb, but falls in fact to the status of a wooden or stone simulacrum of the limb which may be called with the same name only homonymously; cf. *De Generatione Animalium*, 2, 734b24; *Meteorologica*, 4, 389b31. The core of the matter is provided by the forceful idea that every thing is in the deepest sense defined by the difference it is apt to make to the world of reality, by its proper power to effect results and its corresponding action, by its characteristic kind of capacity, deed and work: v. *Meteorologica*, 4, 390a10; *de Generatione Animalium*, 1, 716a23; *Metaphysica*, Z, 1035b16. Alexander of

Aphrodisias formulated succinctly the point (in his Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Z, 1040b5): οὐσίας ἐκεῖνά φαμεν ὅσα καθ' αὐτὰ ὄντα δύναται τὸ εἰκεῖον ἔργον ἀποτελεῖν· οὐσία γὰρ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ τὸ ἀφ' οὗ τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον ἐκπληροῦται. [«We call substances those things, which existing in themselves have the power to accomplish their proper task; for essence is nothing else than that from which the proper work of each individual entity is performed»]. The idea had been anticipated by Plato, in his famous definition of beingness (existence), *Sophist*, 247d: λέγω δὴ τὸ καὶ ὅποιανοῦν κεκτημένον δύναμιν εἶτ' εἰς τὸ ποιεῖν ἕτερον ὅτιοῦν πεφυκὸς εἶτ' εἰς τὸ παθεῖν καὶ σμικρότατον ὑπὸ τοῦ φαυλοτάτου, κἂν εἰ μόνον εἰσάπαξ, πᾶν τοῦτο ὄντως εἶναι· τίθεμαι γὰρ ὄρον ὀρίζειν τὰ ὄντα, ὡς ἐστὶν οὐκ ἄλλο τι πλὴν δύναμις. [«I then maintain that that which by nature possesses any kind of power either to inflict an action on anything else or to suffer an one, however slight, in the hands of something else, be it the weakest, and this even once - I maintain that everything of such a description really exists; for I lay down as a definition defining beingness, that it is nothing else but power»]. The notion was eminently articulated further in Stoicism.

[29] Excellence and Happiness go together for the ancient Greek experience. V. the analysis (on the occasion of the Platonic setting) in my essay, A.L. Pierris, *Roads to Excellence: The Metaphysics of Education in Plato and Contemporary Reality: Is Optimal Self-Realization Metaphysically Neutral?*, in J.D. Gericke and P.J. Maritz (eds.), *Plato's Philosophy of Education and its Relevance to Contemporary Society and Education in the Ancient World*, Proceedings of the First International Conference of the South African Society of Greek Philosophy and the Humanities 29 April - 6 May 1997, 1998, vol. II, pp. 329-373.

[30] The problem of an assumed Aristotelian *holism* with regard to social existence has puzzled classical scholars and philosophical commentators. V. e.g. Newman, *op.cit.* vol. II, pp. 125-7. He quotes, as a foil to his construal of the Aristotelian position, from a letter of Shelley's from August 12, 1812 (published in the *Academy*, July 31, 1886) the poet's vision of the individual - community relationship: «A human being is a member of the community, not as a limb is a member of the body, or as what is a part of a machine, intended only to contribute to some general joint result... He is an ultimate being, made for his own perfection as his highest end, made to maintain an individual existence, and to serve others

