ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF NATURAL SLAVERY

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IN BOOK 1 OF THE POLITICS, Aristotle develops a theory of natural slavery that is supposed both to secure the morality of enslaving such people and to provide the foundation for the uses of slaves he advocates in later books. But modern commentators have been nearly unanimous in finding that Aristotle's proffered theory does neither of these things. Specifically, critics have argued that the theory he offers is itself incoherent and that many of the uses to which he proposes putting slaves in subsequent books of the *Politics* are unwarranted, or even proscribed, by the theory in Book 1.

But in a recent article on this issue,[1] W. W. Fortenbaugh has radically departed from this tradition. Though Fortenbaugh does not attempt to defend the morality of the institution of slavery itself, he argues that traditional criticisms have failed to consider adequately the moral psychology that informs Aristotle's theory.

In this discussion, I wish to explore more carefully the logical consequences and potential advantages of Fortenbaugh's view and to provide explicit (if sometimes only speculative) answers to many of the traditional criticisms. Ultimately, however, I shall reject Fortenbaugh's interpretation as incomplete and thus inadequate. Specifically, I shall show how Aristotle's theory is developed according to the dictates of two distinct models for the relation of natural master and natural slave: one provided by the relationship of reason to emotion, and one provided by that of soul to body, or (for these purposes, equivalently) that of man to beast. Fortenbaugh's view relies on only one of these models, but both are required to complete the theory. I shall provide as complete a synthesis of these models' effects on the theory as I think can be given, but then conclude by showing precisely how and why such a synthesis still fails to make a success of Aristotle's defense of slavery.

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[1] W. W. Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle on Slaves and Women," in J. Barnes, M. Schofield, and R. Sorabji (eds.), *Articles on Aristotle 2: Ethics and Politics* (London 1977) 135–139. This work, and those of Schlaifer, Barker, Newman, and Gillies for which references are given in notes 3, 5, and 7 will be cited by author's name.

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I THE PROBLEM

From the beginning of the *Politics*, Aristotle treats the state as if it were an organic entity. Book 1 of the *Politics* thus attempts to trace the development of this "organism" through its more primitive components and stages, beginning with individuals of different natures, developing through the emergence of the household, and reaching an immature state in the village and its primitive economic arrangements. That biology provides the model for the political analysis Aristotle hopes to complete is soon clear: at 1253a18–29[2] he claims that the household and individual are part of the state in the same way as a hand is a part of the body. Later, he makes this model explicit (4.1290b25–38). Thus, political prescriptions, like those of medicine, will be made properly only if they are in accord with nature.

But as Aristotle develops his civic "organism" he makes a commitment that repels modern readers, for among the relationships that contribute to the formation of the household from mere individuals Aristotle lists that of natural master to natural slave (1252a30–34). Though he considers the view that slavery is simply a matter of convention (1255a3–b4), he rejects it, holding that there are human beings who are from birth marked out by nature as slaves (1254a21–24). In defense of this view, Aristotle offers a number of characterizations of the natural slave. Some of these are psychological: we are told, for example, that the natural slave lacks deliberation and foresight (1260a12, 3.1280a33–34; cf. also 1252a31–34, 1254b20–23). At other times the natural slave is identified by his aptitude for bodily labor (1252a32–34, 1254b17–19, 25–26, 1258b38, 1259b25–26). Aristotle even claims that the natural slave is rightly considered a part of his master's body (1255b11–12).

In addition to the obvious and unanswerable point that slavery is beyond moral defense, critics have charged that this aspect of Aristotle's philosophy is hopelessly problematic. Typically, such commentators argue that the theory of slavery Aristotle presents in Book 1 frequently conflicts with the practical proposals of other books of the *Politics*. For example, though he is explicit in characterizing the natural slave as a tool of action and not of production (1253b23–1254a17), he elsewhere advocates the use of slaves for agriculture (7.1330a25–26), a productive enterprise.[3] Similarly, it seems at least odd to learn first that only natural masters can use forethought (1252a31–32), and that all barbarians are natural slaves (1252b9), but later to discover that Asiatics are intelligent in a way that, in context, seems to

[2]All references from Book 1 of the *Politics* will be given simply in the standard Bekker page and line numbers; those from outside Book 1 will be prefaced by book number. Only other works will be referred to by name as well.

