ARISTOTLE AND POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

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WHEN CITIZENS TAKE POLITICS SERIOUSLY, their actions and their unsophisticated explanations of them imply that politics is something on which they, as rational and moral beings, can have some effect: they make deliberate choices, and such choices are asserted to be essential in politics. When political scientists take politics seriously, however, their science leads them to deny the reasonableness of the premise on which responsible citizenship rests. They find that the cause of politics is not deliberate choice, but the preferences of those with influence, and preferences and the distribution of influence are said either to be arbitrary or to be traceable to certain necessary causes. Thus politics and political science rest on different presuppositions. Yet we might wish that *political science* could do justice to politics and at the same time satisfy us that it is scientific. My purpose here is to study this problem and Aristotle's proposed solution to it, as found in the first part of the third book of his *Politics.*[1]

At the beginning of Book III of the *Politics,* Aristotle asks what the city is; one reason for his doing so, he says, is that disputes arise about whether a deed was done by the city or rather by the oligarchy or the tyrant. In mentioning this kind of dispute, Aristotle may remind some of his readers of a speech in Thucydides that was made before the gates of beseiged Plataea.[2] In that speech the Thebans are inconsistent because they seem to

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say that political responsibility properly lies with many or all, not a few, or with the best, however few. They are consistent in holding that not the fact of authority, but the end for which authority is used obliges citizens to obey governments and cities to keep alliances. Although their arguments about responsibility are made with reference to international affairs, the standards they apply could as well be used with regard to any responsibilities. Why is this typical dispute over political responsibility linked by Aristotle to a definition of what the city is?

The examination of the city begins with our asking what a citizen is, as if the citizen were a part that made the nature of the whole manifest: "The city is some multitude of citizens," (1274b41) and it is "just like some other whole put together of many parts" (1274b39-40). What is done to explain the citizen is, in part, to make the reader privy to a dispute between a democratic citizen and an oligarchic citizen about what a citizen is.

A citizen, we are told, "is defined by nothing so much as by participating in judgment and in rule" (1275a22-23). In the first instance, the definition sought is of an "unmade" citizen. Presumably an unmade citizen must have been born a citizen. If so, we can understand why the law excludes from citizenship resident aliens and slaves, who were not born of citizens. But then we cannot understand why children and old men, born of citizens, are said by the speaker to be incomplete citizens. Children and old men must be excluded because the citizen is one who is fully a man. Being fully a man is manifested in doing the work of a citizen, in ruling and judging. We then wonder why able metics and slaves need be excluded, especially if all citizen-born are presumed to be able and all included. What does being able to rule and being a man have to do with being born in a city? A citizen is a citizen in being a citizen, and the definition neither justifies the emphasis on origin nor clarifies the quality enabling one to be a citizen. Apparently Aristotle's citizen has not thought much about what the causes of being a citizen are. He begins from his own city, the only city he knows, and the limits of his horizon are reflected in both the form and substance of his argument.[3] For him, a democratic citizen is the same as citizen simply. He knows that some men are excluded from citizenship, but he cannot specify a consistent principle of exclusion or inclusion. He does not argue or speak well; he says that he is uninterested in quibbling about names and definitions.

Others, however, do seem to require precision and to be fond of making fine distinctions. Aristotle now presents an objection from someone who says that the definition does not give due weight to the obvious differences

among regimes. In some regimes especially, not all men have a part in rule. The objector immediately insists on differences while the democrat seeks a definition roughly fitting most cases. It is the objector who identifies the first definition as peculiar to democracy. This speaker takes as his point of reference what he sees, but he nevertheless prefaces his observation with a principle justifying his emphasis on differing regimes–the principle that things differing in form are more different than similar. Yet how he reasons from this principle is unclear: for example, he seems to identify the unerring with the prior and the erring and deviant with the latter, as if he were prejudiced in favor of what is old.[4] The form of his argument suggests that he is an oligarch, and the gist is that it is not always necessary to allow the many to rule.[5] His argument consists mainly in contradicting the democratic definition by giving examples of more or less aristocratic or oligarchic cities.

This oligarch, then, insists that the democratic definition be revised. He says that a citizen is "one who has the possibility of sharing in the office of deliberating and judging with skill," and that a city is "a multitude of such men sufficient for self-sufficiency of life" (127b17-21). Thus all free born men are not full citizens in all regimes. He also improves the democratic definition in suggesting, ambiguously, that the origin of a citizen is in a right or a capacity and that the quality of a citizen is doing the work with skill. Furthermore, he adds a final cause: citizenship is for the sake of the self-sufficiency of the city. He clarifies and modifies the first definition, although he does so by making assertions, not by giving reasons.

