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# Person and Community: Metaphysical and Political\*

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Inquiries concerning the nature of man and society and programs of action bearing on their formation and change have undergone reformations and revolutions which parallel in sequence and purpose contemporaneous revolts against metaphysics and projections of architectonic substitutes for it. Again and again, the apparently endless proliferation of warring theories about being and the nature of things and of occurrences has led philosophers to abandon metaphysics to investigate how we know, hopeful that knowledge of mind and knowing might enable them to establish principles and uncover methods of knowing being and what is. When their epistemic investigations, in turn, have traveled many paths into many regions of thought and feeling, it has seemed plausible, again and again, that examination of what we say and do might provide a key to meanings and references and to beings and existences.

Such revolutions have marked off the turns of the ages since the ancient Greeks laid down the pattern and established the vocabulary of culture and philosophy in the West. Inquiry concerning fundamental questions of being and existence, thought and feeling, action and expression faces, as a consequence, the necessity to make initial and usually unexamined choices which determine the statement and the examination of the questions. The choice of semantic and substantive presuppositions may be schematized in two dimensions. Perpendicularly one might choose to begin with beings or with existences, with ideas or with experiences, with symbols or with actions. Horizontally one might ground one's choices in metaphysical principles of things, or in epistemological methods of critical judgment, or in analytical interpretations of statements or processes.

Aristotle made a characteristic contribution to the construction of this

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variable matrix of symbols and significances. He formed a vocabulary of univocal scientific and philosophic terms by giving words in ordinary usage strict definitions and by inventing technical terms or terms of art to transform the original ambiguity of words into a dynamic structure of interrelated terms and meanings. This vocabulary of univocal words entered into the languages of philosophy, science, and policy in the West, but its terms seldom retained the meaning by which Aristotle defined them or the applications with which he used them, and progress or simple changes in all fields were often announced and developed accompanied either by citation or by refutation of Aristotle. Changing interpretations of Aristotle are among the significant characteristics by which successive ages in the West may be interpreted.

Perpendicularly Aristotle opted for self-sufficient substances, self-evident first principles, and natural potentialities and actions; horizontally he formulated an architectonic theoretical science of being and of first principles, an architectonic practical science of political and moral actions, and a productive science which might be put to architectonic uses to order processes and products of artistic and mechanical making. Aristotle's theoretic science of being, which came to be called metaphysics, related the sciences—theoretic, practical, and productive—and the arts—particular and universal—by their first principles or their commonplaces, but in the inquiries and analyses of his followers and opponents it ceased to be a science and became a belief about being and reality based on principles formulated and reformulated in antagonistic idealisms and materialisms and disavowed and refuted in a variety of skepticisms. The forms which arts, sciences, and culture take are determined by the circumstances, times, and communities in which they arise and develop, and Aristotle's practical science of politics accounted for their concurrences and operations. Aristotle presented politics as a single science of human action, individual and social, treated in two parts, from the perspective of the grounds of individual moral action in the *Ethics* and from the perspective of the grounds of political organization in the *Politics*. Its purpose was practical, to lead men to perform good actions, not theoretic, to discover and demonstrate the final good. In the inquiries and analyses of his followers and opponents it ceased to be a practical science and became a theoretic science of the good, or a physcobiological science of nature and human nature, or a rhetorical art of inducing actions, good or bad. Aristotle's productive science of poetics can be given an architectonic function since the statement of what is thought to be and the formation of human associations and communities may be treated as artificial objects, products of arts of making. But from the beginning his followers and opponents turned from poetic science and the investigation of form and matter in art objects to the rhetorical art of using words to produce effects in feeling, conviction, and action.

This is still the vocabulary of discussion and the strategy of action. We tend to begin with the vocabulary in which questions are formulated and to dispute concerning significances and applications, and we use rhetorical arts to secure agreement in the reformulation and revolution of statements

of questions and of principles, and in the establishment of communications and of communities. We seek to be objective by beginning with what men say and do rather than with presupposed things grounded in nature or with alleged facts grounded in knowledge, and we expect natural things and warranted knowledge to emerge from the reinforcement or resolution of claims of individuals and groups in opposition. Nature is a product, not a principle; and the examination of man and society as disclosed by what men say and do can take over the functions once exercised by metaphysics in determining the nature of things and the principles of knowledge, morals, and policy. Men are still formed by the communities in which they are reared, and communities are still formed by the men who constitute them and live in them. Justice and equality are still sought in the relations of man and society and in the relations of men to men and of societies to societies. The meanings of 'nature' have changed, however, and nature operates differently in processes and in explanations. It is no longer used as a principle to establish the 'nature' of man and society and of justice and equality in their interrelations; instead the nature of rights and duties and of man and society in general are derived as products and sequences of what men say, and do, and make.