[3]This criticism is expressed, for example, by R. O. Schlaifer on page 192, n. 2 of his article, "Greek Theories of Slavery from Homer to Aristotle," *HSCP* 47 (1936) 165–204; reprinted in M. I. Finley (ed.), *Slavery in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge 1960) 93–132.

imply no lack of forethought. Rather, their relative deficiency to Greeks is only their lack of spirit (7.1327b23–38).[4] It is also puzzling that Aristotle would defend the morality of slavery by citing its accord with nature, only subsequently to advocate using emancipation as a reward (7.1330a32–33).[5] If Aristotle is not thinking of natural slaves when he says this, then enslaving them in the first place would not be morally defensible, according to his own theory (1255a3–26). But if they are natural slaves, and nature provides sufficient moral grounds for enslaving them, then to free them would be wrong. Worse, if Aristotle is right in Book 1, the natural slave is benefited by being the slave of a proper master (1254b19–20, 1255b6–7, 12–14). In this case, freeing him would be to deny him such benefits, as well. Perhaps the morality of slavery erodes in Aristotle's own thought as rapidly as the alleged benefits to the slave: we soon learn that any such advantage is merely accidental (3.1278b32–37).[6] Indeed, it would seem ultimately that even Aristotle was uneasy with his own theory, for he provided in his will that his own slaves be freed.[7]

Because the *Politics* is almost certainly not a single, finished treatise, however, but rather a composite of several incomplete drafts on various related issues,[8] it may be somewhat unrealistic to expect consistency among

[4]The argument seems merely to put the Greeks between the extremes of the Asiatics, who have intelligence without spirit, and the Europeans who have spirit, but appear to lack intelligence. No stronger entailments about the Asiatics can be drawn from this argument, e.g., that they have only technical intellect, as Schlaifer suggests in an attempt to avoid the problem (193 n. 7).

[5]This criticism is suggested by a number of people. See, for examples, Ernest Barker, *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle* (New York 1959) 365–366; W. L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle* 1 (Oxford 1887) 152 n. 1.

[6]This accords, however, with the view of slaves as parts of their masters in Book 1, for on Aristotle's view any advantage to the whole is also an advantage to the part, but then only accidentally.

[7]In the introduction to Edward Walford's translation of the *Politics* and *Economics* (London 1853), John Gillies celebrates Aristotle's act as one practical illustration of the "liberal maxims of his philosophy" (xxvii), calling this provision of Aristotle's will "an injunction conformable to the maxims inculcated in his *Politics*, that slaves of all descriptions ought to be set free, whenever they merited freedom, and are qualified for enjoying it" (xxviii). Though he makes no reference to the text, one must suppose that Gillies has 7.1330a32–33 in mind, though such a generous reading seems an overstatement of Aristotle's claim. The less "liberal" temper of Book 1 goes without comment in Gillies's short essay. Others are less inclined to see Aristotle's will in such a charitable light. For example, Barker, in the introduction to his translation of the *Politics* (Oxford 1979), says with obvious irony, "These dispositions serve as a commentary on the general view of slavery propounded in the first book of the *Politics*" (xxiv).

[8]For a detailed argument as to the extent of this, see J. L. Stocks, "The Composition of Aristotle's *Politics*," *CQ* 21 (1927) 177–187; for a quite different view, however, see Barker (1979) xxxvii–xlvi. For other discussions of this point, see J. Aubonnet in the introduction to the Budé edition of *Politics* 1 (1960) xcv–cxx, and C. J. Rowe, "Aims and Methods in Aristotle's *Politics*," *CQ* 27 (1977) 159–172.

its various parts, for Aristotle may have made no particular effort to preserve the formulations of Book 1 elsewhere. But Aristotle's critics also argue that in defending slavery Aristotle must resort to an account of the psychology of the natural slave that effectively ensures that no living human being (or at the very most extremely few of them) would actually qualify for slavery.[9] Though man, on Aristotle's view, is a rational animal, the natural slave can only share in reason gotten from his master (1254b20–23). But as he constructs his state Aristotle feels he must resort to the use of slavery. Thus his earlier attempts to justify slavery are characterized by modern critics as a precarious attempt to use psychology to justify an assumption that is no better than a residue of a cultural bias.[10] And this bias blinds Aristotle even to arguments of his own that would seem to undermine the practice he undertakes to defend; he admits, for example, that the same social functions could be performed by non-slaves (e.g., at 7.1330a25–30),[11] but does not feel compelled by this to reconsider the justice of slavery.