Whatever disagreement there might be between democrats and oligarchs, Aristotle causes us to realize from what follows (1275b22-34) that there is more agreed upon than not. In ordinary circumstances, one who is descended from citizen stock on both sides is born and is now a citizen, and no question is ever raised. That deliberating and judging be done well rather than by most or all is of concern to some, but it does not seem to be as essential to the citizen as an unimpeachable genealogy might be.

No citizen, however, has an unimpeachable genealogy. At this point in the text, Aristotle calls our attention to the *bon mot* of Gorgias, the rhetorician. The citizens sought to define an "unmade" citizen, but Gorgias, asking how the first citizen could have been born of citizen parents, urges that Larissaean citizens have been "made" by Larissaean magistrates (called *demiourgoi*) in the same way that other "Larissaeans" (a *larissa* was a kettle) are made by other *demiourgoi* (the word for craftsmen). The opinion held by citizens and reported by Aristotle is that

the title of citizen is inherited from one's parents. But as the first citizen obviously could not have inherited his title, he must have been "made" a citizen by himself or someone else. Either he was merely a made citizen or he deserved to be a citizen. We are led to wonder why the citizen insists that title to rule is conferred primarily by citizen birth, not ability.

Aristotle's corrected definition of a citizen was "political" because it ambiguously reproduced the city's characteristic concern with traditional forms and unconcern with excellence. Gorgias mockingly exposes the citizen's difficulty to his own profit, for he claims to teach an art of rule to citizens of various cities. His pun means that all cities are conventional, or made, and that the true ruler is the artificer. Ruling is making. Gorgias thus calls into question the claim that any traditional order might have on a citizen's allegiance, for it seems that the citizen who wants to imitate the first citizen also ought to make himself, or make something of himself by himself.

Political partisans are closer to one another than to foreign rhetoricians because they take the ancestral order and their own capacities for granted, but it is unclear where Aristotle stands. What he apparently opposes most is Gorgias' outspoken mockery of citizen dignity.[6] Yet if Gorgias of Leontini mocks, the "Little Lion" perhaps seeks to know as well.[7] What claim should the given political order have on a citizen, and why should it be assumed that the capacity to rule comes from birth, not from an acquired art? These may not be the citizen's questions, but they are our questions, and they may be Aristotle's. Gorgias, the skilled speaker and the man who "raises a doubt,"[8] reveals to us the city's incompleteness, both in its unconcern for the arts with which Gorgias is fascinated and in its inability to defend itself against his telling mockery. Moreover, it is only after Gorgias' rhetorical display that Aristotle refers to what "we assert," that is, to his own philosophic teaching.[9]

The text reads as if Aristotle himself had now entered into a dialogue with the citizens and Gorgias (1275b34-1276a6). The possibility that there is some art of ruling is suggested by Gorgias and is not denied by Aristotle. But Aristotle stresses his attachment to Athens by means of his examples and rejects the use of a criterion of artful ruling for judging Athenians, thus indicating that the best attained by any actual Athenian ruler is more likely to be rule in accordance with the best Athenian custom than with some transcultural art. He does insist on the criterion of justice, about which Gorgias was silent. He thus announces his intention of protecting a kind of good citizenship possible for untutored Athenians. His first political act is an attempt to save the dignity of the city—perhaps so that one might be indignant with it when it is not dignified.

Aristotle may have some additional purpose in making justice the focus of the citizens' dispute. The citizens who seek the definition of a citizen simply, as distinguished from a "made" citizen, invoke a distinction of which they might not be fully cognizant. For the citizen as a citizen, the city is his whole, the world in which he dwells and from which he takes his own definition. He gives no explanation of how the whole of which he is a part came to be. Instead, he attempts to distinguish it and its parts from the things whose genesis we can explain: purposive human productions. What is made by man's arts is made because the artisan intends it for some end. What has not been made by man's arts for his use is difficult to define, because the maker's intention may not be obvious and because we cannot confront him. We know a good *larissa* (a kettle) when we see it at work as a *larissa*. We do not know a good Larissaean from looking at Larissaeans at work as citizens unless we know what a Larissaean is for. A kettle is made for cooking, but what use has a citizen?

Upon reflection, however, we might consider whether politics ought to be contrasted to art. In implicitly contrasting politics to art, the citizen makes a distinction that reminds us of a philosophic distinction between natural and artificial, or between things which are not and which are of human making. Gorgias calls our attention to this distinction. The citizens seek an "unmade" citizen, and the city, Aristotle has said, is a whole just like some other whole. The citizen in his thinking substitutes the city for the whole of nature, for all that is not man-made. But in making a distinction between the political and the artful, paralleling the distinction between natural and artificial, the citizen forgets that it may be a part of man's nature to make with art, according to reason. It might be possible to understand nature as devoid of artful beings, but is Gorgias not correct in suggesting that a ruler, who is human and therefore a potentially artful being, might apply his skill to politics? The correct distinction may not be between politics and art, as the citizen first wishes it, for politics may be more artful than natural.

