

# interpretation

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# interpretation

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# *Aristotle's Art of Acquisition and the Conquest of Nature*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

"There are only two sections in the whole Aristotelian corpus that permit systematic consideration [of economics], one in Book V of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the other in Book I of the *Politics*. In both, the 'economic analysis' is only a subsection within an inquiry into other, more essential subject matters. Insufficient attention to the contexts has been responsible for much misconception of what Aristotle is talking about."<sup>1</sup> This statement, by one of the most thoughtful commentators on Aristotle's economics, provides an indispensable insight for those undertaking an investigation of Aristotle's economics: the reader must appreciate the setting in which Aristotle's discussion of economics intentionally, not accidentally, appears.<sup>2</sup> In the case of the art of acquisition, perhaps *the* economic art, it is found in Aristotle's *Politics*. In the same manner that the reader must be alert to the Greek understanding of politics, the meaning of which fails to survive with the term, he also must be alert to the modern concept of economics, a term which, if unqualified, fails to describe Aristotle's meaning.<sup>3</sup> The art of acquisition is not found within a discussion of economics;

1. M. I. Finley, "Aristotle and Economic Analysis," *Past and Present*, vol. 47, 1970, p. 5.

2. Could this be the reason that J. A. Schumpeter, in his *History of Economic Analysis* (Oxford U.P., 1959) states, "Aristotle's performance is . . . decorous, pedestrian, slightly mediocre and more than slightly pompous common sense"? p. 57; also cited in Karl Polanyi, "Aristotle Discovers the Economy," *Trade and Market in the Early Empire, Economics in History and Theory*, ed. Polanyi (Free Press, 1957), p. 57. Compare this with Henry Jackson's statement, in his *Letters*, that Aristotle's *Politics* exhibits "sublime common sense," cited in Aristotle, *Politics*, ed. and tr. H. Rackham (Harvard U.P., 1967), vi. Failure to consider the context of Aristotle's economic teachings is certainly behind H. Michell's assertion, in *The Economics of Ancient Greece* (Cambridge U.P., 1940), that "they [Greek Philosophers] have nothing to tell us regarding those perplexing [economic] problems that so occupy our minds today," p. 34. Michell would go on to say "it is difficult to acquit the philosopher of a conscious unwillingness to condescend to such vulgar and mundane matters as stood in the way of the development of economic theory," [emphasis added], p. 33. In the same vein note Newman, in *The Politics of Aristotle* (Arno Press, 1973), who laments the fact that "[p]olitical economy almost originated with him [Aristotle], and the clearness of his economical vision in some directions is balanced by blindness in others," p. 138. A rare exception to this line of thinking is Karl Polanyi: "none has ever penetrated deeper into the material organization of man's life. In effect, he [Aristotle] posed, in all its breadth, the question of the place occupied by the economy in society," in "Aristotle Discovers the Economy," p. 66.

3. Note: "There is no single English word that will translate *polis* [p]olitics, the abstract general characterization derived from the Greek survives, but *polis*, the concrete subject, does not," Harry Jaffa, "Aristotle," *History of Political Philosophy*, eds. Strauss and Cropsey (Rand McNally, 1963), pp. 65ff. Also see Finley: "'the economy' . . . cannot be translated into Greek . . . the

in fact, evidence seems to confirm that Aristotle wrote no work by that name.<sup>4</sup> And, as we shall see, it would be perfectly fitting, evidence aside, if this were true.

Aristotle's consideration of "economics" is tied to his understanding of nature. For Aristotle, man's simple needs are met by nature through her provisions. This recognition has given rise to the opinion that Aristotle views nature as simply a benevolent provider or a kind mother who dutifully nurtures those whom she brings into the world. Frequently this opinion contrasts Aristotle with a passage from Bacon or Hobbes, who portray nature as mean, secretive and an object of conquest. This paper will argue that those who make such an assessment are not totally mistaken. Yet the dissimilarities between Aristotle and Bacon or Aristotle and Hobbes must be in light of the following problem which is common to the three: the natural circumstances into which man is born are inadequate for man. The failure to give sufficient weight to this problem in Aristotle's treatment of the "art of acquisition" has kept commentators from distinguishing between what Aristotle appears to say and what he actually says. And it causes them to ignore, to comment superficially upon, or to remain perplexed about those passages which support an interpretation opposed to their own.

Initially we shall see that according to Aristotle nature's provisions require sacrifices from man. If nature is a mother, she does not choose to relieve her children from labor and pain. Secondly, given this fact, man is called upon to conquer other children of nature, that is, plants, animals and even other men, in order to live. The conquest of nature, if a modern construct, is not a modern creation. According to Aristotle, the conquering of nature is required not only for man to live but for man to live well. The nature of man requires that he conquer nature's original conditions as well as nature's provisions. Man must move away from his beginnings which reflect his retarded dependency on maternal nature to conditions in which his labor is diminished while his moral faculties are rendered active. Yet the fact that man's moral nature is occasioned by the circumstances in which he seeks the relief of his own estate presents the major problem. Man's desire to relieve his estate has its root and support in the powerful economic desires associated with his youth. It seems the very circumstances which give birth to that morality seem to prevent its dominance.

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ancients did not have the concept [of economy] . . . "Aristotle and Economic Analysis," p. 22.

4. Finley twice refers to the *Oeconomica* as a "pseudo-Aristotelian" work: "Aristotle and Economic Analysis," p. 5, n. 8; M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (U. of California Press, 1973), p. 122; Barker emphatically states, "the *Oeconomica* is not an Aristotelian treatise," *The Politics of Aristotle*, ed. and tr. Ernest Barker (Oxford U.P., 1962), p. 29; and Ross asserts: "Of the *Oeconomica*, the first book is a treatise based on the first book of the *Politics* and on Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, and probably written by Theophrastus or by some other Peripatetic of the first or second generation . . . [t]he second book is a worthless compilation of stories . . . [t]he third book . . . is not by Aristotle," from W. D. Ross, *Aristotle* (Methuen Publ., 1923), pp. 15-16.

What is to be done? A portrait of nature cannot simply describe man's beginnings, for on that account it fails to be descriptive of nature's highest manifestation, man. If nature is to be understood in light of human or moral nature, then it can no longer be simple. Man's morality is evidence of his complexity and hence evidence of nature's complexity. His moral needs are not consistent with but rather are in conflict with his bodily needs. Consequently, moral nature cannot predominate unless nature, as a creator, possesses moral intention even prior to morality. Aristotle recreates man's pre-civil conditions with this in mind. Morality must be shown to have natural roots which can be traced to man's beginnings. It must be invested with strength to overcome the power of bodily desires. This is why Aristotle ultimately portrays nature as a creator who is assisted rather than conquered by her creation, man. To do less is to free man from the pain of his estate only to enslave him to the desires of that estate.

## II. SETTING

Aristotle's discussion of the art of acquisition is found in his *Politics* in roughly the middle of Book I.<sup>5</sup> There is nothing much surprising in this observation since the acquisition of property is necessary in meeting man's bodily needs, and the significance of these needs must be acknowledged when speaking of political life. Yet, to a large extent, Book I is concerned with the household, more specifically with the art of household management (*οἰκονομία*).<sup>6</sup> What is surprising and somewhat puzzling is Aristotle's decision to present the art of acquisition as a part of the household, the association which occasions no exchange.<sup>7</sup> Equally puzzling is his procedure from the opening through the middle of Book I. For although placing his consideration of "economics" within the first book, he does not open by speaking of the household, of man's bodily needs, or of the art of acquisition. These concerns, perhaps owing to the natural strength of the desires which they reflect, are not in need of his immediate assistance. Rather Aristotle's attention is turned to another manifestation of nature, namely human nature, and the problematical conditions associated with its appearance.

Aristotle opens by speaking of the polis, that comprehensive association without which the household cannot be properly understood. The beginning of

5. See Finley: "Neither speculation about the origins of trade nor doubts about market ethics led to the elevation of 'the economy' . . . to independent status as a subject of discussion or study . . ." from "Aristotle and Economic Analysis," p. 22.

6. Note Barker's misleading title for Book I: "The Theory of the Household." Aristotle, in Book I, considers the complexity of the polis of which the household is a *constituent*, if distinctive, part. Barker, *Politics*, p. 1.

7. This fact is disregarded by H. W. C. Davis who speaks of natural and unnatural "finance." *Aristotle's Politics*, tr. Benjamin Jowett, Introduction and Analysis by H. W. C. Davis (Oxford U.P., 1959), p. 8.

the *Politics* does not reflect man's chronological beginnings; it does not reflect the economic side of man's existence. Paradoxical as it might sound, Aristotle begins with the ends of man. His art, in the manner of art, imitates nature, for he prefaces his remarks on the household by introducing the reader to the polis and to goodness. Completion is the starting point for growth, at least noncorporeal growth, and hence politics and morality are brought to light before reclaiming man's beginnings.

His mention of the polis is not followed immediately by the household. He is led from the political association to the political art, for he turns to the statesman, that man responsible for ruling the political association. In this context Aristotle mentions for the first time household management. The manager of the household, that man responsible for ruling the initial association, is introduced in order to distinguish him from the statesman. Aristotle's point, which is not without importance economically, is that these are very different kinds of rule. For purposes of our investigation, this entails at least a twofold effect. First, such a distinction prevents the polis from absorbing the household; the bodily desires may not be exorcised from the *Politics*. And yet, secondly, man's political life cannot take its bearing from those needs which precede it—the good life must be understood as something other than an extension of mere life. Aristotle has chosen to confront the powerful origins of man's economic life by opening with the polis in a book which explores the household and its parts. In what sense does this rob man's economic life of its power?

This question leads into Aristotle's reopening of his work with the following phrase: "if . . . we begin at the beginning and consider things in the process of their growth . . ." <sup>8</sup> Aristotle sets forth the reason why man's beginnings follow his completion in order of presentation: man's beginnings are identified with growth. Only the polis and the soul are identified with rest. Man's pre-political beginnings commence not with male and female but with their union, which itself results from "natural impulse." <sup>9</sup> Man's beginning arises with needs. His movement is a response to the body. Natural desire removes man from his beginnings while giving rise to the creation of a household. Eventually a number of households gives rise to a village. The creation of the village is traced to

8. Barker, *Politics*, 1252<sup>a</sup>28.

9. Barker, *Politics*, 1252<sup>a</sup>33; in this regard also note Marx: "Now it is certainly easy to say to the single individual what Aristotle has already said. You have been begotten by your father and your mother; therefore in you the mating of two human beings—a species-act of human beings—has produced the human being. You see, therefore, that even physically, man owes his existence to man. Therefore you must not only keep sight of the *one* aspect—the *infinite* progression which leads you further to enquire: 'Who begot the father? Who his grandfather?', etc. You must also hold on to the *circular movement* sensuously perceptible in that progression, by which *man* repeats himself in procreation, thus always remaining the subject." Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *The German Ideology, The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Tucker (Norton, 1972), p. 78. In what sense is man's begetting man or his "circular movement" necessary if man is to repeat himself as other than a sensuous "subject"?

the same source as the household—man's procreative desires. But, following the village, simple nature ceases to create. Man's growth culminates with a movement from prepolitical to political, from village to polis. Yet the polis results from deliberation not procreation. Nature's unassisted creativity is at an end.