Some critics have even argued that Aristotle's theory is, of itself, incoherent, quite apart from any abandonment of it in later books. For example, it is in Book 1 that Aristotle advocates the use of stewards to execute the (however modest) "science" of properly employing slaves (1255b35–36), the same book as that in which Aristotle advances his theory that slavery is natural only when those enslaved are lacking in reason and without forethought. Yet stewards are themselves slaves.[12] Others question how it can be that the slave can have a share in virtue (1259b21–1260b7), a characteristic requiring at least some reason (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1106b36–1107a2).[13] Yet others have said that there is an inconsistency in saying both

[9]For examples of this criticism see Barker (1959) 365, and Franz Susemihl and R. D. Hicks in their note on 1254b16 on page 160 of their edition of the first four books of the *Politics* (London 1894).

[10]Thus, Newman says Aristotle's "bias was in favor of accepting and amending the institutions to which the collective experience of his race had given birth, rather than sweeping them away" (151). Also, Schlaifer concludes that Aristotle's only real argument in favor of slavery is "the simple assertion that all barbarians are natural slaves," citing 1252b5 ff. and 1255a28 f. But he goes on to say that "this assertion, however, in view of its general acceptance by the Greeks, might be called an argument *ek ton ginomenon* valid for his age" (198). Against this view, Fortenbaugh explicitly denies that Aristotle's view is "the sophistry of a prejudiced Greek male enjoying a privileged position" (135).

[11]See also Barker's reading of 7.1333a6–11 (given in his translation of the *Politics*, 316), which, if correct, would further support this point. That the same labors were often performed by slave and free alike is evident from Xenophon's remarks in *Memorabilia* 2.3.3. See also Philochorus 328 F 97, ap. Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.10.22.

[12]See the *Economics* (1344a25–26) by some attributed to Aristotle. It was in any case typical for stewards to be slaves. This criticism was suggested to me by David Keyt.

[13]For example, Newman (149) says, "How any form of moral virtue can subsist in the absence of the deliberative faculty, Aristotle does not explain, nor how the use of the body is the best that comes of the slave . . . if virtuous action is not beyond him."

that slaves are themselves alive (1253b32) and that they are no more than parts of their masters' bodies (1255b11–12).[14] Still others have wondered at Aristotle's assertion that masters and slaves can be friends, provided that the relationship is according to nature (1255b13–14), whereas in other works he is very explicit in saying that no such friendship can exist (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1161a32–34, *Eudemian Ethics* 1242a28–29).[15] Finally, some have noted that whereas the relationship of master to slave is despotical, and thus modelled on that of soul to body (1254b4–5), the fact that the slave can receive reason from his master (1254b20–23, 1260b5–7; cf. also 1259b27–28) is better modelled by the relationship between the rational and emotional parts of the soul, a relationship Aristotle stipulates as a political, regal rule (1254b5–6), in contrast to the despotical rule of the master.[16] The disparity between these forms of rule is critical: the regal ruler rules in a fatherly way (1259b1, 10–11), acting in the interest of those ruled (3.1278b37–40); the despot acts solely in his own interest (1278b32–37, 1279a17–21; cf. also *Nicomachean Ethics* 1160b29–31).

In the remainder of this paper, I shall reconsider this last criticism in some detail and argue that though the apparent inconsistency of models can be somewhat diminished by considering the slave apart from his master, this alone, of all the above criticisms, locates a major and irreparable flaw in the theory of slavery Aristotle proposes. In order to develop this argument, however, let us look more carefully at the two models to which it refers and the attempt to defend Aristotle through the use of one of them.

II Reason and Emotion

Despite the near unanimity, variety, and occasional vehemence of Aristotle's critics,[17] a recent article on this topic, by W. W. Fortenbaugh,

[14]For example, Schlaifer (193–194) proclaims flatly that Aristotle "simultaneously grants to the slave a participation in reason and denies it to him utterly, making him a mere body. His entire thought on this point is hopelessly confused: the slave was *ktema ti empsuchon*; now he is only *soma*."

[15]For an example of such a criticism, see Barker (1959) 366.

[16]Examples of this criticism can be found in Barker (1959) 365, and Schlaifer 197–198.