By natural is meant what is given, that is, not made by man. What is natural, as distinguished from man-made, must owe its existence to chance or necessity.[10] What exists by necessity is the subject of science, not art.[11] This science might try to understand nature as if it were matter in motion, with nothing analogous to human intention and reason manifest in it.[12] Thus paralleling or underlying the citizen's perhaps incorrect distinction between the political whole and art is a natural science that makes a problematic separation between the natural whole and human art or purposive making.

Gorgias calls to our attention both man's ability to make things to meet his needs, like kettles, and his own ability to speak and reason. He reminds us of human makings which are perhaps not merely conventional or arbitrary. Gorgias does not make this argument for himself, however. He not only fails to give due recognition to the natural capacity for art found in human beings, but he seems unaware of the conditions which make art possible in this world. These conditions most obviously include the material necessary to effect one's object, such as metal in the casting of kettles. They less obviously include regularities in the order of cause and effect which may instigate our makings and allow us to replicate them. These conditions cannot be understood to have been made by the artisan himself; they must be given, or natural.

When the citizen attempts to connect citizen birth, thus causation, to making man's humanity manifest through political work, we are led to expect that citizen birth will be shown to be a cause of human excellence in the same manner as natural genesis, for the citizen, to repeat, understands the city as an unmade whole, as nature. To natural genesis Gorgias opposes human production by art, with consequences subversive to the dignity of citizens and their opinions. Aristotle allows us to recognize this antagonism. As presented in Book III, his philosophizing begins with the reinterpretation of nature and causation for the sake of rescuing reasonable political opinion from the critique of expertise, while at the same time ensuring that political opinion is reasonable by correcting it in the light of Gorgias' reasonable critique of it. Gorgias' display of man's capacities for speech, inquiry, and art ought to be given political recognition, and the expert Gorgias ought to do justice to the citizen's respect for something given, which both limits and stabilizes human art. For Aristotle a proper understanding of politics embodies and therefore gives us access to a plausible understanding of the relation between nature and human purposiveness.

In order to elucidate this thesis, let us reconsider the arguments summarized thus far from this point of view.

In the first attempt to define a citizen, the citizen is said to be one who participates in the *arche* which is beyond definition. *Arche* means not only office or ruler, but beginning and first or governing principle. So the "citizen" who rules is meant to be the true beginning and cause of all things. This citizen simply, we are told, is not a citizen by chancing to be a citizen; he is a citizen either always or by some regular and explicable cause. He is said to be responsible for all or the most sovereign things. He reminds us not so much of a Socrates, who, when accused of inquiring into

the heavens and under the earth, was compelled to defend philosophy, but rather of what Socrates inquired after, the first principle by which the being of all things and of their being a whole is known.[13]

The citizen participates by judging as well as by ruling, however, and the judge does suggest a man. To speak of participating in the first principle by judging is to imply, it would seem, that the first principle is something intelligent or intelligible.[14] Yet this is not specified; the first principle is "undefined," or "unlimited," and what is common to judge and ruler is "nameless." Failing to name this community might cause some to question its existence, for the mind that judges seems to have nothing in common with what has brought all things into being if all things are body, neither caused nor governed by intelligence. The Athenian democrat cannot cogently link citizen birth to citizen capacity if he thinks of an undefined first cause. In the meantime, the philosophic "democrat," in failing to articulate the manner of being of the first cause, satisfies neither our public-spirited concern for politics nor our desire to be wise.

We can now better understand the objection offered by the "oligarch," who insists that all things are subordinate to *eide,* forms or species. His argument begins with the obvious and reasonable criticism to which the first definition is subject: someone using his senses, not to mention a sensible man, perceives that a man, for example, looks and acts and, therefore, perhaps is different from a beast. Visible differences are indications of different natures. The whole is composed of parts subordinate to different forms, and difference in form is more important than the identity of substance.

The oligarch proceeds to explain that in the regimes which we see, one judges only partly by the first principle, or one judges some things by one principle and others by another. Furthermore, in characterizing the first definition of a citizen as democratic, the oligarch says that in some regimes, the non-democratic ones, participation is possible, but not "necessary." In particular, man's perfection does not fall wholly within the necessary workings of nature. But it is perhaps unnecessary also in the sense that judging and deliberating on the basis of certain opinions might be a sufficient substitute for wisdom. The oligarch speaks of a limited ruling principle. Men, but not other beings, are ruled by human prudence, a deliberation in the light of an opinion about the human good.[15] Perhaps the philosophic "oligarch" too could bespeak a judgment about the whole by defining it with reference to some partial whole within it, the political whole. Such a definition, however necessary as a beginning, would remain hypothetical until it could be shown that the whole is similar to the political whole.