The polis can no longer be described or understood in terms of prior growth. Those economic motives which created the household and village in attempting to sustain life cannot comprehend that association which seeks a qualitatively superior, that is, supra-economic, life for its citizens. Consequently, Aristotle only momentarily reclaims man's prepolitical life and the desires which are at its root. With the end becoming a beginning, man is politicized. The household and man's economic life remain, but with this difference: Man no longer simply meets his bodily needs but now must meet them in a moral way. With the advent of the polis, man's earlier life as well as his subsequent life is transformed. Prepolitical life becomes subpolitical life; man's life prior to the polis is understood in light of his completion following the polis. As a result initial nature and the life which she produces are discredited. Prepolitical life was defective; strictly speaking it was not the life of man. For this reason prepolitical nature is no longer man's nature. It, unlike moral nature, cannot comprehend or encompass its creation. All that appears to remain, prior to the polis, is a time when economic life is devoid of humanity. Yet if prepolitical man is all but forgotten, the same cannot be said of his initial economic activities. Man's labor, like nature's provisions, remains from beginning to end. Although also in need of reassessment, it may be permanently reclaimed, for in the absence of deliberation there is more than the presence of procreation. As we shall see, Aristotle finds in the economic subjugation of life, the subjugation of economic life or the presence of humanity prior to its emergence.

Consideration of the household as a part gives way to the consideration of the parts of the household. Aristotle initially sets forth three actual parts, each of which has constituent parts: master—slave, husband—wife, parent—child. The first, dealing with subjugation, is followed by two concerned with procreation. Yet Aristotle tells the reader that each relationship has a naturally ruling and ruled part—even the procreative relationships are informed by subjugation. Seemingly the only unsubjected part, one which Aristotle separates from the other three, is the fourth part of the household, the art of acquisition. Its concern is not with subjugation but with acquisition or accumulation. The term itself is ambiguous, and Aristotle, as we shall see, merely compounds the ambiguity by using the term to denote two contrary forms of gain. But from the opening Aristotle speaks of the fourth part as an art, an art which has no constituent parts. Hence there is nothing said of internal articulation. At this point it is apparently free of nature. The knowledge that the art of acquisition is potentially a part of the household does little to erase the uncer-

tainty with which it is portrayed. The reader has become aware that it may appear to be something other than it is; the part may assume the dimensions of the whole.

Following his enumeration of the parts or potential parts of the household, Aristotle moves to a discussion of the master–slave relationship. The reader’s expectation is that discussion of the husband–wife, parent–child relationships will immediately follow. But Aristotle’s discussion of the slave leads to acquisition; and hence the art of acquisition, an unorthodox and certainly dubious part of the household, replaces characteristic parts in order of examination. Perhaps this is because the master–slave relationship, which initially was distinguished from the art of acquisition, will ultimately become an example of that art. This is not simply for the reason that the slave may be acquired. Rather, as the part of the household most clearly reflecting subjugation, it anticipates the civilization of the art of acquisition. The slave is an object of acquisition which should and must be subdued in order to be acquired. Slavery reveals the art’s natural character. For following the master–slave relationship the art of acquisition will come to focus on the natural fitness of its objects—objects which nature has fitted for conquest.

Aristotle’s procedure, which at first glance appears so misdirected, has been made to mirror the moral misdirection of man. He begins by treating the master–slave relationship, that union concerned with self-preservation. But it is not followed by the husband–wife relationship, whose purpose is procreation. Rather by moving to the art of acquisition, Aristotle extends the consideration of self-preservation. The expectation of considering relationships extending the love of one’s own are aborted in the face of bodily desires which ignobly limit that love while seeking their own expansion. The powerful tendency of preservation to give birth to comforts is anticipated long before Locke. In any case, the art of acquisition appears to be a deflection from Aristotle’s stated purpose. This deflection is tantamount to an admission by Aristotle of the natural strength of bodily desires which he will condemn as immoral. Certainly his procedure reminds us of the creative and deflective power resulting from man’s economic passions: “Even those who do aim at [the good life] seek the means of obtaining physical enjoyments and . . . they are thus led to occupy themselves wholly in the making of money.”<sup>10</sup>

### III. BENEVOLENT NATURE

Now within this setting, one characterized by man’s immoral desire for unlimited acquisition and the art by which that is effected, Aristotle sets forth nature’s benevolent order:

10. Barker, *Politics*, 1258<sup>a</sup>3–4.

Property of this order is evidently given by nature to all living beings, from the instant of their first birth to the days when their growth is finished. There are animals which, when their offspring is born, bring forth along with it food enough to support it until it can provide for itself: this is the case with insects which reproduce themselves by grubs, and with animals which do so by eggs. Animals which are viviparous have food for their offspring in themselves, for a certain time, of the nature of what is called milk.

It is equally evident that we must believe that similar provision is also made for adults. Plants exist to give subsistence to animals, and animals to give it to men. Animals, when they are domesticated, serve for use as well as for food; wild animals, too, in most cases if not in all serve to furnish man not only with food, but also with other comforts, such as the provision of clothing and similar aids to life. Accordingly, as nature makes nothing purposeless or in vain, all animals must have been made by nature for the sake of men.<sup>11</sup>

While asserting that this passage is “naive” a commentator such as Ernest Barker simply interprets it to mean that the earth “yields her abundance readily.”<sup>12</sup> Barker’s interpretation may stem from his unproblematic translation of the final sentence. Literally the passage should read: “Accordingly, *if* nature makes nothing *incomplete* or in vain”<sup>13</sup> But Barker is not alone. H. Michell speaks of Aristotle’s view of the “kindly fruits of the earth.”<sup>14</sup> Apparently, there is much doubt regarding the validity of Aristotle’s teaching but little doubt regarding its meaning. This in itself is somewhat surprising since Aristotle’s discussion of nature, even within the First Book, is not without obvious difficulties.

Nowhere are these difficulties better evidenced than in his discussion of natural and unnatural slavery.<sup>15</sup> And nowhere can we better see the inadequacy of Aristotle’s depiction of nature as it relates specifically to the art of acquisition and generally to his “economics.” Prior to his discussion of the art of acquisition proper, Aristotle asserts that men naturally differ from each other as the body differs from the soul. Those who can only obey reason in others are appropriately slaves while those possessing a deliberative faculty are fit to be masters. Nature has articulated a severe distinction among men, yet what is even more startling than nature’s intention is its execution. Aristotle admits that nature errs; the bodies of slaves and freemen often display no physical differences.<sup>16</sup> Nature’s weakness in this regard is not a lone exception. The reader

11. Barker, *Politics*, 1256<sup>b</sup>7–25.

12. Ernest Barker, *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle* (Russell and Russell, 1959), p. 375.

13. Emphasis added. Barker’s failure to translate literally the final sentence of this passage was pointed out to me by Prof. Richard Zinman who also made many helpful comments regarding the entire text.

14. Michell, *The Economics of Ancient Greece*, p. 29.

15. This, if the best, is not the only example. For instance, Aristotle’s statement that women have been mistaken for slaves thinly veils the possibility that nature has not been sufficiently distinct regarding the female of the species, Barker, *Politics*, 1252<sup>b</sup>5–6; 1260<sup>a</sup>12–14. And nature appears indecisive in creating animals with a view to their own preservation while concurrently intending them for the sake of man: Barker, *Politics*, 1254<sup>b</sup>10–17; 1256<sup>b</sup>20–25.

16. Barker, *Politics*, 1254<sup>b</sup>32–35.

also discovers that the slave can give birth to the freeman, and conversely the freeman can produce a slave.<sup>17</sup> Nature's distinction within a species is not as evident as between species. Aristotle dramatizes the desirable clarity of distinctions within the species by stating: "If nature's intention were realized—if men differed from one another in bodily form as much as the statues of gods—it is obvious that we should all agree that the inferior class ought to be the slaves of the superior."<sup>18</sup> Men's differences become apparent not with reference to the gods but only with reference to the bodies of gods. Man attributes his nature to the gods in order to make obvious distinctions among men. It appears easier to create divine corporealities than to recreate incorporeal humanity. Man's god-like representations of man do not make for unmistakable distinctions as do his representations of the gods. Given this fact, Aristotle refers to the slave, in the absence of that designation, as a man.<sup>19</sup>

Nature's lack of clarity cannot be divorced from her deficient bounty as evidenced by the possibility, indeed inevitability, of unnatural slavery. Such slavery entails the inversion of the relationship between master and slave: one possessing a deliberative faculty is subjugated by another. Now Aristotle does not waver in his condemnation of such a relationship as unjust. But, following the First Book, the injustice of slavery seems not to be the only issue. In criticizing Sparta in the Second Book, Aristotle speaks of the Helots' inclination to rebel but makes no mention of their unnatural subjugation.<sup>20</sup> Doubt regarding nature's efficacy in distinguishing her slaves is not simply derived from Aristotle's silence. In the Seventh Book, in setting forth conditions for the well-ordered regime he speaks of the desirability of slaves. But apparently the slaves would be drawn from various tribes and probably would speak different languages.<sup>21</sup> He goes on to promise a discussion of emancipation as a reward for such slaves. Needless to say neither tribes nor emancipation has a place in his treatment of natural slavery. The obvious inconsistency does not have an obvious answer. Surely there might be difficulty in strictly subjugating, on the basis of the soul, those with whom one lives without occasioning civil war. Yet maybe the fault lies with nature. Does nature's niggardliness demand slaves, even those who are unnatural slaves? In pursuing an answer we must return to Aristotle's portrait of nature as a provider.

The preceding quotation (at the beginning of this section), which portrays nature as benevolent, contains at least two parts. In both parts nature is neither simply hostile nor indifferent. Rather nature is made to imitate the household: care, parental care, is its formal characteristic. As nature's children we are the

17. Barker, *Politics*, 1255<sup>b</sup>1–5; also difficulties surround the slave's deliberative faculty, his friendship with his master and the extent to which he possesses virtue.

18. Barker, *Politics*, 1254<sup>b</sup>33–39.

19. Barker, *Politics*, 1254<sup>b</sup>16.

20. Barker, *Politics*, 1269<sup>b</sup>1–20.

21. Barker, *Politics*, 1330<sup>a</sup>26–34.

recipients of a legacy which, given the dual aspect of parentage, is uneasy. Initially nature appears as a mother capable of birth and nurture.<sup>22</sup> Far from mastering nature we are the grateful children of her generosity. Only in another work, in a different context, does Aristotle admit that we are enslaved.<sup>23</sup> Maternal nature has not abandoned us to our needs. She has created man with needs only to provide the means and objects by which they can be satisfied. Here nature, unassisted nature, speaks by way of care resulting from procreation and the associated biological provisions. She has secured the infant's life through the adult who is portrayed as providing for her young. Nothing is said of parents who abandon their natural young or of children who may be orphaned due to natural accidents. As infants we are simply attached to our procreator. This attachment gives way to another which is not maternal, for mother nature generates a dependency that is not limited to the child. As Aristotle admits, "similar provision is made for adults."<sup>24</sup>

If nature has acted through the adult in her care for the child, then who or what has she acted through in her care for the adult? Aristotle moves from the dependency of the child to the dependency of the adult with considerable equivocation, using such phrases as "it is equally evident that we must believe," or "so that clearly we must suppose . . ." <sup>25</sup> Nature's concern for the child appears as a necessary, if not completely accurate, prelude to her concern for man. The child is at best an uncertain father of man for man is not limited to the desires associated with youth. Aristotle's comparison reveals a striking contrast. Nature does not simply provide nourishment for life: "[p]lants exist to give subsistence to animals, and animals to give it to men." While nature's hierarchy powerfully reinforces her concern for man, it also discloses her questionable concern for anything less than man. Nature's care appears uneven; she is not simply kind. Even her concern for man does not extend to removing his dependency. The lower provisions of nature are necessarily for the purpose of man's subsistence.