[17]See, for example, Eric A. Havelock, *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics* (New Haven and London 1957), whose discussion of Aristotle's view of slavery on pages 343–352 is one of unmixed disdain. Havelock dismisses the whole matter as Aristotle's attempt to make a "crude concrete application of his authoritarian philosophy" (352). Most critics at least give Aristotle credit for espousing a view that was relatively liberal for its day (see, for example, Newman 151). But until Fortenbaugh's article, the only commentator inclined to defend Aristotle was Gillies (above, n. 7), of whose motives we might be especially wary; Gillies concludes his discussion of Aristotle's theory with the following, rather chilling remarks:

Those rights, and those only, are inalienable, which it is impossible for one person to exercise for another: and to maintain those to be natural and inalienable rights, which the persons

reflects an attempt to preserve at least the sense of Aristotle's theory. Fortenbaugh urges that careful consideration of the psychology of the slave will show that Aristotle's theory is at least coherent, if only "theoretical" (137). In essence, Fortenbaugh's argument relies upon Aristotle's theory of the relation between reason and emotion. According to this approach, when Aristotle says that slaves lack the ability to deliberate, this does not thereby remove them from our species:

> In more technical language, Aristotle denies them [slaves] the logical or reasoning half of the bipartite soul but not the alogical or emotional half. This means that slaves can make the judgments involved in emotional responses and therefore have at least a minimum share in the cognitive capacity peculiar to men in relation to other animals (cf. 1253a16) (136).

Fortenbaugh concludes by saying (*ibid.*) that "in denying slaves the capacity to deliberate (1260a12) Aristotle is not robbing them of their humanity."

According to Fortenbaugh, this view allows us to see that "there is nothing inconsistent or precarious" (*ibid.*) in the thesis that slaves do not have reason, but can perceive it. Moreover, Fortenbaugh is inclined to applaud Aristotle's moderation in avoiding the excesses of Plato, whom Aristotle (and Fortenbaugh) understands as saying that slaves ought only to be given commands (*Laws* 777e5–778a1).[18] This moderation can be seen in Aristotle's remark that slaves ought to receive reasoned admonition (1260b5–7). Based upon his understanding of *Rhetoric* 1391b10–11, Fortenbaugh sees in this a commitment to

> . . . giving the slave his due. For offering a reason involves acknowledging that slaves can follow reasoned admonition and judge for themselves whether or not a particular course of action is appropriate.[19] In other words, to offer slaves reasoned admonition is to invite them to make the sort of decision they are capable of making. Slaves cannot put together reasoned arguments and cannot offer their master reasoned advice. But they can perceive their masters' reasons and can decide to follow them. To this extent they can partake of reason, so that Aristotle is on firm moral as well as psychological ground when he protests against refusing slaves reasoned admonition. To offer reasoned explanation is to respect a slave's cognitive capacity and to allow him to partake of reason as best he can (137).

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supposed to be invested with them can never possibly exercise, consistently either with their own safety, or with the good of the community, is to confound all notions of things, and to invert the whole order of nature (xxxix).

[18]That Aristotle (and thus Fortenbaugh) is incorrect in his conception of Plato's view is compellingly argued by Glenn Morrow in *Plato's Law of Slavery* (Urbana, Illinois 1939) 44–45.

[19]Fortenbaugh's note 6 appears here, the text of which reads, "when we admonish (*nouthetein*) a man, he decides whether he should obey. Cf. *Rhet.* 1391b10–11, where the admonished man is described as a judge (*krites*)." In the context of Aristotle's remarks here in the *Politics*, Fortenbaugh's understanding would appear on this point greatly to overstate the extent of the slave's prerogatives.

It is on these grounds that Fortenbaugh believes (*ibid.*) that "we may conclude that Aristotle's view of slavery is neither psychologically foolish nor morally repulsive."