The "oligarchic" correction is closer to both reasonable non-philosophic common sense and to the tradition of political philosophy initiated by Plato or the Platonic Socrates. It begins with sense perception or a teaching about forms. Human common sense and political philosophy take the same side against democracy and a certain kind of natural philosophy.

Citizens equate being a man with being political, and they assume that man is naturally a part of a whole. It appears to us from Aristotle's presentation, however, that they do not give an explanation of what causes a whole and its parts to be as they are. In addition, they fail to account for purposive human making. The philosophers too have attempted to define the relation of ruling citizens to their city, that is, the whole of nature, and they too fail to make intelligible to us how the citizens, be they first substance or forms, are responsible for the being of each and every part of the whole and for the whole's being what it is.

The difficulty, as Aristotle reminds us with the prompting of Gorgias, is not only that we ought to consider whether politics is more artificial than natural, but that the cause of genesis and change, or responsibility for being, needs to be clarified. Gorgias asks how cities and citizens have come to be as they are, and he asserts that they have been made by art. Aristotle connects Gorgias' reflection on founders to changes in regimes, hence to changes. Gorgias supposes that art is prior to politics and to nature as the cause of their being and changes. He thinks that in speaking of art he can make genesis and change intelligible, whereas in speaking of nature as hitherto defined we could not have done so. The democrat who postulates that being is one in participating in one eternal substance could not account for difference, much less change or generation.[16] The oligarch who postulates that being is form could not explain how something can change its form and still be said to be.[17] Gorgias, the Little Lion, does not offer a more satisfactory account of nature, which he understands to be material for human productions. Rather, he denigrates the importance of the material by turning his attention to the maker. He thereby implies that purposive making has no natural or necessary limits; the maker or changer need not respect natures. Then both the citizen's respect for the traditional whole he has been given and the philosopher's examination of the natural whole are senseless because they are unnecessary. Gorgias is a little lion in reminding us that political and natural causation are problematic and that they might be comprehended by using man's art as a model of causation.[18] But he is only a little lion, for although he implicitly contends that the artisan has no need to reason about what is

given, we doubt that every being we perceive could be cast into a good *larissa.*

Aristotle apparently shares our doubt as well as our debt to Gorgias, for he leads us to reexamine the question of what the city is. Now he asks not what the citizen is, but how the city or the whole can be said to be responsible for its deeds and how it can be said to maintain its identity (1276a8-9, 1276a17-19). In other words, he asks how we can say that something is a cause of being or is responsible for being.

As presented, the inquiry originates in a political dispute. It begins with an allegation put forth by "some" who choose not to keep their contracts because the contracts were undertaken not by the city, but by the tyrant. These "some" are more concerned with doing what is fitting than with obedience to any law or authority merely because it is in force, for they specify the conditions under which they might keep their contracts by distinguishing regimes that are for the sake of "the benefit in common"[19] from regimes that are by being strong. Justice, international or internal, usually means nothing so much as keeping one's contracts,[20] and a political community seems to be kept a whole by the laws, or the contracts willed by the strongest force in a community. A change of regime, however, means that the power of law no longer obtains, and a man is presented with an opportunity to pass judgment on the law and to choose whether or not to obey it. In effect, he must remake the whole for himself. In political practice, the opportunity for making such choices is accompanied by the necessity of appealing to some standard for choice if that making is to seem not arbitrary and thereby to acquire moral as well as physical authority.

The argument required by the man who must make a political choice, that there are regimes that are for the benefit in common, but are not necessarily strong, and that by reference to them one justifies breaking contracts, is said to be akin to another difficulty: when to say that the city is the same, not the same, or other, when, for example, the "human beings" become "unharnessed"[21] and "make their homes" in another place. This in turn is similar to the difficulty of when to believe that the city in which human beings "make their homes down" or "settle down" is one city. In attempting to resolve these difficulties, Aristotle first mentions a "superficial" approach which regards the place, not the human beings. Perhaps "human beings" become unharnessed not only from this or that place, but from place altogether; for a search of them conducted in a "city spoken about" would be "tamer." Neither search is made at this time. Physical continuity cannot make a unity of the parts of the whole, as

we are reminded that the Peloponnesus could not be made one by a wall surrounding it. As perceived, body is particular, not unified. Reasonable speech, or "human being," is one's own, but seems to be common precisely in being perceived.[22] If there are regimes that *are* by virtue of their benefiting and bringing together what is common, they are better understood with reference to rational beings than to bodies. Nevertheless, our first concern is with human beings who "settle down" or live in cities, not to mention bodies.