Man's youth is said to parallel that of a child; nature has given each provisions. Yet the manner in which man, the adult, meets these needs is altered. Now his needs are satisfied neither by nor through his own species but from inferior species. As a result mother nature becomes dramatically less prominent.

22. Note passage from "pseudo-Aristotelian" *Oeconomicus*: "[Agriculture] is also one of the activities according to nature in other respects, because by nature all things receive their nourishment from their mother, and so men receive theirs from the earth," quoted in Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, p. 122.

23. Note Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: "in many ways human nature is enslaved . . ." Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (Harvard U.P., 1961), 982<sup>b</sup>29–32. Still Aristotle does not say that man is simply enslaved. The gates of freedom appear to remain open for the very few. For a more comprehensive examination of this point see Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Rand McNally, 1964), pp. 41–44.

24. Barker, *Politics*, 1256<sup>b</sup>12–18.

25. Barker, *Politics*, 1256<sup>b</sup>12–15.

She remains a provider, yet her provisions, if they are provided for, are not provided to man. Consequently, man is interposed between provision and existence. He is moved. He must labor. This movement, while not redounding to nature's kindness, nonetheless appears natural. His movement appears not to be a response against nature's limited care but an act done at her request. Nature speaks through man's labor securing what has not been secured for him. For this reason Aristotle does not identify unassisted nature with nature simply. Nature issues in and sanctions man's actions. As a result, man is tied to nature and appears totally dependent.

Yet maternal nature's limited care presents an opening. In her absence, man, embodying the paternal dimension of his parentage, must subdue or take in his own behalf.<sup>26</sup> Apparently nature, while remaining a maternal provider, has

26. Note the parental imagery in the works of Bacon. In the *Novum Organon* God is depicted as the "Father of Lights." In the same work Bacon speaks of the mother, or more exactly the "great mother of the sciences," which is natural philosophy. Father and Mother, divinity and art, give birth to the "spirit of man" depicted by Bacon "as the lamp of God, wherewith he searcheth the inwardness of all secrets." Francis Bacon, *Bacon's Works*, collected and ed. James Spedding, Robert Ellis, and Douglas Heath, Vol. III (Longman, 1857), p. 265. Man is the product of God's art who must "recover that right over nature which belongs to it by divine bequest." Francis Bacon, *The Complete Essays of Francis Bacon* (Washington Square Press, 1963), p. 263. Bacon goes so far as to say that "natural philosophy is after the word of God at once the surest medicine against superstition, and the most approved nourishment for faith . . ." Bacon, *Essays*, p. 233. This "great mother" possesses the "power" to make manifest God's "will." Yet Bacon also admits that if "power" and "will" should form an "indissoluble bond," they traditionally have been disunited. The reason for their separation is that the "great mother of the sciences has with strange indignity been degraded to the office of a servant . . ." Bacon, *Essays*, p. 222. In this capacity she could not nurture; she had not received her due.

Bacon makes no mention of similar injustice accorded to our "Father" except insofar as the depreciation of natural philosophy prevented the bringing of light. Yet there are passages which suggest that God, the father, may have received that which justly was due our "true mother." For instance, he states that theology has deflected the "wits and learning of men" from natural philosophy (Bacon, *Essays*, p. 221). Bacon attempts to explain away any conflict by maintaining that the subjugation of natural philosophy results from "superstition" and "religion, the thing which has most power over men's minds, [and] has by the simpleness and incautious zeal of certain persons been drawn to take part against her" (Bacon, *Essays*, p. 233). Irrational beliefs and "blind" zeal, not God, the Father, cast a shadow over natural philosophy. Yet Bacon's response does not address a number of significant questions: Is God only a Father of Light? Is there a rational basis for superstition or darkness? In shedding her servility can the great mother of natural philosophy ascend to a station of greatness equal, if not superior, to that accorded the Father of Lights? The answer to some of these questions may lie in Bacon's recreation of the comment that "man is a god to man but from the arts" (Bacon, *Essays*, p. 262). The great mother may "let the human race recover that right over nature which belongs to it by divine bequest" but that bequest may result in an eclipse of divinity. Indeed Bacon's call for honoring our "great mother" exposes the dependency of God even as he sanctions those activities which constitute natural philosophy. Using the parental imagery we find that the father needs the mother, for she can directly grant what the father can at best only indirectly bestow—unencumbered she can relieve man's estate. Not only mother nature but perhaps God the father is an encumbering invention. Both inventions, in varying ways, engender restraint as the moral solution to the problematic character of man's birth. A morality based upon moderation or abstinence is an impediment to man's rebirth, a rebirth which should enshrine light and dispense with darkness. Far from moral or manly, such darkness is, in Bacon's words, "merely childish and effeminate" (Bacon, *Essays*, p. 254).

articulated maleness as coeval with humanity but never to her own eclipse.<sup>27</sup> Man remains dependent but, given Aristotle's presentation of nature's hierarchy, man must stir, and these stirrings assume a posture toward dependency; they reveal a kind of independence.<sup>28</sup> He subdues nature's provisions by his own labor. While Aristotle would never allow man's efforts to be pitted against nature's scarcity or nature's impotency, he cannot hide the fact of man's potency. Man does not remain a child. He matures and can rival the parent from which he sprang. With this in mind Aristotle first removes man from nature's dominating care by portraying his potency as a "natural art."

Initially the characterization of man's early economic activity as a natural art seems unproblematic. The arts are endemic to man. They involve a kind of knowledge which is put to work so that man may live. And it might be expected that man's first labors, which satisfy needs by provisions expressly intended for that purpose, would be the most natural of all the arts. Yet upon closer examination the status of man's prepolitical activity as an art and especially its designation as a natural art are not without difficulty. One such difficulty stems from the fact that the art of acquisition is immediately bound to nature. The ordinary arts have no such close affinity. Aristotle speaks of natural slaves but never of natural artisans. Moreover he speaks of natural slaves only in the context of the natural art of acquisition. The arts of the city exist not directly from nature but as a result of law. Second, the designation of such an art as natural defies our understanding of the ordinary arts. The knowledge accompanying the arts is received knowledge, received from those who possess the wisdom necessary for the practice of the art. But, initially, where is the source of wisdom? In the case of the art of acquisition does nature impart wisdom to the artisans? Is nature the artisan of artisans? Aristotle has told us that nature produces, yet this productivity results from gender—she is not an artisan in the first instance. Still her provisions appear to result from need. Is this nature's message? Does nature teach man through need? We must remember that man's initial needs are not limited to subsistence. Surely anyone who describes nature as maternal could never adopt this position.

Portraying nature as an artisan would have the consequence of portraying man as her product. Such characterizations would redound to the detriment of each. As a producer nature would lose its identification with maternal benevolence and care. It would appear as a provider but of meager and unruly provisions. Unable to satisfy his needs without danger and toil, indicting rather

27. In this regard see Bacon's accounts of the myth of Atalanta. According to Bacon, Atalanta engaged in a footrace with Hippomenes. Atalanta, by far the faster of the two, left the course on a number of occasions in order to pursue golden apples rolled across her path by her opponent who eventually won the race. In Bacon's recreation of the myth Atalanta represents art and Hippomenes nature. Art is charmed by nature and thus distracted from her goal. As a result Bacon concludes, "art remains subject to nature, as the wife is subject to the husband." Charles Lemmi, *The Classical Deities in Bacon* (Johns Hopkins U.P., 1933), pp. 104–5.

28. See Joseph Cropsey's excellent essay, "Political Life and a Natural Order," *Journal of Politics*, Feb., 1961, p. 52.

than indebted to his maker, man must alter his circumstances by production. Alienation ends in imitation—production forms the horizon of man's life. Given this fact, nature is more like a mother whose creation is man; she labors on his behalf. In response he gratefully practices the natural art of acquisition. The reader is reminded of Aristotle's opening description of the unnatural art of acquisition, which is distinguished from the natural art by virtue of being "a certain sort of experience or skill."<sup>29</sup> Aristotle does not simply distinguish the two arts on this basis, but neither experience nor skill is mentioned in his discussion of its natural counterpart. In presenting the natural art of acquisition Aristotle omits any mention of the abilities required for the performance of the art. He does not discuss the quality of the artisan's product or its reflection of the artisan's expertise since nature does not demand that the artisan produce—only that he subdue. In the strict sense, "the natural form . . . of the art of acquisition is always, and in all cases, acquisition from fruits and animals."<sup>30</sup> Man, like nature, cannot be depicted as a producer. He only appropriates from nature. Yet nature may have appropriated the power of art from man. Irrespective of Aristotle's presentation, nature expertly creates products which are perfectly limited to man's needs.

The power of man's art in limiting and shaping that of nature's has been lost on those who take their bearings from nature's simple products and man's bucolic beginnings. They view Aristotle's praise of nature's provisions, admittedly inconsistent with other parts of the *Politics*, as an endorsement of precivil life. Hence Ernest Barker, while excusing Aristotle's natural teleology since "it was only natural that early thought should indulge in such naivete," explains, "it remains true that the ideal economic society of Aristotle comes perilously near the 'golden age'—when wild in the woods the noble savage ran."<sup>31</sup> Barker's quotation is helpful because it misses the mark on so many accounts. First, Aristotle did not, nor would he, speak of an "ideal economic society." Society is never mentioned, perhaps because of its inseparability from the primacy of economic life. And surely the household, that association where economic life

29. Barker, *Politics*, 1257<sup>a</sup>5–10.

30. Barker, *Politics*, 1258<sup>a</sup>38–40.

31. Barker, *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, pp. 376–77. Similar statements in Barker abound: "the fundamental characteristic of his theory of production, if it may be so called, is a reactionary archaism, which abolishes all the economic machinery of civilization in favor of the self-supporting farm and a modicum of barter," (*Politics*, p. 375); "His ideal is a state of natural simplicity in which men raise their crops and breed their cattle, bartering one with another when necessity impels and using money only in foreign exchanges," (*Politics*, p. 389); "he [Aristotle] seems to commit the error of identifying nature altogether with the primitive and undeveloped rudiments, oblivious of his general teaching, that the supremely natural is the absolutely complete and developed end. In this way, he comes to be as reactionary in economics as was Plato in his theory of the family, and to make his motto, like Plato, 'back to the simple and primitive' It seems curious that he should have adopted a tone so much unlike that of the rest of the *Politics* in discussing economics," (*Politics*, p. 376). Even Newman echoes Barker in this regard: "Aristotle's aim is, in the first place, to lead the Science of Supply to nature. He had not, however, fully worked out his conception of nature, or freed it from inconsistency and obscurity," (*The Politics of Aristotle*, p. 134).

is primary, would never be described as "ideal." To view activities associated with man's beginnings as "ideal" transforms Aristotle's attempts to limit man's desire for products other than nature's into an attempt to limit man's desire to the products of nature. Second, to speak, as Barker does, of man's beginnings as "golden," if literally interpreted, is directly contrary to nature, and, if figuratively understood, is simply in error. This error is caused by his failure to recognize that Aristotle never characterizes man's beginnings as an "age" or a "state." Aristotle's portrait is intended to expose man's relationship to nature, not to expose natural man. Man's beginnings are lost in antiquity because no "noble savage" existed. Only in another context does Aristotle describe barbarians and then not in terms of man chronologically understood but as a people who are subhuman.