From the beginning of Western philosophical speculation, two theories of the relations of man and society have developed in opposition and in mutual adjustment. Plato analogized man and society; the virtues of man can be discovered writ large in the state, and they form a single mutually defining whole or a single virtue; the associations and communities of men differ only in size, not in nature. Aristotle made univocal distinctions between the virtues of men and the institutions of societies; he sought a basis for discovering and investigating the 'nature' of man in the nature of his faculties and in their natural functions and habituations, and the 'nature' of the associations of men in the natural relations of men to men and of men to things; the associations of men form a hierarchy from the household, the simplest community required for mere living, to the state, the inclusive community required for living well. The virtues of man, based on his nature, provide him a second nature; the institutions of states, based on natural relations of men and things, constitute a nature prior to the nature of individual men, which orders the relations of ruling and being ruled; justice is a virtue in individuals, an order in states, and a bond between individuals and states.

Aristotle begins his *Politics* with a refutation of the theory that human associations differ only in size and in the number of their members as a preliminary to formulating the theory that their differences are found in the nature and function of ruler and ruled in them in ordered sequence from simple autonomous to inclusive free community. Aristotle based the simplest community on two natural relationships, the generation of the immediate family on the interrelation of male and female, and the formation of the economy or household on the interrelation of master and slave. Two further relationships arise with products of these relations, father and son, and owner and property. The relation of male and female in the generation of children

is a relation of two rational beings, and Aristotle likens it therefore to 'constitutional' rule, that is, the true form of the rule of many called by the very name of 'polity' or 'constitution' as contrasted to the degraded form called 'democracy.' The relation of father and son in the education of the young is a relation in which unformed rational potentialities are formed and developed, and is likened therefore to 'royal' rule. The relation of master to slave in the formation and operation of the household economy is a productive relationship in which the workers lack by nature the power to make decisions concerning their own welfare and that of the community, and it is likened therefore to 'despotic' rule. The relation of owner to property is a relation between man and the things he makes, and it operates therefore in production and use. In the household slaves are animate instruments of action, while property consists of products and inanimate instruments of production.

Aristotle's formulation of the natural relations which underlie the family and the more inclusive communities, the village and the state, into which it enters as an element and from which it derives its characteristic social functions, are the source of four doctrines attributed to Aristotle and almost unanimously condemned as egregious Aristotelian errors—a conception of property, of slavery, of youth, and of women. They are all errors concerning the 'nature' of men in social relations. They are misinterpretations of Aristotle, for they neglect the distinction between the meanings Aristotle gave to 'nature' in practical and in theoretical sciences, but they are widely accepted interpretations which take on characteristic forms in successive ages and make his distinctions available to frame new interpretations of man and society, science and knowledge, and action and statement. Aristotle differentiated the political order from the economic order; he made the economic self-sufficiency of the household a prerequisite to the political organization of the state; and he subordinated economic to political objectives. Politics later became inseparable from economics in political economy, and political theory and history were given new economic forms as theories of property and production, or of the freedom and rights of men, and as histories of the development and interactions of cultures or of the generation of communities and their acquisition of power.

With these changes in economics and in its relation to politics Aristotle's conceptions of the nature of property and of production became egregious errors, but they provided the vocabulary for their own correction. Like Plato, Aristotle recognized that existing Greek cities were in reality two cities rather than one, a city of the rich and a city of the poor, and he changed his definition of democracy from the rule of the many to the rule of the poor. Moreover, he maintained that of all possible constitutions only two actually existed, usually in mixture, oligarchy and democracy, balancing and opposing the pursuit of wealth and the pursuit of freedom as ends of the state. He separated questions of the ownership, production, and use of property. He argued for private as opposed to common ownership, and he sought criteria and limits of production in use. The determinant role of use and consumption

in the household led him to distinguish the economic order of the family from the political order of the state, and to differentiate property which is an instrument of production from wealth which is accumulated and used for exchange but not for further production, a distinction which earned him repeated criticism and refutation for failure to understand the productivity of capital and the justification of interest.