The advantages of this interpretation are many. That there can be such human beings as Aristotle's natural slaves is not the least of these, though it is one of the few explicitly claimed in Fortenbaugh's brief discussion. In fact, accounting for the slave's psychic lack as Fortenbaugh does also accords with much of what Aristotle allows slaves to do in other books. For example, so long as the slave can comprehend the reasoned explanations of his master, there is no reason to suppose that he cannot engage in modestly responsible activities, such as stewardship and agriculture. Moreover, it would not be clear that the slave could not have a share in virtue, so long as he stood in a relationship with a natural master such that the appropriate reason was provided. In this way, the virtue of a slave would be exactly as Aristotle says it is: dependent upon and caused by the reason of the master (1260b3–7). And as a human being with at least some virtue, there is no reason to suppose that the slave could not enjoy friendship with his master.[20] We might even speculate that Aristotle's view, so interpreted, allows the natural slave to develop the right moral habits—habits not of the deliberative part of the soul, but of the emotional—given a sufficiently ample exposure to his master's reason. In such a case, it would remain true that all virtue (in the strict sense)[21] was gained from the master, and that the individual was a natural slave because of his initial and substantial need for his master's reason, but his relationship to the master might ultimately no longer need to be the same as it had been initially. Through sufficient exposure to his master's reason the natural slave, however naturally a slave, might conceivably be able to earn his freedom, thus resolving another apparent contradiction between the first and later books.[22] And that the same social functions could be performed by free men would in no way modify the fact that natural slaves exist and stand to benefit through slavery. Finally, that the slave has no share of the happy life or purposive life remains

[20]This is admittedly only a partial answer to the criticism that elsewhere Aristotle rules out such friendships. For more detailed expressions of the way this argument would work, as well as cautions as to its ultimate incompleteness, see Schlaifer 194–196 and Newman 150.

[21]Aristotle allows that there can be natural virtues, which are not virtues in the strict sense and which may be had by children and non-human animals. It is noteworthy that these may be transformed into virtue in the strict sense by the acquisition of reason. (See *Nicomachean Ethics* 1144b1–17; also *Eudemian Ethics* 1234a27–30.)

[22]Note, however, that Greeks distinguished between freed slaves and free men. Manumission did not give the former slave citizen status but made him a "resident alien," with, at Athens, a significant special disability. All "resident aliens" required citizen patrons. Unlike free foreigners the freed slave had no choice of patron, but had to be represented by his former master. Certainly for anything like the status of a citizen, the deliberative faculty would be required, which is something presumably still lacked by the slave. In any case, Aristotle does not address this issue in any detail, so this argument remains highly speculative, at best.

always true: considered on his own, he lacks the requisite psychic capacities for the purposive life and thus the happy life; but *qua* having received the appropriate reason from his master, he might be freed to engage in what he alone could never have achieved, for he has been provided with the right habits and reasons for action.

There is a curiosity in this, however, that leads us to its inadequacy. Critics have argued that Aristotle's account of the natural slave ensures that few if any human beings would qualify. On this conception, however, it would seem rather that *too many* qualify, namely, all those that gain their good moral habits and reasons for action from others. There is ample reason to suppose that this is the case for each and every one of us, for we all receive moral training of the requisite sort. Moreover, left initially and utterly to ourselves, we would be unlikely to generate these habits and reasons on our own. Of course, free children, on Aristotle's account, have the potential ultimately to come to engage creatively in the development of these habits and reasons, whereas slaves are condemned by their psychic lack always to depend upon their masters' guidance. But until the child's potential is realized, both child and slave stand in similar need of guidance. This similarity may perhaps be reflected in the Greek practice of calling both child and slave *pais*.

But Aristotle clearly states that the rule of free father over free child is not the same as that of master over slave, for the former is regal in nature (1259b1, 10–11) and the latter is despotic (1254b4–20). No doubt this distinction reflects the fact that the parent-child relationship is one of flesh and blood, whereas slaves are not kin to their masters. There is thus a natural relation of affection and emotional concern between a father and child that is no part of the master-slave relationship. Hence, the father rules the child like a king, with real concern for the welfare of the ruled. Similar considerations plainly apply as well to the "regal" rule of intelligence over emotion, for these are also related in such a way as to involve mutual concern.

But though such considerations may plausibly be supposed to have moved Aristotle to assign different forms of rule to children and slaves, they are neither part of nor entailed by the theoretical warrant he offers for slavery. Aristotle does not attempt to defend the despotism of slavery on the grounds that the slave is not kin, nor could he, for such a defense would provide no ground for distinguishing conventional from natural slavery. After all, neither sort of slave is kin. Aristotle's defense of natural slavery is rather only that the proper slave is psychically deficient.