When considering Aristotle's emphasis on the objects of art along with Barker's comments on savagery, it becomes apparent that the questionable status of artisan is not reserved for nature alone. In speaking of the natural art of acquisition the presence of artisans need not require the presence of man. Remembering Aristotle's statement that a man without a polis is either a beast or a god presents the difficulty. The bodily needs do not await humanity, and hence we find a subhuman practitioner of this natural art. Now even in the polis the artisan was not considered a complete man. Yet, within civil life, he could be found in the company of complete men. This need not be true of those who engage in natural acquisition. They make their appearance prior to the polis, prior to the availability of moral life. In part, it is for this reason that Aristotle speaks of the natural art of acquisition, not the natural artisan of acquisition; it is for this reason that he deemphasizes the practitioner of the natural art, his skill and expertise. Such skill directs us away from art to the artisan's knowledge. It eventually moves us to man's knowledge and the defective moral circumstances in which the natural art of acquisition arises. Aristotle presents nature's wisdom in lieu of that of the artisan. The depreciation of the artisan is in keeping with the fact that he is not the beneficiary of the natural art of acquisition. Nature's dramatic articulation, her provisions, are not intended to sustain life. Her products, like those subsequently generated by the artisans of the city, produce a way of life which cannot be understood economically. For evidence that this is the case, we need only turn to the activities which comprise the natural art of acquisition.

#### IV. THE NATURAL ART OF ACQUISITION

Aristotle moves to a discussion of the kinds of acquisition and the ways of life from which they follow. He selects the word *chrematistic* to convey his meaning of the natural art of acquisition. According to Newman, among others, the word, while inexact, "often mean[s] money and [is] always suggestive of

it.”<sup>32</sup> The ordinary art of acquisition, that art commonly thought to be natural, reflected the opinion that nature was mean, that her limited provisions were the cause of man’s impoverishment, and that man must conquer nature in order to live well. Aristotle changes all this by speaking of the art of acquisition in a setting prior to the emergence of money. His discussion of the natural art of acquisition as *chrematistics* represents his transformation of a term traditionally associated with the unlimited pursuit of wealth into a term which describes the limited pursuit of provisions for the satisfaction of man’s needs. This transformation is accompanied by another—nature is no longer condemned for her meanness but commended for her wisdom—nature’s imposed moderation is not to be overcome but heeded. Amid the conditions of man’s birth is found the truth of moral life: acquisition is not without pause or limit. As a result, the ordinary meaning and source of *chrematistic*, namely money-making and the unlimited economic desires from which it springs, is rendered unnatural.<sup>33</sup> Unnatural acquisition begins as man moves away from nature’s limited bounty. This is why Aristotle does not depict man’s original circumstances as either an ill condition or the natural objects which meet his needs as perishable provisions. Man is not portrayed as departing from nature in order to acquire. On the contrary, Aristotle goes so far as to speak of nature’s “comforts” in making man’s beginnings receptive to and descriptive of his acquisitive pursuits.<sup>34</sup>

Aristotle initially considers the objects of acquisition by observing that different provisions of nature cause different ways of life in both animals and man. In the case of animals, their lives are ruled by the nature of the food which sustains them. Depending on their provisions they may be either nomadic or solitary. There is apparently no question that their manner of life is directly attributable to the satisfaction of initial needs. This is true not only among classes of animals—carnivorous, herbivorous, omnivorous—but even among species within a class. In the animal world nature has been exact. Diversity, whether among classes or species, is solely attributed to economic life. This point assumes major importance, for Aristotle immediately moves to an elaboration of the natural acquisitive arts. This transition is effected by an ambiguous statement, which, while appearing to unite the lives of men with those of animals, in fact disassociates them: “What is true of animals is also true of men. Their ways of life differ considerably.”<sup>35</sup>

32. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, p. 187. Also, “*chremata* is a term which, though it primarily means things, tends to imply the notion of money,” Barker, *Politics*, p. 27; “*Chrematistike* was deliberately employed by Aristotle in the literal sense of providing for the necessities of life, instead of its usual meaning of ‘money-making,’” Polanyi, “Aristotle Discovers the Economy,” p. 92.

33. This is missed by Barker who states, “It is indeed somewhat curious that Aristotle, who criticized Plato for forgetting that an association must be composed of dissimilar members, practically makes his own economic association one of similar members, all engaged in the same pursuits.” (Barker, *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*.)

34. Barker, *Politics*, 1256<sup>b</sup>18–22.

35. Barker, *Politics*, 1256<sup>a</sup>28–32.

One might expect that the considerable differences in men are owing to the same cause which produced such differences in the animal world. Yet, at this point, Aristotle does not mention whether the distinctions in men's lives result simply from subsistence or whether the natural "truth" common to men and animals alike is simply contained in the appearance of "differences" in their ways of life. Instead, what follows is a listing of man's ways of life. With this listing it becomes apparent that, despite Aristotle's earlier identification of animals and man, man differs sharply from other living beings. This is evidenced by this inclusion of both the pastoral art of the nomads and piracy among the natural arts. He begins his discussion of the nomads tentatively and with qualification. There are no such qualifications in his listing of piracy. In fact, piracy holds a central position among the arts.<sup>36</sup> Given the fact that the pirate steals from other men, it becomes clear that man's actions cannot exactly be explained by virtue of providential nature. And clearly Aristotle's natural art of acquisition is an elusive art. For he appears to designate as central those activities which do not acquire nature's provisions, and he fails to designate those that do.

There are two listings of the arts of acquisition. In the first, hunting is surrounded by nomads' pastoral art and farming. Piracy, fishing and the pursuit of birds and animals exist as separate species of the genus hunting. In the second, herdsmen and farmers are listed before piracy, which now is a separate genus, followed, in turn, by fishing and hunting. Hunting and piracy occupy central positions and are, in some sense, a part of each other even while they differ.<sup>37</sup>

The first way of life which Aristotle describes is that of the pastoral nomad. This life does not accidentally follow from a discussion of the ways of life of animals. The nomads not only tend herds but live as a herd, and they are isolated in the sense reminiscent of Homer's depiction of the Cyclopes: "There a monstrous man was wont to sleep, who shepherds his flocks alone and afar,

36. Barker merely states that piracy was a "tolerated pursuit in the eastern Mediterranean down to Aristotle's time, and indeed later," (Ross, *Politics*, p. 20); Ross simply mentions that piracy is among the natural arts of acquisition, (*Aristotle*, p. 242); and Newman omits any mention of piracy, (*The Politics of Aristotle*, pp. 128-29).

37. Aristotle is portrayed by Bacon as a practitioner of the natural art of acquisition. He is said to be both a pirate and a hunter. Bacon states that Aristotle was "a fortunate robber, who made a prize of learning" (Bacon, *Works*, III, p. 353). He is also a hunter who "killed all his brethren" (p. 365); he conquered "all opinions" as his scholar conquered "all nations" (p. 352). Aristotle's success results from the fact that he never "nameth or mentioneth an ancient author or opinion, but to confute and reprove" (p. 352). Bacon cites a divine aphorism which sheds light on Aristotle's method: "I have come in my father's name, and ye receive me not; if one come in his own name, him ye will receive" (p. 352). The result was glory "without regard of antiquity or paternity" (p. 352). Yet if Aristotle comes in his own name, he also comes in the-name of nature and nature involves paternity. For Aristotle, nature, although responsible for man's inception, intends man's completion. This completion, while not in the name of the father, is at least fatherly—it is a recreation of the activities of subjugation. A strong case can be made that it is Bacon who sheds paternity (see footnote 26).

and mingled not with others but lived apart with his heart set on lawlessness."<sup>38</sup> The nomadic way of life does not arise or follow from the bodily needs of the nomads so much as from the needs of the animals which sustain them. As Aristotle puts it, nomads "follow in [animals'] tracks,"<sup>39</sup> and consequently man's life becomes contingent for direction upon those from which he derives sustenance. At the same time, and for the same reason, his life most clearly reveals providential nature. Nomads make their living with ease from animals which nature has apparently subjugated to their needs. Aristotle describes them as moving yet "indolent."<sup>40</sup> Unlike the farmer and the hunter they are freed from continual exertion in order to sustain life. More than any of the other practitioners of natural arts of acquisition they possess leisure. Nature indeed appears kind.

Given the nomads' relationship to nature, why has Aristotle not spoken more favorably of their life? Of the practitioners of the natural arts of acquisition, nomads alone accept providence as Aristotle has portrayed her. They are satisfied with her generosity; they appear content, lacking in nothing. Yet as a result of being initial nature's favored children, they remain childlike adults. It becomes clear that their uncivil idleness, their retardedness, stems from nature's care. Aristotle does nothing to dispel this impression. By omission he exaggerates it. First, no mention is made that their moving existence for the sake of pasturage is not an easy one—nature does not quickly or easily replenish the harvest of animals. And second, their animals are not naturally created to obey the call of the nomad. Aristotle takes pains in order to portray the nomad's plight as lacking pain. Their life is portrayed as complete. They are minimally stirred by the bodily desires, and consequently those desires complete the simple horizon of their life.<sup>41</sup>

It may be said that nomads, despite the products of nature upon which they live, conform to the letter but not the spirit of the natural art of acquisition. They practice natural acquisition insofar as they are not producers. But the natural art of acquisition excludes and discredits production because it results in man's satisfaction with economic life. The nomad is satisfied with economic life in the absence of such productivity. His servility is in the presence of penury. He sleepily practices an art which merely sustains life. We turn from

38. Homer, *Odyssey*, Vol. 1, IX (Harvard U.P., 1966), pp. 185–90.

39. Barker, *Politics*, 1256<sup>a</sup>30–36.

40. Barker, *Politics*, 1256<sup>a</sup>30–32.

41. Compare providential care of nomads with rule of providence in the healthy city of Plato's *Republic*. Both nomads and members of the healthy city apparently lead lives characterized by peace and ease. Justice, in each case, is portrayed as unproblematic; there is no conflict in these associations since providence has instilled only limited desires in each man and she has provided the objects to satisfy these desires through her bounty. Yet, from the perspective of nobility, such care is but tyranny, such contentedness but servility. This explains Aristotle's depreciation of the nomadic way of life and Plato's debunking of the healthy city. Moral life, reflecting moderate desires, is not available in the absence of human freedom. Man's moral choice of necessity implies the possibility of immorality.

the nomad's gratitude to the farmer's patience and then to the stealth of the hunter. But the nomad's servile submission to nature is best remedied by the pirate. He, like the hunter, is moved to conquest, yet, unlike the hunter, his dissatisfaction or incompleteness causes him to turn away from provisions granted by nature and meet his needs from other men.

Farming, the last way of life in the first listing, is akin to the nomadic existence in that the farmer lives from domesticated animals while the nomad lives from "cultivated plants."<sup>42</sup> Nature is apparently kind in both instances. But, as in the case of nomads, appearance can be deceiving. Farming is an idle art only when comparing it with the nomad's wandering. It would be better to call it a peaceful art, yet this would ignore man's attack on mother earth by which he forces her to yield a product. The earth's provisions are man's reward for his labor. This would seem to be denied when moving from prepolitical to political conditions, for there are men who exist as farmers without farming. One is reminded of Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* in which Socrates speaks with a gentleman-farmer. Such a man has not overcome nature's harshness but simply does not bear that harshness. Toil is borne by the slaves—not the labor but the laborer has changed. Given this fact, one wonders why in the first instance a majority of men, as Aristotle tells us, choose to live by agriculture. If the nomad's existence is characterized by such ease why are there so many farmers? Is this unspoken testimony to the arduous existence of nomadic life? Does this indicate man's sedentary nature? Or does it confirm man's timidity in confronting nature's unruly and often dangerous animals? In any case, the result of farming is a decisively limited product associated with unlimited toil. What follows is the frequent observation, as M. I. Finley properly notes, that "the Greeks . . . never tired in their praise of the moral excellence of agriculture."<sup>43</sup> The next question which presents itself is "Why was hunting not, with equal frequency, cited as a moral activity?"