Locke began his *Second Treatise on Civil Government* by distinguishing the *power* of magistrates over subjects, fathers over children, masters over servants, husbands over wives, and lords over slaves in refutation of Filmer's reduction of the commonwealth to the family in his *Patriarcha or the Natural Power of Kings*, much as Aristotle began his *Politics* by distinguishing the *rules* of statesmen, kings, householders, and masters in refutation of Plato's reduction of the republic to the family. Locke sought the foundations of society in natural powers, whereas Aristotle sought them in natural relations; Aristotle's refutation of the reduction of the state to the family was for the purpose of distinguishing politics from economics, whereas Locke's refutation of that reduction permitted him to assign the name 'property' to "the mutual preservation of lives, liberties, and estates" and to make the enjoyment of property the end of civil government.

Modern political revolutions have been economic revolutions, conflicts of rich and poor, haves and have-nots, in which resolutions have been sought in common ownership of the means of production as a stage to the disappearance of politics and the withering away of law and the state, or in private ownership of the products of one's labor as a stage to the extension of rights from economic to social and cultural rights and the withering away of divisive nationalisms in the community of mankind. In the one, dispossessing the dispossessor was the road to freedom and well-being; in the other, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness became a synonym for life, liberty, and property. Among nations, have-not nations came into existence liberated from imperialisms and colonialisms, and seeking to form a third world independent of the worlds of communism and of capitalism. Within nations, have-not groups, minorities and majorities, took form to vindicate their economic, civic, social, and cultural rights. Aristotle's natural relations have ceased to be generative principles of interdependent societies, but they have reappeared as principles of opposition in existing men and emerging societies whose clashing purposes and claims may lead to the formation of equal and just societies and men. The rejection of Aristotle's argument that wealth is not productive is usually on the grounds that he confused economic with biological productivity, and it is seldom remarked that the argument depends on the sense which 'nature' takes on in a practical science in which the nature of a political association orders and relates the activities of men and communities that function within it and defines and delimits the pursuit and accumulation of wealth lest unlimited accumulation take precedence over all other social ends and activities and transform the political community.

Aristotle's exposition of the natural relation of master and slave is the source of the attribution to him of a doctrine no less offensive to modern

sensibilities and repugnant to accepted opinions than his condemnation of the art of money-making, *chrematistike*, the doctrine that some men are by nature slaves. We have since learned that all men are by nature equal, but in making that discovery we have abandoned again Aristotle's distinction between a practical and a theoretic, a political and a psychological, sense of 'nature.' Aristotle chooses his position in the controversy between those who think slavery is natural and those who think it is contrary to nature by expounding the nature of the rule of master over slave rather than the individual nature of the slave or the particular science of the master. For the production and use of property in the household or the economy, instruments of two kinds are needed, inanimate instruments of production or making and animate instruments of action or doing, tools and materials that are used and workers who use instruments in production according to the directions of a master craftsman or *architecton* who relates making to doing. The rule of master over slaves has two aspects, an economic aspect, which leads us to recognize the continued existence of "wage slaves" even after the abolition of slavery, and a social aspect, which leads us to recognize that in actual social situations there are many slaves who lack the power to make fundamental decisions bearing on their own welfare or that of the community of which they are members, and that communities of the unprivileged are formed on the model or as instances of communities of the dispossessed.