only as far as consists with his own virtue and progress». Aristotle, however, could not agree better with the second part of the quotation. In criticising the Platonic construal of the best organisation of political society, he emphasises the fact that it is absurd to conceive of an optimal social order without optimised individuals and of a happy social integral without happy individuals. *Politica*, B, 1264b15 sqq.: ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ἀφαιρούμενος τῶν φυλάκων, ὄλην φησὶ δεῖν εὐδαιμόνα ποιεῖν τὴν πόλιν τὸν νομοθέτην. ἀδύνατον δὲ εὐδαιμονεῖν ὄλην, μὴ τῶν πλείστων ἢ μὴ πάντων μερῶν ἢ τινῶν ἐχόντων τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν. οὐ γὰρ τῶν αὐτῶν τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ὡνπερ τὸ ἄρτιον· τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ ἐνδέχεται τῷ ὅλῳ ὑπάρχειν, τῶν δὲ μερῶν μηδετέρῳ, τὸ δὲ εὐδαιμονεῖν ἀδύνατον. ἀλλὰ μὴν εἰ οἱ φύλακες μὴ εὐδαιμόνες, τίνες ἕτεροι; οὐ γὰρ δὴ οἷ γε τεχνῖται καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τὸ τῶν βαναύσων. [«In addition, while removing happiness (well-being) from the Guardians (the governing class in the Platonic best form of city-state), he (sc. Plato) affirms that the lawmaker must make the city as a whole happy. But it is impossible that the whole city should be happy without most, all or, at least some parts of it possessing happiness. For well-being does not behave like evenness with regard to things characterised by them: evenness may belong to a whole of two parts without belonging to either of the parts, but this is impossible for well-being. And so if (according to Plato's make-up of the best polity) the Rulers are not happy, who else would be? Certainly not the artisans and the mechanical and vulgar multitude»]. Aristotle again and again impeaches Plato's political analysis on the fundamental ground that it is wrongly preoccupied with the unity and oneness of the social integral. (He refers forcefully to Plato as οἱ λίαν ἐν ποιοῦντες τὴν πόλιν, «those that make society very one», *Politica*, B, 1263b7). The Aristotelian objection is in fact twofold, both that it is impossible in the nature of things (primarily of human nature itself) to enhance the unity of society to the degree demanded by Plato and that, even if possible, such a tendency would destroy, instead of promote, the very existence of social State-order. (V. *Politica*, V, chapters 2-5; esp. 1261a15-25; 1261b6-15; and see the criticism of Platonic partial «communism» in his best city-type, *ibid.* chapters 3-5). Aristotle observes, characteristically, that wanting society to become unified too much is like endeavouring to improve the harmony of a chord by making it one sound or the power of a rhythm by making it monotonous, 1264a33-6). The State, according to Aristotle, does not only consist of many (individuals), but, much more importantly, of *dissimilar* ones; otherwise, as we saw, the finality of

human existence could not have been realisable. *For without division of capacities, performance and work done, collective self-sufficiency would not be secured and, therefore, individual excellence could not be attained up to the crowning perfection of human nature. Political society is not a homogeneous field, but is rather markedly unhomogeneous.* The social integral is complex and variegated. In fact, by the side of the already noticed fundamental distinctions between man and woman, master and slave, there exist many more functional divisions of humankind, all necessary and collectively sufficient for such aggregate self-sufficiency that renders realisable the human optimality to the extremest limits of human nature. V. *Politica*, Γ, 1277a5-10.

It is, therefore, abundantly clear that, contrary to resistant and persevering misconceptions, there cannot prevail any doubt as to Aristotle's strong, and metaphysically founded, *individualism*. What is really at stake with Shelley's formulation is that, for Aristotle, individualism is compounded realistically with *gradationalism*: every individual of a kind intrinsically aims at the perfection of its nature and this is the highest norm (final good or duty or «moral» obligation) of its activity; on the other hand not every such individual is capable of reaching the peak of its proper perfection. The individual should, and does actually, strive for its maximal self-realisation, but its optimal, achievable status depends on the constellation of its capabilities and does not necessarily (indeed, not in most cases) coincide with the perfection of human nature, in particular with the complete realisation of man's superior potentialities, with which only the very few are objectively privileged. (So in *Politica*, H, 1328a38-40: *συμβέβηκε δὲ οὕτως ὥστε τοὺς μὲν ἐνδέχασθαι μετέχειν αὐτῆς (sc. τῆς εὐδαιμονίας) τοὺς δὲ μικρὸν ἢ μηδέν* [«and it so happens that some are capable of participating in well-being, while others are able to do this in a small degree or not at all»]. The same view applied to classes of men is stated by Plato, *Republic*, 421c). Moreover, the distribution of natural capabilities and the corresponding optimal states of self-realisation among individuals possesses for Aristotle teleological significance, in that it is required for the attainment of supreme perfection in the case of the blessed, fortunate ones. In this sense the individuals belonging to inferior grades of human realisation exist for the sake of those exemplifying the superior and completer forms of perfection - or rather, they exist for the sake of the fuller manifestation of human perfection in distinguished individuals.