Hunting, along with farming, is not an idle art. There is movement but little leisure. Yet hunting occupies a special position among the natural arts of acquisition. In the first listing it is the only art for which Aristotle would enumerate separate species; in the second listing three of the five arts involve hunting, and following Aristotle's natural hierarchy, hunting is included as a part of the art of war which is said to be naturally just.<sup>44</sup> In opposition to

42. Barker, *Politics*, 1256<sup>a</sup>35–40.

43. Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, p. 123.

44. Compare Aristotle's account with hunting as presented in Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*. The state of nature requires the hunter, yet nature's unruly and perishable provisions demand war and pain from man who wants "to enjoy." Given this fact, nature's imposed moderation is of no moral use. The life of the chase cannot be morally liberating. The conditions of nature must be conquered by art and the hunter relieved of his burdens. Abundance and ease are evidence that nature's yoke has been broken. Yet, man's liberating conquest of nature ends by extending the preeminence of those desires which were her original concern. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge U.P., 1960), #30.

the domesticated animals of the nomads, Aristotle presents animals that are unwilling to be tamed. These are animals free from art. They are avowedly wild creations which apparently do not resemble their creator. Hunting, more than farming and far more than the nomad's life, reveals the extent to which initial nature is unkind. Man's need is at odds with the animal's disposition. In subjugating the animal, despite its disposition, man "follows in their tracks" only so they might follow in his. That is, the hunter, as distinct from the pastoral nomad, overcomes not only the animal but, in important respects, the animal's way of life.<sup>45</sup> At the same time that he conquers nature's provisions he also conquers nature's conditions. Man is thereby moved away from his beginnings to the expanded corporeal desires of civil life but only after he has rendered those desires suspect by taking life. It is no accident that the depreciation of animal life antedates the enjoyment of meat.<sup>46</sup> The movement of the hunter is the movement for moral independence, away from the bodily desires and towards the emergence of the human soul.<sup>47</sup> This is why hunting, notwithstanding the farmer's need for slaves, can never be understood as serving the provisions of the earth. It must subdue in its own name.<sup>48</sup> Yet man's spirited-

45. The distinction between warriors as they are presented in the *Politics* and the *Republic* is that Aristotle never likens the warriors to dogs (*Republic* 375a1). Their dignity stems from the absence of masters. In this sense Aristotle's warrior seems to resemble the philosopher in Plato's *Republic*. Yet, notwithstanding the fact that the philosopher is courageous, he could not be characterized as a kind of warrior or even the highest of warriors. He is not concerned with overcoming. He in the main surrenders to a kind of eros. Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, tr. and ed. Allan Bloom (Basic Books, 1968), 375a1.

46. The visitors to Bensalem, the utopian island of Bacon's *New Atlantis*, also enjoy meat. Yet prior to being received by the island's inhabitants the visitors must foreswear piracy and hunting. These activities are impure on an island where the productive arts are unaccompanied by problems of licentiousness and the way of life rests on universal love. Indeed hunting is a kind of violation which opposes the spirit of Bensalem; animal life is taken, not as a means to moral life, but primarily as a means to the continuation of life (Bacon, *Essays*, pp. 271, 274, 293, 300).

47. See Plato's *Republic* where the healthy city is destroyed with man's desire for luxury and comfort. Yet the feverish city which follows cannot be understood in terms of economic desires. The economic arts, although present in the feverish city, are essentially descriptive of the healthy city. The feverish city is characterized by a noneconomic art. The movement away from the healthy city to the feverish city is a movement from merchants, tradesmen, money and peace to the art of hunting and the warrior. Thus, in both Socrates' account in the *Republic* and Aristotle's account in the *Politics* the economic arts are subjugated to the arts akin to war. In the feverish city the warriors form a separate and superior class distinct from economic artisans. They are distinctive in that they cannot be understood as an extension of economics or the body. This is why the feverish city is more advanced than the healthy city. The warrior's life is evidence of man's disinterest in what heretofore was a consuming interest. The warriors exemplify not a concern with life or the extension of life but with the denial of life. The warrior is Socrates' solution to a natural problem: man's economic desires reflect not only the first city which he leaves behind but seem to foretell the truth of all cities which are to follow. Socrates interrupts man's economic growth. Such growth is limited, if not denied, as soon as it is occasioned by virtue of the warrior's art: the desire for meat is understood in light of the depreciation of life. Through the image of the warrior Socrates not only subjugates life but at the same time introduces that element of the soul which rules the desire for life.

48. Compare with Bacon's depiction of the Greek deity Pan: "The effect of Pan could not be more lively expressed, than by making him the God of hunters: for every natural action, every

ness, once aroused, may easily concentrate on something other than nature's provisions. Perhaps this is why farming is most frequently cited as moral. The hunter's spiritedness necessitates the earth's limitation in order to produce as well as maintain civil life. This is not to say that the other arts such as farming are just. But the farmer must take what nature intends. The same cannot be said of the hunter.<sup>49</sup> He, as opposed to the farmer, does not await nature's bounty but is moved by covetousness to acquire.<sup>50</sup> Herein lies hunting's association with piracy.

Given its unorthodoxy, piracy is a startling inclusion among the natural arts of acquisition. As an art its product is not derived from nature. It takes from other men, not from plants and animals. And it seeks excessive gain or gain which goes beyond that necessary for life. In this sense it anticipates unnatural gain, for both arts reflect longings which are neither characteristic of, nor capable of, being satisfied by the conditions which nature directly bestows. In

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motion and process, is no other than a chase: *thus arts and sciences hunt out their works* . . . " [emphasis added]. He continues, "all living creatures either hunt out their aliment, pursue their prey, or seek their pleasures; and this in a skilful and sagacious manner." In Bacon's reformulation of hunting, nature becomes the hunted not the hunter. In the process hunting no longer commands man's pleasures in a moral way but now appears "in a skilful and sagacious manner" to serve those pleasures. Francis Bacon, *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*, tr. Peter Shaw, Section II: Of Poetry (London, 1733), p. 62.

49. See Montesquieu: "[The magistrates of the Greek republics] would not have the citizens apply themselves to trade, to agriculture, or to the arts, and yet they would not have them idle. They found, therefore, employment for them in gymnastic and military exercises . . . Now, these exercises having a natural tendency to render people hardy and fierce, there was a necessity for tempering them with others that might soften their manners. For this purpose, music, which influences the mind by means of the corporeal organs, was extremely popular" (Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, tr. Thomas Nugent [Hafner, 1966], p. 39). Montesquieu footnotes Aristotle, who, in criticizing Sparta, does not simply praise the life of the warrior but praises the moral life of the warrior. Aristotle's presentation of the hunter or warrior is not amusical. The warrior or hunter is tied to justice, which is tied to nature, which in turn dictates that subjugation is not without limit or independent of need. The natural art of acquisition constitutes part of Aristotle's music for the warrior and ultimately for the man of moral virtue.

50. According to Bacon, the highest grade of ambition is more wholesome and noble when it is less covetous:

" . . . it will not be amiss to distinguish the three kinds and as it were grades of ambition in mankind. The first is of those who desire to extend their own power in their native country; which kind is vulgar and degenerate. The second is of those who labour to extend the power of their country and its dominion among men. This certainly has more dignity, though not less covetousness. But if a man endeavour to establish and extend the power and dominion of the human race itself over the universe, his ambition (if ambition it can be called) is without doubt a more wholesome thing and a more noble than the other two . . ." (Bacon, *Essays*, p. 263).

Compare this passage with Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics* where covetousness, as practiced by the warriors, hunters and pirates is essential for man's wholeness and nobility. Indeed "vulgar" covetousness, that covetousness limited to the community as distinct from the universe, occurs in the setting appropriate for man's moral completion. It is not disinterested labors on behalf of the species but interested labor on behalf of moral man which designates the grades of ambition and the nature of subjugation.

this sense only piracy, among the natural arts enumerated by Aristotle, is a genuine art of acquisition. But what seems most unusual is that nature sanctions robbery as a manner of acquisition.<sup>51</sup> In what sense is this true?

Alone, the practitioner of the natural art of acquisition cannot meet all his needs. This is evidenced by robbery, whereby man takes that which others are not willing to surrender. Aristotle moves the reader to question the justice of the natural arts of acquisition by pointing to the robber's art which, if unjust in the strict sense, nonetheless exposes man's association with other men.<sup>52</sup> Piracy, although identified with the prepolitical arts, is not tied to nature's hierarchy. In this sense it is free. The pirate feels disaffection from nature because he is dissatisfied with the life which she has created for man and, as a result, explores the possibilities in meeting his own needs.<sup>53</sup> As piracy moves man away from maternal nature it points to moral nature. It reflects, by requiring, morality. The pirate's independence serves not only to reveal that dependency which enslaves the nomad to precivil nature but also to disclose the servile character which results from the civil artisan's enslavement to profit.<sup>54</sup> Their divergent settings cannot hide the close connection among precivil nature, profit and slavery. Piracy is distinguished from these two arts neither in its attempt to overcome

51. See Plato's *Republic* (373a–e) where theft of land is the natural outcome of providence's meanness. Economic scarcity means that some must live, to say nothing of live well, at the expense of others. The taking of land leads to retaliation and war, yet such war awakens the soul and brings about human, not providential or barbarous, peace. Robbery replaces providence in giving birth to the manly activity of the warriors who protect the spoils of the city.

52. See Montesquieu's statement that "[t]he total privation of trade, on the contrary, produces robbery, which Aristotle ranks in the number of means of acquiring; yet it is not at all inconsistent with certain moral virtues. Hospitality, for instance, is most rare in trading countries, while it is found in the most admirable perfection among nations of vagabonds" (*Spirit of the Laws*, p. 317). Aristotle provides no list or instances of virtues among robbers. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* he specifically condemns robbery as a "mean" and "stingy" vice; it is opposed to liberality. Nonetheless he states that robbers "tak[e] the greatest risks to get booty (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, tr. Martin Ostwald [Bobbs-Merrill, 1962], 1122<sup>a</sup>8–9). Also of importance is the particular "moral virtue" which Montesquieu cites. To say the least hospitality is a doubtful virtue. There is the question of whether hospitality is due all strangers and, more importantly, the question of whether hospitality, when extended by robbers, serves covetousness and hence is no longer hospitality. Setting aside the extraordinary Socrates, robbery, in the *Republic* and in the *Politics*, is for the purpose of securing one's own. Not only its end but its spirit is opposed to hospitality. It is not servile but aristocratic. Compare Plato's and Aristotle's accounts with the hospitable modern robber, Robin Hood, whose nobility is in the service of democracy.

53. In this regard note the character of Glaucon who rejects the providential city of Plato's *Republic* (372d<sup>ff.</sup>). He voices his dissatisfaction by characterizing the healthy city as a "city of pigs." Literally the healthy city is a city without pigs—there is no hunter or meat present—while figuratively it is Glaucon who is a pig—his desires appear insatiable. Yet, unlike the healthy city, the depiction of Glaucon is distinctively human. His longings for completion cannot be satisfied even by a beneficent providence.