The vocabulary of natural relations in ruling and being ruled supplies the distinctions of kinds of suppression in discriminations based on race, nation, religion, age, sex, or any other association or coexistence. The change is from natural generative relations to antagonistic oppositions in which the victims of discrimination struggle to achieve equality of individuals, of groups, and of nations. Paradoxically the achievement of equality of men and of societies requires two steps, first, the integration of the underprivileged group into a group with recognized unity and dignity, and, second, the reintegration of liberated and established groups in a just and equal functioning of more inclusive associations and nations in a world community. In the first step integration and dignity are sometimes sought by 'demonstration,' not in the sense of proving utility or worth, but in the sense of exhibiting and calling attention to injustice and inequality. In the second step desegregation and community are sometimes sought by assigning "quotas" according to the number of the disfavored group without consideration of the abilities and functions required for the successful operation of the larger inclusive group. Indeed demonstrations at conventions, legislatures, administrative bodies, or international organizations may be for the purpose of impeding their operation, and active participation with other groups may be for the purpose of changing the functions, the membership, or the constitution of the inclusive body. The operation of the societies of men depends at once on mutual trust and antagonistic opposition. If one distinguishes the political and the moral, the collective and the individual, senses of 'nature,' some men are by nature slaves in the societies in which they function, but all men are by nature free and equal in their individual integrity and ac-

tivities. On the other hand, if the political and social natures of associations are reduced to and derived from the physical, biological, and psychological natures of individual men, all men are equal, not in their powers and abilities, but in the rights and freedoms, which they realize in societies, to live, to satisfy their needs and wants, to form and take care of families and to participate in other associations, to think, to express their thoughts and feelings, and to share in the economic and cultural, technological and scientific achievements of society.

Aristotle's use of the natural relation of father to son for the formative education of the young for participation in households and in other communities was transformed and inverted to add a cultural antagonism of old and young to the economic antagonism of rich and poor, and the social antagonism of privileged and repressed. *Paideia* means both education and culture, both a process and a product, individual and social. The education of a man in a society is to acquire a comprehension of the knowledge available and an appreciation of the values esteemed in the society. Cultures endure and change, and the culture of an age of innovation or revolution is not found in a body of knowledge and a canon of commitments but in attitudes and abilities which enable men to use what is known to investigate what is unknown and to turn from representations to presentations. Tradition and revolution are natural constituents in any human association, but society sometimes functions as a cohesive whole in which different cultural conceptions and aspirations are adjusted to each other and influence each other, and cultures, revived, reviewed, or newly imagined, sometimes function to reorder society and to reform man. The revolt of the young has been generalized from a revolt against parents to a revolt against established forms of education and all establishments, and from a revolt of children against their father, as it was in the family as Aristotle treated it, to the revolt of the generation gap, as it was in the family made into state in the Republic of Plato, and the revolt of young societies, young states, young ideas, arts, sciences, philosophies, religions, modes of production, and policies of action. If education in its broadened sense of culture is not the transmission of the known and the accustomed, but the formation of arts and abilities to go beyond them, the young are clearly right in their criticism of the establishment, and the accustomed answer to their criticisms that they do not yet have the education requisite to judge what they are taught or to propose changes or improvements is inapposite, since such knowledge does not exist in the minds of either young or old and depends on instituting new cultural institutions and designing new modes of education.

Aristotle's use of the natural relation of male and female for the generation of children and the formation of the family is the source of a doctrine, attributed to him, of the natural inferiority of women. Here, as in the other natural relations, Aristotle distinguishes between the sense of 'nature' proper to theoretic sciences like physics, biology, and psychology and the sense of 'nature' proper to practical sciences like politics and ethics. In biology male and female are members of the same species, and they do not differ in any

of the biological functions investigated except generation. The terms 'male' and 'female' occur only in the *On the Generation of Animals* as the two principles operating in all generation as form and matter in the semen and the catamenia; and in the operation of those principles Aristotle says, in order to emphasize the continuity and the difference of the functions, that the female is an immature or an impotent male. His interpreters, favorable and unfavorable, generalize such statements to make them apply to all functions, biological, psychological, and social, of male and female. In the controversies of his time, Aristotle did not derive the offspring from the sperm of the father, and he did not attribute a kind of sperm to the mother. He was an epigenecist, and held that the embryo arises from a series of successive differentiations from a simple homogeneous mass, anticipating in all its essential features the doctrine of Harvey. The natural relation of male and female in the *Politics* is a relation of rule. It is a "constitutional" or "political" rule in which ruler and ruled both participate in ruling and contribute to the generation of the family, and male differs from female in providing the initiation of the process of formation. In the *Nichomachean Ethics* there is no differentiation of male and female virtues, but in the *Politics* the differentiation of functions provides a basis for distinguishing the virtues of the mother from the virtues of the father. When political natural relations are reduced to individual natural powers and functions, women are constituted a deprived group or species, alienated economically, enslaved socially, and curtailed culturally.