Aristotle first poses two alternative assertions about wholes: either one asserts that the city remains the same if its race, or genus *(genos),* of "settlers" is the same, "exactly as we are in the habit of saying that a river or stream remains the same even as its matter is corrupted and born"; or one asserts that the human beings are the same, but the city is other. Of course not all of us are in the habit of speaking about rivers in this way. Heraclitus is renowned for having asserted that one can never step into the same river twice because the river is its particles of matter and these, always being corrupted and born, are not the same, but different particles.[23]

Aristotle makes no explicit reference to Heraclitus, but he mentions a river whose parts are always coming into being and being corrupted, and he contrasts the consequent problem of affirming the identity of the river to what "we are in the habit" of saying. He thus suggests to us that he has in mind philosophy or science as opposed to every day speech and a philosophy exemplified by Heraclitus' doctrine of flux. In the *Metaphysics,* we are told that Heraclitus taught that all sensible things are in flux and that the conviction that Heraclitus was correct led Plato to posit the theory of forms, eternal beings, because there can be no science of what is in flux.[24] Plato taught that being lies in the separated intelligible forms in which all sensible things participate. Without immediately attempting to resolve the theoretical issues involved, let us consider that the political implication of Heraclitus' teaching is conventionalism or historicism: since beings and the totality of beings are radically temporal and variable, all assertions about the natural relations of beings to one another must be similarly contingent. The political implication of Plato's asserted response to Heraclitus can perhaps be best stated by recalling that the just city of the *Republic* is made possible only by an abstraction from body and is therefore impossible.[25] Plato's political teaching is paradoxical. Aristotle's intention, we suggest, is not only to oppose Heraclitus' theoretical natural science, but Plato's paradoxical assertions as well. To both of these he opposes first "common sense" perception, then a

correction of the common sense account of this perception, and finally a theory about wholes which supports that common sense.

Habit or common sense leads one to insist that the identity of a river is maintained, presumably because one sees that the form of the whole remains unchanged. One might attempt to support this observation with the argument that the whole *is* the genus to which its particular parts belong. Yet this argument would seem to be insufficient, because we insist upon the identity of the river not only because of the continuous presence of the same matter, but because of the enduring shape of that particular heap of water.

Furthermore, it is unsatisfactory to oppose Heraclitus by insisting upon the generic identity of beings because we are still unable to comprehend political beings and political wholes. Genus *(genos)* when applied to cities usually means the race. To assert that humans *are* only in being parts of the city, city being understood as the genus of settlers, is to subordinate individual men to the race, to its inherited characteristics and its ancestral laws and customs. Men, however, manifest reason and thus may differ in more important respects from one another than do particles of water. Yet to assert that the genus pertains to human being, and is the same regardless of the settlement, is to deny that the body and the political and cultural have any effect on man's humanity. In effect, it is to assert, as Plato might appear to have done, that human beings do not have to settle down.

As political scientists, we might want to explain how the city is a whole of parts that are at once loyal, law-abiding citizens and reasonable men. We might want to explain why the issues discussed by political men are significant: that is, whether all or few, democrats or oligarchs, should rule. We have contended that Aristotle meant to show us, in presenting the two definitions of a citizen, one characteristically democratic, the other oligarchic, that most men tend to identify their own customary order with order simply; the fundamental characteristic of citizenship is an attachment to the traditional order. But with his references to changes in regime and to the relative disorder exemplified by international affairs, Aristotle reminds us that some men must pass judgment on that order.

Such men are typified by Thucydides' Thebans who speak at Plataea. The Thebans, having undergone a change in regime, go so far as to suggest that present Thebes is not the same as old Thebes, because its regime differs. They hold that contracts are morally compelling insofar as they intend a benefit in common. By benefit in common they do not necessarily mean the benefit of the majority rather than the few best. In repudiating their own tyrants, they imply that they would have respected

any moderate and lawful order. They do not sense any need to defend their attachment to Thebes, although they insist that politics, not culture, determines the being of Thebes. They acknowledge that there might be a legitimate range of opinions about which forms are just, but they require that there be some lawful order which makes its end the benefit in common.

Let us now consider Aristotle's "we assert": if the city is some community, it is a community of citizens in a regime, and becoming other in form and different in regime, it necessarily seems to be not the same—exactly as we assert that a chorus is other when comic than when tragic (1276b1-4). The being of each chorus is determined chiefly by its specific form, even if the identity of the genus, chorus, is necessary to permit the comparison. We know that Greek comic and tragic choruses differed in the arrangements of the lines and files of chorus members. This visible difference was caused by the particular order given the parts, and in identifying the chorus, its order, or form, not the individual chorus members, or matter, is what we must perceive.