The teleological nexus in the distribution of capabilities and optimalities among individuals, as this is represented by the finality in the structure of political society, accounts for the *organicity* of the social integral in the State, and, thus, for the construal of its members as limbs of a living organism. Hence the relevant Aristotelian representation is more than a metaphor.

It is remarkable that the true solution to the intriguing apparent Aristotelian confusion on the issue which has perplexed classical scholars has been clearly formulated in a simple way by an eminent economist. V. the already referred to Appendix VII, *Aristotle's Theory of the Origin of the State*, in C. Menger, *Investigation into the Method of the Social Sciences*, (Eng. tr. Fr. J. Nock, 1963¹, 1996³) pp. 207-9.

- [31] *Politica*, Γ, 1278b17 sqq.: εἶρηται δὴ κατὰ τοὺς πρώτους λόγους ... καὶ ὅτι φύσει μὲν ἐστὶ ἄνθρωπος ζῶον πολιτικόν. διὸ καὶ μηδὲν δεόμενοι τῆς περὶ ἀλλήλων βοηθείας [οὐκ ἔλαττον] ὀρέγονται τοῦ συζῆν· οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ κοινῇ συμφέρον συνάγει, καθ' ὅσον ἐπιβάλλει μέρος ἐκάστῳ τοῦ ζῆν καλῶς. μάλιστα μὲν οὖν τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τέλος, καὶ κοινῇ πᾶσι καὶ χωρὶς· συνέρχονται δὲ καὶ τοῦ ζῆν ἕνεκεν αὐτοῦ καὶ συνέχουσι τὴν πολιτικὴν κοινωνίαν. ἴσως γὰρ ἔνεστί τι τοῦ καλοῦ μῦρον καὶ κατὰ τὸ ζῆν αὐτὸ μόνον, ἂν μὴ τοῖς χαλεποῖς κατὰ τὸν βίον ὑπερβάλλῃ λίαν. δῆλον δ' ὡς καρτεροῦσι πολλὴν κακοπάθειαν οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γλιχόμενοι τοῦ ζῆν, ὡς ἐνούσης τινὸς εὐημερίας ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ γλυκύτητος φυσικῆς. [«It has been said in the first book (of the Politics) ... among other things this also, that man is by nature a political animal. For this reason, people yearn for a common life (with each others) even if they do not stand in need of mutual help; not but that the common interest (advantage) also brings them together, so far as a share in good life (human perfection) falls to the lot of each. This then (sc. good life or well-being) is in the highest degree the end (of political society), in common for all and separately for each one. But they also come together for the sake of life itself and keep together political society. For there inheres apparently a particle of beauty in bare living as well, provided that there is not much excess of grievance in life; for it is evident that the many patiently endure a lot of distress clinging to life, as if there existed some happiness and natural sweetness in it»].

I have brought to emphatic notice in the main text the explicit formulation on Aristotle's part of the *reducibility of the common interest to its varied individual components*: «the common interest brings

(individuals) together, *so far as a share in good life (human perfection) falls to the lot of each*».

[32] This expresses a profound ancient Greek experience which found in the course of time striking formulations, e.g. in the Neoplatonic Theory of Evil.

[33] The long argument (*Politica*, Γ, 1280a25 - 1281a4) is found in the context of a crucial discussion concerning equality and inequality in society. The general drift is to establish that in the optimal form of political association, public goods (like political power and honour) must devolve proportionally to the respective merits of the various individuals, i.e. according to their degree of perfection (of optimal realisation of human nature); *ibid.* 1281a4-8. *The best constitution of a State is thus natural aristocracy*. This once more refers back to the necessity of there obtaining *acute competitiveness and the Agonistical Ideal of Life* in a society functioning optimally and with maximal efficiency. The operating principle is again that of Self-Interest, of Sacred Egoism.