54. When speaking of justice, Montesquieu confirms the fact that robbery and moral virtue belong together in opposing trade: "[t]he spirit of trade produces in the mind of a man a certain sense of exact justice, opposite, on the one hand, to robbery, and on the other to those moral virtues which forbid our always adhering rigidly to the rules of private interest, and suffer us to neglect this for the advantage of others" (Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, p. 317).

nature nor in its desire to satisfy needs, but in its unsubmitive character:<sup>55</sup> the pirate takes what he wants, by conquest.<sup>56</sup>

Yet piracy discloses more than this. The pirate, along with the hunter, practices war in conditions of indolent peace. Man's slumbers are interrupted by the pirate who stings him or endangers what he thinks he wants most. As a consequence the pirate creates others in his own image, for they must imitate him in conditions where there is "no propriety, no dominion, no mine and thine distinct . . ." <sup>57</sup> The art of war is naturally enlarged, for men are moved to fortify their holdings or, when that is not enough, to covet their neighbors' And as Hobbes in his *Leviathan* has formally instructed, the competition or movement after gain may also herald movement toward peace, but civil rather than barbaric peace. If this be true, then piracy, in moving us closer to civil life, also moves us closer to justice. Yet, before we forget, this is at the price of natural justice or justice in accordance with the ascending order of nature's manifestations. Piracy appears boldly to deviate from the other arts. But, perhaps, more boldly, the other natural arts secretly conform to it. This possibility demands that we briefly return to hunting and war as they relate to piracy.

That piracy and hunting are related was acknowledged prior to Aristotle. Xenophon recounts that the Spartans taught their youth "thieving" and "deceiving" "in order to make the boys more resourceful in getting supplies and better fighting men."<sup>58</sup> Although Xenophon's account is somewhat shocking, war is tied to nobility, and insofar as the warrior fights for a noble purpose stealing and deceitfulness are freed from ignominy. But this is an admission that piracy lacks the morality associated with war in civil circumstances. Precisely for this reason piracy is the appropriate prepolitical art. In prepolitical circumstances we should not attempt to understand piracy in light of war but war in light of piracy. Nature attempted to hide this. She attempted to attach piracy to war and war to natural providence. With this disclosure, her claim that man justly wars on nature's manifestations is open to considerable doubt.<sup>59</sup> In light of this

55. In contrast, see Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* where robbery is presented as an unnatural form of acquisition (#19). Generally its boldness or unsubmitive character endangers life; specifically robbery appropriates another individual's labor, the natural title to property. In order to secure property, the pirate's boldness must be feminized or made acceptable; it must be placed in the service of peace. Hence the pirate, following society, merely fulfills magnified, prepolitical desires—he is not, as in Aristotle, used to overcome those desires. To the extent that these economic desires rather than his initial boldness are indicative of the pirate, it may be said that piracy, more than the other "natural arts of acquisition," characterizes bourgeois man. For in denying habituation to moral virtue on the ground that it violates freedom, in what sense does the pirate, although often rendered petty and timorous, remain intact?

56. Perhaps this consideration responds to Newman's puzzlement: "It is not easy to see why a man should not be allowed to exchange his labour, just as much as the produce of his vines . . . [t]here need not be in labouring for hire any such desire for an indefinite amount of coin . . ." *The Politics of Aristotle*, p. 132).

57. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1958), p. 108.

58. Xenophon, *Scripta Minora*, II (Harvard U.P., 1968), pp. 7–8.

59. The following statement by Bacon, made with regard to Aristotle's "books on animals . . . and other of his treatises," has special significance in light of this fact: "he [Aristotle] had come

certain questions arise: Can the inclusion of piracy among the natural arts reveal that man steals from nature? Must man rob from nature or initial nature in the name of humanity? What is the source of morality and justice in the absence of providential nature? At this point nature's foresight and bounty are both suspect. Her improvidence in one respect is substantiated by another, for Aristotle concludes his listing of the natural arts by stating that some men may have to "eke out the shortcomings of one way of life . . . by adding some other way."<sup>60</sup>

Aristotle's artisan, who engages in more than one art, puts the reader in mind of Marx's famous passage from *The German Ideology*:

in communist society, where nobody has an exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming' hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.<sup>61</sup>

For Aristotle, nature's weakness rather than her strength causes the artisan to leave one art for another. Nature is uneven not only in her bounty but also in her articulation of man. Each artisan is not equally capable of practicing every art, and consequently some artisans, by virtue of their inabilities, are forced to practice more than one. For Aristotle, different manners of gaining subsistence are man's last, rather than his best, recourse since there is nothing humanizing in multiplying activities which are all intended only to meet the needs of the body. Marx's passage, on the other hand, is striking because the arts are presented as independent of needs. Of those activities cited by Marx, only one, unrelated to subsistence, appears with reference to the demands of the body, and it follows the satisfaction of a need. Subjugation without necessity appears to be the essence of man's existence. The absence of necessity is accompanied by the disappearance of nobility. For Marx, man is initially and ultimately is a producer. Given this fact, Marx has no need of the pirate.

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to his conclusion before; he did not consult experience, as he should have done, in order to the framing of his decisions and axioms; but having first determined the question according to his will, he then resorts to experience, and bending her into conformity with his placets leads her about like a *captive* in a procession . . . " [Emphasis added] (Bacon, *Essays*, p. 206). When such a statement is considered in light of the natural art of acquisition, Aristotle appears as a deceptive master who captures and then recreates experience forcing her to yield images of morality. Bacon, on the other hand, appears to liberate experience. Yet such liberation, if free from traditional morality, is not free from recreation. And Bacon's recreation, albeit in the name of enlightenment, is not without deception: "As for antiquity, the opinion touching it which men entertain is quite a negligent one, and scarcely consonant with the word itself. For the old age of the world is to be accounted the true antiquity; and this is the attribute of our own times, not of that earlier age of the world in which the ancients lived; and which, though in respect of us it was the elder, yet in respect of the world it was the younger" (Bacon, *Essays*, p. 225).

60. Barker, *Politics*, 1256<sup>b</sup>5-10.

61. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 124.

Marx may dispense with the pirate since he is unconcerned with demonstrating the limitations of economic life. As we have seen, Aristotle demonstrated that limitation by distinguishing economic life from moral life, by distinguishing the nomad from the hunter. Yet this distinction points to another—that between hunter and pirate. In his enumeration of the natural arts of acquisition Aristotle first subsumes piracy under the art of hunting; but in his second listing piracy is given an independent status, separate from hunting, yet central to the other arts. Hunting appears to resemble piracy yet in the final analysis is distinguished from it. As can be seen from the natural art of acquisition, this may be explained by the fact that although the nobility of the hunter cannot be understood economically, it cannot be understood free of nature's provisions. Moral life is a dependent life in that it cannot ignore the body and its demands. Aristotle has powerfully made the case that such dependence need not enslave. Man may control those desires which seek to control him. Yet to be morally independent is not to be independent simply. Independence, which is not limited to morality, carries us beyond beginnings, the household and the natural art of acquisition—in short, it carries us to a domain that appears independent of nature. It moves beyond the world of morality to a theoretical world, beyond the world of the hunter to a world which resembles that of the pirate. In a radical way, Aristotle seems to foreshadow the highest distinctions of human life, not from its heights, but from within an economic horizon.

The connection between the worlds of piracy and philosophy is too well drawn to be easily dismissed: The pirate reflects a nobility which cannot be traced to morality; his activity cannot be understood by returning to nature as a provider; he lives outside while being dependent upon the city; he is said to endanger the very arts upon which his preservation relies; and his fellow citizens, given the nature of his enterprise, may quickly become his enemies. Equally well drawn is the relationship of the hunter's art to that of the pirate. Of all the arts upon which the pirate relies, only one, hunting, comes close to reflecting his life. Both conquer but with this important difference: The conquest of the hunter testifies to the importance of nature even while he conquers her provisions. The pirate, on the other hand, depreciates nature by disregarding the demanding, dependent life which she has imposed on most men. In its place the pirate's attention is drawn to the possessions of other men, to considerations of one's own. Simply stated the pirate conquers other men, a conquest which entails living off of their labor. This is why his life, unlike that of the hunter, is not one of continual movement. His way of life does not preclude leisure. To understand this aspect of the pirate's life we would have to compare him not to the hunter, but to the nomad. The pirate appears to be a peculiar combination of the hunter and the nomad. Yet he engages in conquest without the hunter's war and, at the same time, surrenders to other than the nomad's peace. The pirate's life, in appearing independent of nature's demands, approaches a divine life. It ultimately cannot be understood within the polis, the household or the natural art of acquisition.

Aristotle concludes his discussion by affirming the natural status of the art of acquisition. Such an art is part of household management, for it acquires objects “necessary for life and useful to the association of the polis or the household.”<sup>62</sup> The polis, which had been introduced prior to an investigation of the household, now reappears when discussing acquisition and the bodily needs, but only as an afterthought or an exception. Not even designating acquisition as a “natural” art would cause Aristotle to discuss the polis in this context.<sup>63</sup> Its return also reminds us that, although the bodily needs and the objects which meet those needs are more fitted to the household, the household ultimately serves and is informed by the polis. Perhaps owing to the precarious relationship between nature’s articulations and war, the household must, in the final instance, be seen as a subpolitical rather than a prepolitical association.

It follows, states Aristotle, that the objects of the natural art of acquisition constitute “true wealth.”<sup>64</sup> He ends as he began. Wealth, like acquisition, has been abstracted from its accustomed surroundings in order to redefine it. The wealthy man must take his bearing from objects that do not bestow wealth as ordinarily understood. The thread running through “true wealth” and this entire section on the natural art of acquisition is limitation.<sup>65</sup> Whether it is the bounty which is credited to mother nature or the product of an all-consuming labor, man’s economic activity is portrayed as naturally limited to his initial needs. This does not mean that man must return to a primitive life. We are referred back to nature to appreciate her benevolence only after attaining civil life.<sup>66</sup> Man’s nature requires that he move beyond his beginnings to civil life, yet in such circumstances money, not nature’s objects, is the medium of exchange. Money conveys no limitation. It lends itself to accumulation since it does not remind us of our needs. In the presence of civil life the political-moral art must not only remind us of but compel us towards moderation. This requires an authoritative or natural standard which governs man’s beginnings in light of his end. One could say mother nature has given way to moral nature

62. Barker, *Politics*, 1256<sup>b</sup>29–30.

63. Note that Socrates, in Plato’s *Republic*, joins what for Aristotle would be the natural and unnatural arts of acquisition in the “true city.” In this city we find farmers and herdsmen as well as house-builders, weavers, cobblers, and surprisingly, merchants, tradesmen and wage-earners (369d–371e). These later artisans, who Aristotle classifies as unnatural given their unlimited desire for wealth, are portrayed in the healthy city as possessing limited desire even in the presence of money. This distortion serves to clarify the fact that the artisan and the true city are borne of similar simplicity. Aristotle would take issue with this account. This polis, the true or healthy city must be a complex city; it must be understood not economically but morally.

64. Barker, *Politics*, 1256<sup>b</sup>31.

65. Note Finley: “I am unaware of any text which suggests that continued growth in this [economic] sphere of human behavior was either possible or desirable, and the whole tenor of the literature argues against such a notion,” “Aristotle and Economic Analysis,” p. 20.

66. See Finley: “Greeks and Romans never tired in their praise of the moral excellence of agriculture, and simultaneously in their insistence that civilization required the city. They were not being self-contradictory . . .” (*The Ancient Economy*, p. 123).

except that mother nature originates with moral nature. The creation of mother nature was necessary if Aristotle was prudently to dispute while quietly affirming a passage of Solon's which he recreates prior to his investigation of unnatural acquisition: "There is no bound to wealth stands fixed for men."<sup>67</sup>

## V. UNNATURAL ART OF ACQUISITION

Aristotle moves to the unnatural art of acquisition only after considering the natural form. Now he is willing to admit that this second kind of acquisition is justly the art of acquisition. Justice here refers not to the worthiness of the art but to the fitness of characterization: this unnatural art is responsible for the view that there is no limit to wealth. This justly designated unnatural art is distinguished from its counterpart by the fact that it results from a "certain sort of experience or skill." From the opening Aristotle tells the reader that the unnatural art of acquisition is not wholly an unnatural art.