The vocabulary of natural relations which Aristotle formed to provide principles for the actions of man and society in the context of nature and the cosmos has been transformed in meaning and inverted in application to a vocabulary of existential situations in which men form antagonistic groups which seek by actions and statements to liberate men and to form just societies. The vocabulary of universal natural relations which are generative of moral man and civil society has become a vocabulary of particular natural rights to be acquired by constituting societies in which the aspirations of men are realized. Natural relations are univocally distinct; natural rights are ambiguously intermingled and analogically interdependent. Economic rights extend beyond production and consumption for the satisfaction of material needs and felt wants, based on economic relations of ownership and property, to include participation in and enjoyment of whatever has been made or done by man in society that might contribute to a fuller life and even, in turn, to protection of nature and the cosmos for the continuation of life and the advancement of well-being and happiness. Social rights extend beyond freedom of action and cooperation, based on social relations of workers and supervisors of work, to include decision making in general, not only concerning one's own actions and those of others but also concerning beliefs and values, facts to be accepted and knowledge to be credited; and freedom of choice (the combination of feeling and knowledge in desiderative reason or rational desire) is transformed from a freedom to do as one should in accordance with the order of society to a freedom to do as one pleases to achieve individual

satisfaction in a community based on mutual confidence in cooperation with other communities moving to a world-community of free and equal men. Cultural rights extend beyond education in and cultivation of what is known and what is valued, based on cultural relations of old and young, teacher and learner, establishments and processes of formation, to the development and transmission of arts and disciplines designed to use the known as a basis for inquiry into the unknown and what is perceived and experienced as a basis for discerning the previously unperceived and apprehending the previously unfelt and unappreciated, and to spread, diversify, and deepen culture in a plurality of cultures and societies which is the community and culture of mankind. Political rights extend beyond legislative and judicial institutions for the formation and rectification of economies, societies, and states based on political relations of ruler and ruled grounded in erotic loves and concupiscences, to other forms of love and attachment including charity (*agape*) between God and man, and friendship (*philia*) between equals who share without distinction of mine and thine, and to a world-state which will control and prevent conflicting appeals to force and recourse to war, or to a stateless world-society without need for domination and law. The natural *relations* of men provide, in a word, distinct *principles* for the generation and continuation of the family and for the formation and operation of the household on which other associations and communities are based. The natural *rights* of men, on the other hand, are formulated in universal bills of human rights, which overlap as expressions of the single right to live, claimed by existing men and societies of men, and which set forth and differentiate rights as *objectives* to be sought in the development of man and of society and of the relations between them.

Aristotle made ethics and politics parts of a single science of politics, but he carefully distinguished between the scientific treatment of the virtues of man and the institutions of the state, and he did not reduce ethics to politics or politics to ethics. The intricate vocabulary in which he made these distinctions has been used to transform virtues into duties in systems of moral laws, and to direct political actions to moral ends ordered in a hierarchy of priorities established by the principles of moral virtue. In the portion of the science of politics concerned with communities Aristotle distinguished economics from politics by basing the family and the household on natural relations of men, and by treating the more inclusive communities based on them as 'natures' prior to and determinative of the natures of individual men in themselves and in relation to each other. In like fashion, in the portion of political science concerned with the actions of individual men he sought grounds for the examination and organization of man's virtues in the nature and operation of his psychological faculties and by treating the virtues which constitute the characters of men as their 'second natures.'