In view of its importance, the entire relevant passage with the argument in question is given at *Appendix B*. It has, furthermore, a practical, direct bearing in contemporary issues, such as the nature and future of the European Union.

[34] Aristotle is explicit on the operating reason in the formation of complex associations - namely the requirement of establishing self-sufficiency. *Politica*, B, 1261b11-3: *οικία μὲν γὰρ αὐταρκέστερον ἑνός, πόλις δ' οἰκίας, καὶ βούλεται γ' ἤδη τότε εἶναι πόλις, ὅταν αὐτάρκη συμβαίῃ τὴν κοινωνίαν εἶναι τοῦ πλήθους*. [«For the Household is more self-sufficient than a single (individual), and the State (is more self-sufficient) than the Household; in fact, a State is meant to be constituted when the association of the multitude (of the many individuals) reaches self-sufficiency»]. What the individual cannot do on its own and isolated, he can do in the appropriate communion with others.

Even more emphatically the point is being made in the Peripatetic *Oeconomica*, A, 1343a10 sqq.: *πόλις μὲν οὖν οἰκιῶν πλῆθος ἔστι καὶ χώρας καὶ χρημάτων αὐταρκές πρὸς τὸ εὖ ζῆν· φανερόν δέ· ὅταν γὰρ μὴ δυνατοὶ ὧσι τούτου τυγχάνειν, διαλύεται καὶ ἡ κοινωνία*. [«The state is, therefore, a multitude of households, of territory and of wealth that is self-sufficient for the good life (for human excellence and perfection); and

this is evident, for when they (people) are not capable of attaining this end (the well-being of human nature as realised in individuals), society is dissolved». (The work is contained in the Aristotelian corpus, but is reported by Philodemus - in his *Περὶ Οἰκονομίας*, col. 7.38, 44; col. 27.14 - to have been written by Theophrastus).

It is to be observed that on the satisfaction of the condition of self-sufficiency is founded the priority in nature of the higher-order association (namely the political society organised in a State) over the narrower ones and over their common ultimate elements, i.e. the individuals (cf. n. [28]). Since human nature, as individually existent, cannot attain to the full blooming of its essential attributes save in the context of societal integration securing its self-sufficiency for that crowning achievement, the State is by nature prior to the individual: without the (appropriate) complete societal integral there cannot obtain perfection in human nature realisable in an individual. Still, there can surely exist humanity and human individuals not yet integrated into a full State-organisation under the bond of developed political society. Thus man is prior to State in nature - individuals to particular States and humanity to the State-universal. In fact and furthermore, the household is also prior to the State, for the conjugal association of man to woman is prior to political association of individual with individual. This priority is in the order of origination and concerns the necessary antecedents to the existence and nature of a thing. The former priority on the other hand, regards finality and the precedence involved is in the order of perfection. The one relates to questions of necessity (*τὰ ἀναγκαῖα*), the other to issues of consummation (*τὰ καλὰ*). Thus the following passage is harmonised to the one quoted at the beginning of n. [28]. *Ethica Nicomachea*, Θ, 1162a17-19: *ἄνθρωπος γὰρ τῇ φύσει συνδυαστικὸν μᾶλλον ἢ πολιτικόν, ὅσω πρότερον καὶ ἀναγκαιότερον οἰκία πόλεως καὶ τεκνοποιῖα κοινότερον τοῖς ζώοις* [«for man is by nature more of a conjugable animal than a political one, so much so in fact as the Household is prior to, and more necessary, than the State, and as the begetting of offspring is a universal trait of all animals»]. (The formulation in *NE*, A, 1094b7-10 is commonsensical and part of the preliminary and aporetic treatment of the nature and preeminence of political science in the first chapter of the Aristotelian Ethics).