Aristotle begins his discussion by examining the art's product. He observes that the product may have more than one use, one appropriate to the product, that is, the purpose for which it was created, and one not, that is, a product which is exchanged for other products. He seeks to clarify his point by raising the example of shoes. It becomes apparent from this example that, when speaking of the unnatural art of acquisition, nature no longer supplies the product. Man, a product of nature, makes products removed from nature or, more exactly, transforms products supplied by nature. Imitation of nature, the original producer, not subjugation of nature's product, is the beginning point of unnatural acquisition. Man's artisanship in his own name implies dissatisfaction. Specifically, man produces since nature's original grant was insufficient. He attempts to remedy such deficiency by producing or granting to himself that which nature had only bestowed sparingly. But in the process he loses sight of the purpose of nature's provisions; he loses sight of his limited bodily needs. Hence man as a producer is suspect. Also suspect is peace, that condition in which the arts flourish and within which the needs administered to by the arts are secured.

As presented by Aristotle the problem of the product's use results from exchange, and exchange accompanies man's production. No mention is made of production prior to exchange. It appears that man's labor does not produce everything that he needs even while he produces some things in excess. Given this fact, Aristotle approves of exchanging one product for another, an action not strictly reflecting the product's purpose, if it suffices for subsistence.<sup>68</sup> It now

67. Barker, *Politics*, 1256<sup>b</sup>34.

68. Finley's citing of David Hume is especially important in this light: "I do not remember a passage in any ancient author, where the growth of a city is ascribed to the establishment of a manufacture. The commerce, which is said to flourish, is chiefly the exchange of those com-

appears that man determines the use of a product and also the extent to which nature meets his needs. Exchange presents the possibility that man's use of a product may be for reasons other than his needs. Use and need are disjoined with the appearance of man's productivity. There was no discussion of man's misusing nature's provisions.<sup>69</sup> The question becomes, "Why couldn't nature's productivity give rise to exchange?" Indeed Aristotle speaks of bartering one of nature's simple products in the next few lines. Nevertheless, exchange, while justly heralding the possibility of unlimited gain, can never be understood as the culmination of natural acquisition.

This may be seen from the fact that piracy neither serves nor is directed by bartering. The barterer may, like the pirate, meet his needs from other men. Yet the peaceful setting in which exchange occurs more closely reflects the life of the nomad. The difference between barterer and nomad is that the former lacks the latter's gratitude for nature's care. The barterer is no longer simply innocent. He cautiously attempts to make gains in exchanging with other men. Unlike the pirate's boldness and the hunter's depreciation of life, barterers succumb to mutual economic use in the service of security and ease. Unlike the nomad they extend the power of economic life.

Aristotle's chronology opens by eliminating the household from discussion. This is made possible by considering production only as it relates to exchange. Since exchange only occurs among households within a village, the initial household is reserved for natural acquisition in the strict sense. Nonetheless, it should be remembered that the household is present given the location in which exchange is discussed in the First Book. Aristotle only concedes that exchange is not contrary to nature when precipitated by need.<sup>70</sup> He omits mention of the initial household at the same time that he raises evidence to demonstrate that exchange need not be contrary to nature. His evidence is that of barbarism. Barbaric tribes, which he omitted in discussing natural acquisition by concentrating on art rather than artisans, exemplify a remote natural limitation upon corporeal desires. They are only made a reflection of nature in an unnatural

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modities, for which different soils and climates were suited," "Aristotle and Economic Analysis," p. 22; also cited in Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, pp. 21–22.

69. This subtlety seems to be lost on Ross: "What is more surprising is that he [Aristotle] regards the whole acquisition of wealth by trade other than barter as unnatural and even wrong . . . . But he does not notice that the pursuit of wealth for its own sake may arise even at this earliest stage, where goods are accumulated and exchange has not begun, and profiteering is possible (Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 243).

70. See Polanyi, who states that Aristotle used *καπηλική* to designate commercial trading. This term is derivative, according to Polanyi, from *κάπηλος* which is "synonymous with trickster, fraud, cheat." He goes on, "[c]ommercial trade was of course, not huckstering; nor was it retail trading; and whatever it was, it deserved to be called some form or variant of *emporía* which was the regular name for seafaring trade . . . . When Aristotle referred specifically to the various kinds of maritime trade, he fell back on *emporía* in the usual sense. Why, then, did he not do so in the main theoretical analysis of the subject but use instead a word of pejorative connotation?" "Aristotle Discovers the Economy," p. 92.

setting; nature's imposed moderation is set prior to man's liberation. Yet, due to exchange, the barbarian can no longer play the child of nature. His limited use of products results not from the wisdom of providence but from want of capacity. He awaits unnatural acquisition.

Exchange is not primarily seen as a means of associating men but simply as a step to the introduction of money. According to Aristotle, men find difficulty in exchanging unwieldy products so they consent to substitute a useful commodity which is easily portable. At first, exchange is practiced in a natural way even after the introduction of money. Hence, money is not a product of the unnatural art of acquisition. That art concentrates upon its accumulation only after it has been introduced, and even then, not without time and technique. Reminiscent of Rousseau, man's debasement may spring from art; but, unlike Rousseau, man's art is not in the first instance debased. In any case, several consequences follow. First, money is not condemned. It does not necessarily serve unlimited desire.<sup>71</sup> Any moral judgment regarding money depends upon its use, and thus, condemnation is reserved for those who use money without regard to its moral purpose. Secondly, freeing money from moral disapprobation must be seen in light of Aristotle's praise of civil life and especially virtuous life. Moral virtue is impossible without external equipment. Yet, for this reason, external equipment must be circumscribed by necessity; the condition must not supplant the essence of man. Aristotle takes care to attribute civil life to something other than the introduction of money, for he is aware that barbaric life is not limited to precivil conditions.

Emerging from the fact that man makes excessive gains from money are two opinions, neither of which Aristotle offers in his own name. The first is a justification for the unnatural art of acquisition; the second purports that money is worthless and useless for the purposes of life. The first opinion is merely a restatement of the unnatural art—there is no limit to wealth, and consequently man may be solely concerned with accumulating money. The more obscure of the two is the second opinion which, Aristotle tells us, arose as a reaction to the first. This view, in contrast to Aristotle's, omits any mention of a natural art of acquisition. Instead it condemns the object of corrupt acquisition, money. Those making the argument point to Midas who, although surrounded by gold, was unable either to eat or drink.

Clearly Aristotle, however adamantly opposing the first opinion, can never completely endorse the second. By failing to designate a form of acquisition as natural, those holding this opinion have abandoned money to the service of unlimited acquisition. They have no moral grounds for its condemnation. Their only moral recourse is to censure the object which it seeks to appropriate. They do so in the name of convention. Money is not derived from nature but

71. Note Locke's statement that "as different degrees of industry are apt to give men possessions in different proportions, so this *invention of money* gave them the opportunity to continue and enlarge them" (*Second Treatise of Government*, #48).

is the product of consent. Aristotle cannot support this opinion, for it fails to recognize the extent to which, in this instance, nature gives rise to consent. Money is not simply conventional. Not even Aristotle attributes the introduction of money to either an art or artisan. This second position, in drawing a firm distinction between nature and money and siding with initial nature, renounces more than money. If extended to its conclusion, this opinion directs our attention to precivil life as the only alternative to moral corruption.

Aristotle takes the time to recreate the fable of Midas. What possibly could this mean? At first glance, the purpose in citing the fable is evident. In desiring wealth Midas had forgotten those basic needs which wealth, in the form of money, cannot meet. Midas' error was that, in attempting to conquer nature, he forgot man's nature or man's dependence on nature. Yet, in one sense, the example speaks against those who initially cite it. For Midas, while reminding us of the importance of our basic needs, also reminds us, through the desire for gold, of the insufficiency of those needs in satisfying man. Man's attempts to fulfill his desires, even at the cost of preservation, disclose the intensity of his longings for completion. And, as Midas clearly reveals, such desires for completeness need not entail moral edification. Man, as reflected by Midas' folly, may seek completeness either through unlimited acquisition or through romantic longings for a premoral condition. Man's desire for completeness must not culminate in either madness or barbarism. Dionysius the god who granted Midas' wish, knew something of this, for he thought the avaricious request unwise.

Dionysius' wisdom lay in producing moderation by assenting to the letter of Midas' wish. He instructed Midas by way of unmitigated folly. But what has Midas learned? That completion entails destruction. Following this lesson there is no indication that Midas would attempt completion other than by means of the body, only that he would no longer do so to the extent he had in the past. For this reason moderation, in the *Politics*, must precede rather than follow man's attempts at completion. Education has the advantage of portraying the ugliness of Midas' desire without experiencing Midas' way of life. As a result folly is called by its right name; pleasure is identified with nobility. Not the denial of life but the failure to lead a moral life is folly. Yet short of the destruction of life, what can deter man from a life reflecting his expanded initial desires? Aristotle discredits mere life by crediting noble praise. Honor and shame form the contours of a fair life. Nevertheless, honor may be conveyed by or upon those who are not honorable. Consequently Aristotle replaces the unedifying letter of Midas' wish with a spirited habituation to nature.

Neither the second opinion nor Midas understands incorporeal nature. Midas merely wants by his touch to recreate a product of nature. But he has sought to distinguish himself from his countrymen by reproducing nature in order to live in unequalled splendor. What Midas fails to see is the democratic origin of gold's value. Perhaps this is why Aristotle makes no mention of the fact that

Midas was a king. Midas is everyman. Even the divine granting and rescinding of the wish is by Dionysius—the god of fertility as well as wealth. Midas' understanding of nature extends only to what the price will bear. He has mistaken the common for the uncommon. His exaggerated appreciation of nature's sparkling product must be understood not only or primarily in terms of nature's similarly common, if necessary, provisions, but in light of the uncommon essential beauty of man's soul.<sup>72</sup>

Aristotle praises the second opinion, that is, "currency is regarded as a sham, and entirely a convention," in that it attempts to make a distinction between natural wealth and the art of acquisition as popularly understood. He uses that distinction to support his own: the natural art of acquisition is different from the unnatural art and is concerned with the management of the household. The second opinion was silent regarding Aristotle's distinction or the household. Also, he again reminds the reader that the natural art of acquisition is a limited art. Yet even this point differs from the one he attributes to those maintaining that currency is worthless. The fable of Midas only proved that currency is limited. Aristotle is concerned with limiting the acquisition of currency and, as we have seen, by no means on the basis of initial needs.

The unnatural art of acquisition is said by Aristotle to be unlimited. In this sense it resembles the other arts. All arts attempt to secure their end to the greatest possible extent, all except the natural art of acquisition, which is limited. If this is true, then how can it maintain its status as an art? The natural art of acquisition is limited only with regard to money. But the accumulation of money is not its purpose. It cannot be understood apart from the art which it serves. That art, household management, possesses an end different in kind from unlimited acquisition. It nonetheless seeks its purpose, a moral purpose, in an unlimited way. Hence the natural art of acquisition, in sharing the purpose of household management, similarly possesses an unlimited end, an unlimited end which demands limited wealth.

The problem, which Aristotle observes, is that although wealth has a limit, everyone seems actively engaged in acquiring an unlimited amount of money.<sup>73</sup> He first suggests that the reason for this is the involvement of natural and unnatural acquisition with the same objects. But this answer is inadequate since it does not account for the direction in which men are moved. Why does handling money move men toward its accumulation? Aristotle then admits that the genuine cause of unlimited acquisition and the attraction of money is the desire

72. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1179<sup>b</sup>32–34, 1181<sup>a</sup>23.