By analogy, then, one needs to know how Athenians have constituted their political order as well as that they are Athenians in order to determine whether Athens is or is not the same city. The political order, the way in which a multitude of human beings orders itself or maintains an order is the definitive cause of the city. Aristotle brings the deliberate content of politics to the fore without denying that it has a non-rational matrix, for he says that sameness and otherness are determined "chiefly"—not only—by the regime. Citizens are right in taking seriously the political order of the city in which they have been born. The form of the whole, which is determined by the order of the parts, is the most important political fact, and the parts might rearrange themselves. Reason and intention are added to culture through politics. This is how one makes a politically responsible assertion about cities whose parts are both a race of settlers and human beings.

Aristotle tells us that a chorus is similar to all other communities and compounds, the example of which is a harmony of sounds. The examples of harmonies used are Dorian and Phrygian. Elsewhere in the *Politics*, these are used to represent oligarchs, who are precise and masterful, and democrats, who are open and soft.[26] Ultimately, they are *thymos* and *eros*, parts of the soul. That the being of a city can be known by looking at its regime is an analogue of the teaching that one knows a human soul in knowing its order.[27] Man's makings are circumscribed by psychic harmonies, as well as by the customs of political beings. Art imitates or

perfects nature.[28] What the political art makes is a beautiful whole which resembles a human soul, for this is the "nature" that the political art imitates and perfects.

We have contended that Aristotle's assertions are meant to be politically responsible, for they allow making a given regime as good as possible seem a reasonable thing to do.[29] We also contend that Aristotle wishes us to learn about "responsibility," causation in general, from politics and from citizens' assertions about political wholes.[30] *All* communities and compounds are compared to a chorus by Aristotle; any other order can be understood by analogy. Reflection upon the apparent order of visible things, such as the heavens, leads one to wonder about the cause of its order. About the efficient cause, the citizen can say nothing politically useful and the philosopher can say nothing certain. What we can ascertain about perceptible wholes is that the form constituted by the parts in an order is the being of the whole. The cause is the form which inheres in the matter, and the matter is a cause incidentally, not essentially. Perception of the order as an order might be said to be a cause of its order in another way.

We thought the citizens' definitions of a citizen unacceptable because they told us little or nothing about how the origin and the quality of a citizen are related. In fact, however, they told us almost everything, and we failed to see this because we did not think that forms are causes of being. The citizen told us *almost* everything because they did not tell us how parts might differ and yet be related to one another and to purposive human making. Aristotle's consideration of when the city can be said to be the same or other is meant to answer these questions. This difficulty, we recall, is akin to the difficulty confronted by the citizen who wishes to disregard legal contracts, hence forms, because they are not for the benefit in common. This citizen reasons that all forms justly constituted must intend as their end the benefit in common. According to his reasoning, the distinctiveness of forms is transcended not in seeking the similarity of the matter of which all of formed matter partakes, but in considering what end the forms share. Change is justified with reference to that end, hence "explained." Change is effected or a new whole generated by human beings who intend that end. Artisans, too, intend the beneficial, and what moves the artisan to make is better articulated by the citizen than by Gorgias. Nevertheless, Aristotle's references to Gorgias with his universal art, to true things unseen, to regimes that are not strong, to human beings unharnessed and living as one in a city spoken about, and to compounds like harmonies remind us of a human soul and its speech and of a nature

with which it is in harmony. The whole is completed by wisdom, the end toward which human speech and the desire to perfect it point.

Purpose is perceived within the whole when one asks about the final, not the material or efficient, cause of forms. Upon reflection, the cause by which the chorus, and therefore other wholes, is fully intelligible is the intention to have manifest beauty *beheld.* Both politics and nature, as formed matter, *are* in themselves. Yet their being coincides with the purposive human making which is the making of wholes in speech.[31] If the whole of nature has a first cause, that is a cause which is logically prior, it is contemplation, the final cause toward which intellect and intelligibles move.