It might be replied in Aristotle's defense that it is the child's potential for independent rationality that earns him a regal rule by his father. If true, this would preserve the theoretical basis Aristotle offers, for now the distinction in modes of rule over child and slave would again be based on their distinct

psychologies. Unfortunately, however, the potentiality of the thing ruled does not seem to be an important ingredient in Aristotle's distinctions of the proper sorts of rule. An obvious example of this can be found in the model Fortenbaugh appears to have in mind in the development of his interpretation: the relationship between intelligence and emotion. As with master and slave, intelligence rules emotion. As with master and slave, intelligence supplies reason to emotion, which the latter itself lacks, but can perceive and be guided by. As with slave and master (but *unlike* child and father), emotion is not even potentially intelligence, nor does it have the potential ever to have reason in any other way than by being given it by intelligence. Yet intelligence rules emotion in a regal fashion, or in the same way as a father rules his son. The potential of the child is plainly not an essential feature of this relationship, therefore, for such potential is no part of the analogous relation of ruler to ruled within the parts of the soul. This part of Aristotle's analogy, therefore, must derive from some other feature, as I proposed above.

Since, then, intelligence rules emotion in a regal way, this relationship cannot provide the proper model for the relationship of master to slave, for the latter is an instance of a despotical rule. Hence, despite the numerous apparent advantages Fortenbaugh can claim for interpreting Aristotle's defense of natural slavery according to this model, such an interpretation cannot account for what is perhaps the most noteworthy ingredient of the master-slave relationship: the despotism of slavery requires another explanation.

III Soul and Body, Man and Beast

One natural relation of despotism is that of soul to body (1254b4–5). Another is presumably that of man and beast (1256b16–26).[23] And Aristotle does not fail to apply these relations as models for the slavery he seeks to defend:

> We may thus conclude that all men who differ from others as much as the body differs from the soul, or an animal from a man (and this is the case with all those whose function is bodily service, and who produce their best when they supply such service)—all such are by nature slaves . . . (1254b16–19).[24]

Looking at the slave in this manner, it is not surprising to see that the only way in which he differs from a beast is that he can perceive reason and thus be subservient to it, whereas beasts "simply obey their instincts" (1254b23–24).

But this ability to serve reason is apparently not an important distinction for the quality of rule or consideration slaves are to receive, for Aristotle

[23]One mark of a despotical rule is that the relationship exists for the sake of the advantage of the ruler (3.1279a17–21).

[24]This is Barker's translation, as is the next short quotation.

repeatedly compares them to tame animals (1252b12, 1254b24–26). In this way, slaves are so much more beast-like than man-like that it is Nature's design that slaves would actually be distinguishable *physically* from masters, a design that, unfortunately, she too often fails to satisfy in fact (1254b27–34).

Because the natural slave can be characterized in this way, a number of inferences can be drawn, all of which contribute neatly to Aristotle's theory. First, it is clear that Aristotle would not expect anyone to argue that non-human animals are anything more than goods to be used by, and for the sake of, men. To the extent that Aristotle has given us a theory that identifies some biologically human beings as the moral equivalent of non-human animals, therefore, he has given us a defense not only of using such creatures, but of using them despotically. This is an important point, and one not sufficiently shown simply by his identification of slaves as living tools (1253b32). As Aristotle allows, the look-out man is a living tool for the pilot (1253b29–30), but there is no need to suppose that look-out men are or should always be slaves. If, however, it can be shown that there is a class of beings that are human but not more deserving of consideration in their own right than non-human animals, it will have been shown that owning such beings is morally appropriate.

The obvious way to proceed in this proof is to explore the comparison between animals and those that are to be identified as natural slaves. But the argument here is tricky, for Aristotle explicitly says, just as Fortenbaugh would have it, that the essential characteristic of a slave is psychic and not somatic in nature (1254b34–1255a2). It is also clear that this psychic quality is only that the natural slave lacks reason, though he can apprehend it. On the face of it this would not make the slave sufficiently distinct from the freeman to warrant enslaving him; as was shown above, the appropriate model for this would appear to be that provided by the relationship of intelligence to emotion, a regal rule.

How then can Aristotle turn what would apparently require a regal rule into despotism? On the actual nature of such an argument we can only speculate, for Aristotle never makes this more explicit. But it is certainly provocative in this regard that Aristotle's defense of slavery against those who would claim it to be merely conventional concludes with a stipulation of the difference between Greeks and barbarians, for elsewhere he says that barbarians have no natural rulers and thus all live as slaves (1252b5–9).