The faculties of man provide two basic distinctions for the scientific examination of moral action: the distinction between faculties which are and those which are not subject to habituation, since virtues are habits formed by actions such as they in turn produce, and the distinction between the ir-

rational faculties which share in rational principles which form moral virtues and character, and rational faculties which have a rational principle and contribute to the formation of moral virtues. Moral virtues have two interdependent characteristics: they are determined relative to the passions and actions of individual men, and they are determined by universal rational principles, as a prudent man would determine them. The rational faculties are likewise of two kinds. One is calculative and grasps rational principles of 'variable things; the other is scientific and grasps rational principles of invariable things. The calculative faculty is the source of two intellectual virtues: art, the virtue of making, and prudence, the virtue of doing; the scientific faculty is the source of the three intellectual virtues of knowing, the virtues of scientific proof, intuition, and wisdom. Prudence has its applications and exemplifications in the state and in the individual. When it is concerned with the individual man himself, it is called 'prudence,' but as man exercises prudence it may be called economics, legislation, or politics; and politics in turn is divided into deliberative and judicial prudence. These basic distinctions set up univocal differentiations between choice, which is concerned with means, and wish, which is concerned with ends, and between character and rational principles, or desire and reason, as the sources of virtue. They have been merged by the reduction of the invariable to the variable and by the consequent transformation of scientific into calculative virtues. 'Deliberation,' 'choice,' and 'decision' are no longer limited to things which are contingent and within our control, but are used also to know things which are variable but not in our control, and things which are invariant and under our control, and they have taken over the functions of 'demonstration,' 'intuition' and 'proof.' Aristotle distinguished arts, prudence, and science as the intellectual virtues of making, doing, and knowing, but the scientific analysis of those virtues did not determine the scientific methods of the productive, practical, and theoretic sciences. We have adapted the vocabulary of those distinctions to reduce intellectual virtues and scientific methods to moral virtues by introducing man and his decisions into the processes and the nature of art, policy, and science, and by reconstructing them according to the rules and choices of games.

Justice occupies a crucial place in the relations of man and society, in the formation and activation of men by societies, and in the constitution and operation of societies by men. Aristotle emphasizes the univocal character of that distinction by remarking that 'justice' is an equivocal term whose meanings are as far apart as those of 'key' as the collarbone of an animal and the instrument to lock a door. It is a universal virtue since a man is formed in *all* his virtues by living in accordance with the laws of his society. It is a particular virtue since societies are formed and regulated by the agreements and decisions of men concerning equality. 'Justice' is equivocal because there is no relation between the formation of men by societies and the formation of societies by men. There are two forms of the particular justice by which equality is established and maintained in societies: a distributive justice which establishes a proportion between persons and the functions and possessions

assigned to them, and a rectificatory justice which establishes a proportion in transactions, voluntary and involuntary, between man and man, and which focuses on the character of injuries done without consideration of the characters of those who injure or are injured by treating men as equal before the law. This vocabulary of distinctions between justices in man and in society now provides a vocabulary by which to deny those distinctions in the recognition of kinds of existing injustices to be rectified. In a time of newly emerging nations, rectificatory justice takes precedence over and determines distributive justice, and the antagonistic oppositions of underprivileged and dispossessed groups in established nations make use of rectificatory justice to win assent to new forms of distributive justice. As a consequence no difference remains between universal and particular justice, for the virtues of universal justice imposed by the establishment are injustices to be rectified when rectificatory justice establishes a new distributive justice to take the place of established inequalities and injustices.

Metaphysics as a science of being and first principles provides principles and causes operative in sciences of man and of society and applicable to problems of individuals and communities. Metaphysics as an art of statement and action takes its beginnings, its materials, and its motivations, rational and emotional, from the oppositions of particular men and societies. A vocabulary of univocal terms is no less useful in an art of metaphysics than in a science. A science of first principles fixes their meanings and references by the scientific methods of the various sciences. An art of grounding one of two opposed statements or actions or of assimilating them in a more comprehensive statement or more inclusive action opens up new meanings and moves to new references. The relation of man and society, as disclosed by what men say and do, is heuristic in its orientation and concrete in its foundations. Insight into the relations of persons and communities breaks the dogmatism which are the source of antagonistic oppositions and leads to revolutions and reformations in the communications and cooperations of men. It preserves a plurality of cultures by reviving them in statement and in action in an embracing world culture whose unity is the community it establishes for the development and enrichment of a diversity of cultures. It finds a basis for the establishment of justice in existing injustices in men and in societies, and in a rectificatory justice which establishes new distributions of function and property in which men seek equality, not in powers but in rights, and freedom, not in acquisition but in activity, in a just society which seeks common realizations for individuals and communities, not in overcoming oppositions but in assimilating innovations and achievements in art, science, and policy to each other.