Neither a fascination with natural science which leads us to forget that man is an exemplary part of nature nor a fascination with art which leads us to forget that man is a part of nature permits the solution offered by political philosophy, which begins by taking politics seriously on its own terms. Causation, according to Aristotle, is correctly understood by the citizen whose concern for his city causes him to wonder about disavowing responsibility for its deeds if its laws have not been beneficial. Aristotle must demonstrate to such a man, as he does in the *Politics* and the *Ethics,* that the true benefit in common is philosophizing about political beings and wholes resembling political wholes, but he need not demonstrate how to look at a whole, for this the philosopher has himself learned from politics.[32]

According to Aristotle, then, political science, in order to be scientific, need not refer to causes different from those about which a responsible citizen tends to think. Aristotle's theoretical science in its most obvious formulations, his "assertions," attempts to demonstrate the plausibility of a "political" perspective. This argument about how the whole is to be comprehended needs to be made because there is always a possibility that someone will make assertions about theoretical science which make common sense seem senseless.[33]

For Aristotle, politics, properly understood, is form or order consciously maintained and occasionally reformed for the sake of forming the best human beings. Nature, properly understood, is an order whose first cause is made manifest by the best human being. Both are given to man, yet both are graced by man when he intends his own excellence. Aristotle's science can be a science of reasonable common sense and he can demand that philosophers be politically responsible because he holds that the common sense of a good citizen is "responsible."

NOTES

1. *Politics,* 1274b31-1276b15. This is the first of six "examinations" in Book III. All references are to the Oxford Classical text of the *Politics,* (Oxford, 1957).

2. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* (Cambridge, Mass., 1919), Book III, Ch. 61-67.

3. As in a democracy, a citizen is said to participate without limit of time in the jury and in the assembly. The man offering the definition, presumably having always lived in a democracy, speaks of offices limited or unlimited in time because he knows only lot or rotation, not election, as the means of filling offices. At one point, he substitutes membership in the assembly for the magistracies, because the assembly is sovereign in a democracy. Cf. 1317b17-1818a3 for a list of democratic modes.

4. At 1275a38-b3 it is said that regimes differ, that some are later and some prior, and that the erring and deviant regimes are necessarily later. In the *Metaphysics* (Bloomington, Ind., 1966, 1018b9-1019a14), Aristotle explains that temporal priority is only one kind of priority, so the usage in the *Politics* does not *necessarily* mean earlier in time.

5. The speaker is more worldly, for he has information, more or less correct, about foreign regimes; he makes authoritative statements; he speaks of necessities and self-sufficiency as might a business man. He distinguishes himself from other citizens, revealing a distaste for the *demos.*

6. The corrected definition of a citizen was ambiguous insofar as the requirement of skill was added, but not emphasized, and the end was said to be self-sufficiency, which is similar to utility. At 1275b31, Aristotle refers to "the previously orated definition," thus bidding us to compare his rhetoric to that of Gorgias.

7. Aristotle introduces Gorgias as Gorgias of Leontini, which is both the name of his city and "Of the Little Lions." At 1284a15 Aristotle, in reporting an assertion of Antisthenes', tacitly compares philosophers to lions. The leonine quality is the use of speech or reason to understand speech in contrast to the use of speech for political ends, as Gorgias may use it.

8. "To raise a doubt," or "to be at a loss," *(aporeo)* is frequently used by Aristotle to indicate that a philosophic inquiry is being pressed.

9. Some things are "said" by Aristotle (*lego,* the root of *logos,* reason, speech, or reasonable speech) in the way that one might argue with a reasonable man. Other things are "asserted," *(pheme)* in the way that one might hope to discourage argument with a display of self-confidence, as for example, when expressing political opinions and in teaching.

10. Aristotle, *Physics,* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), 192b8-9, 195b30-196b9.

11. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* (Oxford, 1894), 1139b22-23, 1140a17-18.

12. In the last portion of the second book of the *Physics,* 199b33-200b9, Aristotle distinguishes between understandings of natural necessity which are mechanistic or mathematical and his, which is purposive. One might speak of necessity in the sense that a heavy object necessarily falls to earth or in the sense that the angles of a triangle necessarily equal two right angles. But one might also speak of necessity in the sense that bricks are necessary in the building of a house, although bricks cannot be said to cause the house as does the purpose of the architect; the bricks are hypothetically necessary to effect the purpose. Construing natural

causation as analogous to artful causation, Aristotle requires the physicist to consider not only the material, but the causes of motion, which can be understood as purposive, or intending an end.

13. The citizen is distinguished from a metic, a resident alien, of whom it is said that he may participate in the city's justice so far as to be involved in lawsuits and to need a patron to represent him in court. The reader may thus be reminded of Socrates' trial and defense of philosophy before the city. In that defense, Socrates portrays his activities as a vindication of the oracle or the god, who may, of course, also be thought of by many as the first cause.

14. For a comparison of the metaphysician to a judge, see Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* translated by Hippocrates G. Apostle, (Bloomington, Ind., 1966), 995b3-4.

15. *Ethics,* 1097a30-35, 1141a20-29.