It is tempting to infer from this remark that Aristotle thinks that barbarians lack the capacity for deliberation, for this is the quality by which he distinguishes the natural ruler. There is obviously reason to resist making such an inference, however, for Aristotle could not plausibly suppose that *all* barbarians were so sorely deficient, especially given the heights to which he must know the civilization, for example, of the Persians or Egyptians had risen. Aristotle may well, then, have meant only

that those of the barbarians that were not deficient in the relevant way did not end up being the rulers, or at least that the ones who did in fact become rulers among the barbarians did not rule as natural rulers should rule.

But it is clear that Aristotle thought that natural slaves were best (or perhaps only) to be sought from among non-Greek cultures, which means that he was committed at least to believing that a significant number of barbarians were deficient in the relevant way. And though these barbarians (unlike animals) would still have the potential to perceive reason, without a masterly Greek to supply it (since their own rulers could or would not do so) this potential will be wholly unactualized. Thus, when living among their own kind such barbarians would be in no actual way different from animals. This, perhaps, is Aristotle's reason for saying that capturing slaves through just wars is no different in genus than hunting (both are arts of acquisition—1256b23–26).

Similarly, just as the animals that are owned and tamed benefit from this relation, despite the fact that the relation exists properly for the advantage of their owners, so Aristotle could argue that a barbarian is benefited by being the slave of a masterly Greek, despite the fact that the advantage of the master is the only essential concern of the relationship (see note 7 above). Such an assertion, however likely to be readily accepted by his Greek audience, is certainly unacceptable according to modern moral principles and has been roundly criticised as a mere appeal to a cultural bias. But if we take seriously two principles assumed from the beginning by Aristotle, we might find more uniquely Aristotelian reasons for this.

What distinguishes men from animals is that only the former have *logos* (1253a9–10). In context, it seems so clear that Aristotle means language (for he contrasts it with animals' capacity merely to make noise), that no translators have even attempted to render it in a way that shows a relation to later passages where he denies *logos* to the natural slave. Yet Aristotle says that the purpose of *logos* is the identification of the advantageous from its opposite, and thus the just from the unjust (1253a14–15). It is difficult to see how this could be achieved by those who lack the capacity for deliberation. Thus, even if Aristotle would allow that languages other than Greek counted as real languages,[25] it would remain true that (at least many of) their native users were incapable of using them (or for that matter Greek, if ever they learned it), in such a way as to satisfy fully the distinction between man and animal. Hence, when the barbarian/natural slave is captured and enslaved, he finally has the opportunity to come into

[25]It is worth remembering in this regard that the etymology of *barbaros* is probably onomatopoetic, from the sounds such people made, as if we called the speaker of a foreign language a "blah-blah." Ironically, according to Herodotus (2.158.2) this was the determining factor employed by the Egyptians, who called anyone who used a foreign language a barbarian.

contact with the proper use of *logos*—reasoned arguments designed to identify right from wrong. It is in (presumably the Greek) language, after all, that the master gives reasoned admonition to the slave. Lacking such a master, however, the barbarian would lack at least the full actualization of the thing that distinguishes him from non-human animals, if not all of it. So in this way, too, in lacking the capacity to deliberate, the barbarian/natural slave fails, when left among his own kind, to be in any actual way distinct from the beasts that all would allow are rightfully owned as property.

Secondly, Aristotle says that the natural slave is a part of his master, specifically, a part of his master's body (1255b11–12). From this claim we can conclude even more securely that the model for the master-slave relation that Aristotle uses is that of soul to body. Considered in this way, there is a sense in which the slave is to the master as the master is to the state; at 1253a18–29 it is clear that the individual is related to the state as a part is to the whole. The dissimilarity, however, is more striking: being a part of a state requires freedom and deliberative capacity, whereas this is plainly not required to be a part of the body. In addition, Aristotle seems disinclined to make the slave a real part of the state, as opposed to a mere condition of it (3.1278a1–3). Similarly, the hand of a citizen would not be considered a proper part of a state, even though the citizen himself is. But Aristotle says that the man who is not part of a state is either a beast or a god (1253a3–7, 27–29; cf. also 35–37). The slave, we may be assured, is not a likely candidate for the latter characterization.