Since the State is such a human association as to provide self-sufficiency for the attainment of human excellence, the question naturally rises as to its appropriate magnitude. Aristotle allows for some laxity in the

determination of its size, but argues for the existence of a norm, a due measure of size, round which the actual number may vary - similarly to every other natural or artificial kind; e.g. the proper size of man or a ship can be delimited within certain boundaries beyond which the respective particular thing is no more of its reputed kind, or is a defective instance of that kind, failing to discharge affectively its proper function (*Politica*, H, 1326a34-b2). For the idea cf. *De Anima*, B, 416a16; *De Generatione Animalium*, B, 745a5; Δ, 771b33; *Ethica Nicomachea*, 9, 1170b29; *De Animalium Motione*, 3, 699a34; *Politica*, E, 1309b21-31; and see Plutarch, *Symposiaca*, 5, 5, 1. Aristotle explains in the case of the State (*ibid.* 1326b2 sq.): *ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ πόλις ἢ μὲν ἐξ ὀλίγων λίαν οὐκ αὐτάρκης (ἢ δὲ πόλις αὐτάρκης), ἢ δὲ ἐκ πολλῶν ἄγαν ἐν μὲν τοῖς ἀναγκαίοις αὐτάρκης, ὡσπερ <δ> ἔθνος ἀλλ' οὐ πόλις· πολιτείαν γὰρ οὐ ράδιον ὑπάρχειν· τίς γὰρ στρατηγὸς ἔσται τοῦ λίαν ὑπερβάλλοντος πλήθους, ἢ τίς κῆρυξ μὴ Στεντόρειος;* [«and similarly with the state, a small state will not be self-sufficient (and yet the state is (essentially) self-sufficient), while the very large one may be self-sufficient in the necessities of life, but in the way of a nation, not a (closely-knit, urbanised, proper) state: for it is not easy for a definite form of social and political order to obtain in it; who can be effective general in an oversized army, or herald in a vast assembly?».]. For the opposition in ancient thought and practice between nation and state, cf. end of n. [23]. The exceedingly big State can indeed provide things necessary in self-sufficiency or even abundance, but, as in a nation unintegratable into a proper State its bulk will prevent it from equally securing the supply of things superior suitable to the satisfaction of higher order wants: there is not enough specific order and common way of life in it for that. The determination of the right size is deduced from the very essence of State; *Politica*, 1326b7-11: *διὸ πρῶτην μὲν εἶναι πόλιν ἀναγκαῖον τὴν ἐκ τοιούτου πλήθους ὃ πρῶτον πλήθος αὐτάρκης πρὸς τὸ εὖ ζῆν ἔστι κατὰ τὴν πολιτικὴν κοινωνίαν· ἐνδέχεται δὲ καὶ τὴν ταύτης ὑπερβάλλουσαν κατὰ πλήθος εἶναι μείζω πόλιν, ἀλλὰ τοῦτ' οὐκ ἔστιν, ὡσπερ εἵπομεν, ἀόριστον.* [«Thus a primary (first) state is necessarily the one which comprised such multitude as it is the first number (in the ascending order) capable of guaranteeing self-sufficiency in respect to political society with the purpose of a life of excellence. Now it is possible that there can be a bigger state exceeding the primary one in number, but this possibility of excess is not, as we have said, indefinite»]. Since it is better to take in and integrate the *greatest* (and not the first and least) number consistent with the attainment of the end of State, the best

definition should refer to the optimal excess over the first multitude. Thus (1326b22-4): δῆλον τοίνυν ὡς οὗτός ἐστι πόλεως ὄρος ἄριστος, ἡ μεγίστη τοῦ πλήθους ὑπερβολὴ πρὸς αὐτάρκειαν ζωῆς εὐσύννοπτος. [«It is thus evident that this is the best delimitation of the state size, namely the maximal aggregate of people consistent with self-sufficiency of life, that can be held together from one point of view and under one organising principle»]. The one view and principle required has to do with Aristotle's doctrine that the best order in society prevails when each individual fares in respect to status and power according to its merit, which condition can only be secured when each individual's excellence and performance can be tested on a common ground to which all members of society can have direct access and of which all may have virtually immediate knowledge (cf. 1326b11-22). *The agonistical ideal of life necessitates the existence of a common ring on which the contests are being taken in open view of everybody.* Such a ring is provided by community of values and a common cultural framework; it is safeguarded by the exercise of power, capable of enforcing and sustaining thorough communicability and transparency, and, also, strict accountability for good or bad corresponding to success and failure, under minimal, at least, commonly accepted conditions of what constitutes a success (and, thus, failure, as well).