16. In both the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics* Aristotle begins by reviewing the teachings of his predecessors. He insists that we must begin the study of nature with what is most familiar and clear to us, that is, the observation of wholes and motion, although he himself begins by refuting theories which make this kind of beginning seem not to lead to correct conclusions (*Physics,* 184a10-b14, 185a13-14). Neither those, like Parmenides, who hold that nature is one nor those who hold that nature is unlimited matter can make these phenomena intelligible (*Physics,* 184b15ff, 187a12ff; *Metaphysics,* 988b23-32).

17. Those who spoke of forms are, of course, Socrates and Plato. The first application of forms was in the examination of the moral virtues, although Plato expanded their use (*Metaphysics,* 987a30-b14, 1078b9-32). Cf. Plato, *Phaedo,* (Cambridge, Mass., 1914), 97B-102A, for the Platonic Socrates' account of his study of nature. According to Aristotle, the separated forms do not explain motion and change (*Metaphysics,* 1079b12 ff.).

18. Cf. *Physics* 199a19-20. The progression of Books I and II as a whole should be considered in this light: from the theories criticized in Book I, to the distinction between natural and artificial at the beginning of Book II, to the increasingly emphasized comparison of natural causation to artful causation.

19. *To koine sympheron. Sympheron* means "the bringing together" as well as "benefit." *To koine symperhon,* as distinguished from *to koinon sympheron,* means a bringing together into what is common, which must be a feminine, singular noun as is *arche,* for example. Or *koine* is an adverbial dative, and the meaning is then a benefit or bringing together by common efforts. *To koinon sympheron* suggests a benefit to or bringing together of those who have something in common, as well as the ordinary in contrast to the rare.

20. Cf. Plato, *Republic,* (New York, 1968) 331C, the first definition of justice; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Harmondsworth, Eng., 1968), p. 202, where the definition of justice is the performance of covenants. *Politics,* 1280a25ff: Aristotle opposes the opinion that the city is *no more than* a mutually beneficial contractual alliance for preservation.

21. Cf. *Politics,* 1262a21-24. *Phaedo,* 88B (a reference to the soul's becoming unharnessed in death).

22. *Politics,* 1253a7-18: Reason *(logos)* is unique *(idios)* to man among all creatures, but it is perhaps what is most "one's own" *(idios)* to each man.

23. Heraclitus, fr. 12 (Diels): "Upon those who step into the same rivers different and again different waters flow." Socrates' paraphrase is: "Heraclitus . . . likens the

beings to a river, saying that you cannot step into the same river twice" (*Cratylus,* Cambridge, Mass., 1926: 402A).

24. *Metaphysics,* 1078b12-17.

25. *Republic,* 479A, 472B-E, 462C. Aristotle's criticism of the *Republic,* at 1261a10-14, is that this city is impossible and Socrates does not make clear what ought to be done instead.

26. *Politics,* 1290a20-29.

27. *Politics,* 1253a15-19, 1285b29-33.

28. *Physics,* 199a15-17.

29. In Book IV, at 1289a1-5, Aristotle again bids men to assume responsibility by reforming a given order, but there he likens reforming a regime to relearning. Upon reflection, what needs relearning has not been learned rightly or well.

30. At the end of Book II of the *Physics,* 198b10-200b11, Aristotle argues that nature is purposeful. Nature is considered as if it might be an artifact (199a8-21), except that natural things have a principle of motion within themselves (199b16-17). The end, or final cause, of a natural being is its form (199a31-33). Cf. *Metaphysics,* 1075a11-16: "We must also inquire in which of two ways the nature of the whole has the good and the highest good, whether as something separate and by itself, or as the order of its parts. Or does it have it in both ways, as in the case of an army? For in an army goodness exists both in the order and in the general, and rather in the general; for it is not because of the order that he exists, but the order exists because of him."

31. *Politics,* 1278b1-5, 1287a1-3, 1287a8-10, 1288a37-1288b2.

32. The reader's attention is called to the topic of the argument immediately following the present one: is the virtue of the good man and the serious citizen the same? The most explicit praise of the philosophic life is, of course, that in which the *Ethics* culminates (1177a12-1179a32). For the utility of analyzing political wholes, cf. *Politics,* 1283a3-17 and context; *Ethics,* 1155b1-10 with 1167b28-29 and 1170a13-14: Aristotle offers a "more natural" (physical) explanation at the end of his analysis of friendship, which begins with an explicit abstraction from the opinions of men like Euripides, Heraclitus, and Empedocles, who seek "a deeper and more natural (physical)" explanation of human friendship.

33. Consider the context of Aristotle's criticism of Plato's idea of the good in Book I of the *Ethics:* a consideration of the happy or good life. Cf. *Politics,* 1252a7-9. Aristotle frequently puzzles over the implications of the "assertions" of "some."