Thus, Aristotle can rightly characterize the slave as properly deserving a relationship like that of the body's to the soul or a beast's to a man. And rather than conflicting with this characterization, the slave's psychology contributes to it, at least to a point: without the guidance of a master, the slave's psychology in no way elevates him (in actuality) from the beasts; indeed, without such guidance, he can have no virtue and thus is the worst of beasts (cf. 1253a35–37). In these ways, the slave is sufficiently beast-like to require a comparable analysis.

But the heart of this defense lies in taking the slave in two importantly different states: (i) outside of slavery, where he is, for the above reasons, effectively a beast, and (ii) enslaved, where he has the benefits of his master's reason. This is crucial, for if we look at the two states, we find that different models apply. It is not enough to defend slavery by saying that the slave would be no different from beasts (in actuality, if not in potentiality) were he apart from his master, even if Aristotle can offer a reason for thinking that is the case. The same man, when guided by another with reason, is no longer beast-like: he can have some share of virtue; he can at least enjoy (or suffer) reason. Thus, the model of body to soul may provide a useful picture of the natural slave when living out of natural

slavery, and may theoretically justify treating him in ways similar to the ways we treat animals, so long as he is in that state. But once he is brought into the household of a natural master, this model can no longer accurately apply, for now his psychological potential can be actualized.

We thus come to a paradox: however we might be able to justify owning such creatures as natural slaves apart from their masters,[26] we cannot seem to justify owning them at the time they are actually owned, for then the model must be that of reason to emotion, for it is a feature of the slave *qua* slave that he receives his master's reason. The only way the slave might be kept in a state where he is no different in actuality from the beasts would be for the master to *fail* to give him reason. But then we would have come no further than the view for which Aristotle (unfairly—above note 18) rebukes Plato. The defense for the actual practice of continued slavery can now only be that unless such creatures are *owned*, they would not enjoy the actualization of their (however limited) humanity. Now it would not be surprising if Aristotle thought that slaves ought to be owned only for a time (while they are being "tamed," for example) and then emancipated. But an argument is still needed as to why they must be owned at all, especially during the time that they enjoy their masters' reason, for again, this stage of the relationship appears to require a non-despotical relationship. I do not see how such an argument can be made on theoretical grounds, though it is easy enough to imagine a practical argument to that effect. Still, a defense of slavery solely on pragmatic grounds was not all that Aristotle sought to achieve, for such an argument could have been offered without most of the moral and metaphysical considerations Aristotle imports to assist him in his theory. In any case, Aristotle attempts no such argument.

IV Summary and Conclusion

I have argued that two important models are employed in Aristotle's theory of natural slavery, both of which allow some application of his conception of the natural slave: (i) that cited by Fortenbaugh, where the slave is to his master as the emotions are to reason, and (ii) that criticised by most critics where the slave is to his master as bodies are to souls, or non-human animals

[26] I do not mean to suggest that the above account is clearly adequate in this regard, but only that it may have been what led Aristotle to his view. It might well be argued that this is still not sufficient, for even among his own people, the barbarian/natural slave has the capacity to receive reason, however unactualized, and that this alone is sufficient to require no less than a kingly rule. However Aristotle would argue this, the above observations are suggested only as possible motives for his arguments, motives that would show at least a superficial plausibility in making such arguments from his point of view. Validity, of course, is another matter. An example of an interpretation of Aristotle that provides him with such a view can also be found in A. E. Taylor, *Aristotle* (rev. ed.: New York 1955) 102–103.

are to men. The former explains many of the uses to which slaves would be put, allows there to be such human beings (at least in theory), and *qua* human, even allows them to enjoy some friendship with their masters. But the model of emotion to reason does not warrant the despotism of slavery. The second model, of body to soul or beast to man, would entail such despotism, and can be defended by taking the natural slave in a context where he has not the natural master's guidance and direction. But this model cannot accurately apply to the relationship of natural slave to natural master, for it is in relation to the master that the slave is made in actuality more than beast, more than mere body. Hence, once exposed to his master, the slave no longer deserves the despotism he receives, for now the proper model is again reason to emotion.

Aristotle has told us why we can hunt some human beings as we do non-human animals (though not, presumably, for meat), and why some human beings are only actualized as human beings through the guidance of others. But he has never explained why some human beings deserve to suffer continuing despotical rule. Fortenbaugh's insights notwithstanding, Aristotle's theory fails.

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