73. See Chester Starr, *The Economic and Social Growth of Early Greece, 800–500B.C.* (Oxford U.P., 1977), p. 47: "the Greeks searched for [wealth] with that intensity which they displayed on other aspects of life. This desire demands stress, for many modern studies accept far too easily the Platonic and Aristotelian disdain for 'profit' or for the sordid aspects of making-money (chrematistike)."

for life. Hence he reveals that unnatural, like natural, acquisition arises from natural desire.<sup>74</sup> Man naturally desires more than nature initially provides.<sup>75</sup> This is true despite the fact that Aristotle had identified “comfort” with natural acquisition. He was well aware of man’s disposition toward forgetting the pain associated with birth by enhancing civil life with physical pleasure. The frequency of this occurrence is explained by the fact that man can relieve his own estate and the enjoyment—no less, albeit later, than the initial need—is naturally felt.

It is in speaking of the unnatural art of acquisition, of its attempt to satisfy that which is deepest in man and of the natural desires from which it originates, that Aristotle introduces morality or the good life.<sup>76</sup> No mention was made of the good life in his discussion of the natural art of acquisition even though that art served morality. The practitioner of natural acquisition was untouched by longings for completion since he only possessed a dim awareness of man’s possibilities. The ceiling of his aspirations was naturally premoral; his art was governed by enforced limitation. As such it could be of service to unenforced limitation or limitation in circumstances of abundance. As we have seen, this point is missed by readers who misunderstand Aristotle’s account of acquisition by focusing on the products, not the limitation. These commentators assumed that Aristotle’s praise for nature’s benevolence and the natural art of acquisition extended to the horizon of man’s life established by his initial needs. They paid insufficient attention to the political implications of Aristotle’s prepolitical art. But following the creation of the polis, the art of household management is ordered by the requirements of the good life or the life at which politics aims. The good life, as one sees from reading the *Ethics*, does not deny large possessions of currency, only unlimited ones. The moral use of great amounts of cur-

74. In this regard note Aristotle’s critique, in Book II, of Phaleas of Chalcedon. Specifically: “There are some crimes which are due to lack of necessities; and here, Phaleas thinks, equality of property will be a remedy, and will serve to prevent men from stealing simply through cold or hunger. But want is not the only cause of crimes. Men also commit them simply for the pleasure it gives them, and just to get rid of an unsatisfied desire. Vexed by a desire which goes beyond the simple necessities of life, they will turn criminals to cure their vexation. Men may not only commit crime to cure a desire they already feel: they may start some desire just in order to enjoy the sort of pleasure which is unaccompanied by pain” (Barker, *Politics*, 1267<sup>a</sup>3–17).

75. This point is missed by Polanyi: “Human needs be they of the household or of the city, are not boundless; nor is there a scarcity of subsistence in nature” [Emphasis added] “Aristotle Discovers the Economy,” p. 80. He seems to assume that since Aristotle did not admit of scarcity none existed. He fails to recognize that the unnatural art of acquisition is a confirmation of nature’s scarcity.

76. Note Newman: “He [Aristotle] scarcely seems to admit that the love of money is as primary an instinct of human nature as the love of pleasure; he sometimes resolves the former into the latter” (*The Politics of Aristotle*, p. 200); yet what would result from identifying the love of money as a “primary . . . instinct of human nature”? Newman seems unaware of the moral purpose of the natural art of acquisition. The love of money is not presented as an instinct of human nature in order to demonstrate its *unnatural* character.

rency discloses great virtuous disinterest in the desires from which it stems.<sup>77</sup>

Man's immorality causes him to subvert the arts. According to Aristotle, if man cannot attain a sufficient amount of money by practicing the unnatural form of acquisition, then he attempts to gain his end by making the other arts serve this purpose. The question becomes, "Don't the other arts already serve this purpose insofar as artisans are momentarily rewarded for producing their product?" Aristotle would say no. Each artisan appears solely concerned with his product. Aristotle reduces the good of the artisan to the good artisan. As a consequence he omits any mention of how the arts are related. His account has left the artisan true to his art but strangely unable to sustain himself.

While the horizon of natural acquisition was limited to bodily needs, the artisan of the city now appears divorced from subsistence. In the city only one art, an unnatural art, is said to aim at money. All the other arts are primarily taken with fashioning their products. In removing himself from nature, the citified artisan has removed himself from that side of his life concerned with corporeality. His bodily needs were his concern only when nature supplied—while limiting—his provisions. With the passing of the natural art of acquisition the artisan is not left unattended. Aristotle now speaks of the arts with reference to morality. Morality supercedes natural acquisition with the appearance of noneconomic possibilities. At this point Aristotle reminds us that both the arts and moral qualities may succumb to the desires for pleasure. He does not speak of moral qualities in terms of the arts, for he presents courage rather than soldiering. The damage done by hedonism should not be depreciated; not art but moral virtue is destroyed when an appropriate disregard for life is forgotten in favor of the pleasures of life.

Courage, Aristotle's first example, inherently assumes a posture which is thought, in the name of nobility, to resist brute nature. It rejects the base pleasures arising from civil conditions without which it cannot exist. Robbed of its morality courage is an ability for hire which may be used to destroy that which it previously sustained. The corruption of the arts and of man's moral capacities are not explained by the absence of unnatural acquisition as an art separate from other arts but only by its presence. This unnatural art possesses an entry into the artisan's life by virtue of the fact that all products must be reduced to money, the common medium which serves man's needs. To the extent that the arts' incidental concern with money becomes their central concern, they serve the master art—the art of money-making. This is the reason that Aristotle first considered the purpose of the arts independent of the artisan's compensation. He sought to prevent the unnatural art of acquisition from supplanting mother nature in designating the worth of the other arts.

If Midas wasn't kingly, his art appeared to be, for it ordered his life and,

77. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1122<sup>a</sup>34ff.

without divine rectification, would have denied his life. In a similar manner the unnatural art of acquisition appears supreme. It is capable of destroying or submerging the other arts into the desire for money. They differ, for as we have seen the strength of the unnatural art of acquisition requires wisdom other than Dionysius'; it requires human wisdom. The unnatural art, in ordering men's lives, appears only to do what the natural art did before it. Both order life on the basis of his bodily desires. Yet the natural art ordered man's bodily life when man's life was limited to the body. The unnatural art of acquisition orders man's life when this is no longer true. This is why one art of acquisition can be natural and another unnatural despite the facts that both control man's life and that in each case the artisans are not in the first instance men. But now accompanying the unnatural art are greater needs which are different in kind—as we have seen, the good life is not one of monetary degree. Man's life must now be ordered by an art aware of man's maturity or complexity. Clearly the natural art of acquisition is not suited to such a task. We need to find its civil equivalent, an art which is natural even if it is not coeval with man's chronological birth and which is concerned with natural subjugation even though it aims at peace. Perhaps this can best be accomplished by making a new beginning.

## VI. THE LEGISLATIVE ART

We can best make that beginning by returning to Aristotle's detachment of the arts from that side of man's life concerned with subsistence. At that time he limited a consideration of the artisan to his product. The excellence of the artisan was dependent upon the goodness or badness of the finished product but was independent of the use to which the product was ultimately put. Hence the excellence of the artisan did not extend to man unless we assume that man is solely a producer. But, as we have seen, the artisan must also consume. He must use the products of other artisans as well as his own. Man's use of the product moves beyond reason in the service of production. It involves knowledge with which the artisan appeared unconcerned. Initially, for want of such knowledge, the "wisdom" of the body informed the arts—use was a response to need. But with abundance this wisdom no longer suffices. Now man must deliberate, not regarding use, but the good use of the artisan's product. Morality is required in the absence of the artisan's limited awareness. It emerges with possibilities created by, but not limited to, bodily needs. As a consequence man is forced to choose, and his choice is tied to his way of life. Use reflects life within the horizon of morality—both are informed by goodness. The good man is the man who leads a morally useful life. As such, he may now be presented as a product. He is produced by human wisdom and the legislative art—the only art whose product discredits both producers and production.

The legislative art is the only art that can apprehend the natural character of the art of acquisition. Its acumen stems from understanding the effects which result if man's art is seen as conquering nature. It prevents these effects by denying that man, a manifestation of nature, conquers all other natural manifestations. This would be no better than the conquest of nature by art, since power would be the title for subjugation in each case. Rather the legislative art acknowledges that man is nature's highest manifestation; he is the manifestation who can rightly conquer and order in the name of nature, for he is the only part which reflects the whole of nature.<sup>78</sup> Man mirrors nature in that he is at war with himself. The conflict present in nature's articulations, man and animal, is a recreation of the conflict present in man, soul and body. The natural war to overcome animal life morally yields to the civil, yet no less natural, war to overcome the body and its desires. Here man must fight to subdue, not nature's provisions, but nature's raging passions; here he fights not to live but to live well. If man is nature's highest articulation, then the war in which man is a part is inferior to the war among the parts of man. Consequently, the legislative art's depiction of economic life is a battle meant to serve the greater victory of moral life. Only moral life explains the fierce independence of the hunter and the slavish disposition of the petty artisan; only nobility explains why war reveals man prior to the polis, and why peaceful pursuit of gain fails to reflect humanity even within civil life. The natural conquering of animal life and the conquering of man's animal passions are pitted against the docility which man occasions by surrendering to the gifts which he presents to himself. This surrender is the conclusion of a quiet civil war in which the lower parts of man's soul attempt to profit ignobly at the expense of a higher part.<sup>79</sup> The

78. Compare with the following statement by Engels: "The seizure of the means of production by society eliminates commodity production and with it the domination of the product over the producer. The anarchy within social production is replaced by consciously planned organization. The struggle for individual existence comes to an end. It is only at this point that man finally separates in a certain sense from the animal kingdom and that he passes from animal conditions of existence to really human ones. The conditions of existence environing and hitherto dominating humanity now pass under the dominion and control of humanity, which now for the first time becomes the real conscious master of nature, because and in so far as it becomes master of its own social organization" (Frederick Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* [Foreign Language Press, 1975], p. 97). According to Engels, man must finally be separated from the "animal kingdom." The producer must be liberated from dominating product and nature alike. His subjugation results in oppression, for it dehumanizes man making of him a commodity. At the same time the producer's domination of nature does not portend unlimited economic desires, since history has solved the problem of use. Man desires no more than he needs. The end of history heralds an earlier beginning. Man's domination of nature, his transformation from commodity to human being, resembles nature's earliest domination of man—his economic contentedness occurs in the absence of desires to the contrary. For these reasons the natural art of acquisition, for Aristotle "the product dominating the producer," ceases to have moral meaning. It administered to man's lack of contentedness with economic life.

79. The affinity between productivity and peace is from a much different perspective affirmed by Bacon: "Wherefore, as in religion we are warned to show our faith by works, so in philosophy by the same rule the system should be judged of by its fruits, and pronounced frivolous if it be

natural art of acquisition reminds us of man's war for survival, but, given the nature of human life, it also reminds us that his war for survival is not his most perilous war.

The legislative art, much like the natural art of acquisition, is no ordinary art. Law, which issues from the legislative art, determines the fate of the other arts. They are permitted or prevented from appearing in the city by political rule. The legislator deliberates regarding those arts which are essential for human life. In turn, the meaning of human life cannot be determined apart from the nature of man. Law permits and forbids in the name of nature. Hence nature governs the legislator. Yet nature cannot simply govern the legislative art as it was said to govern the acquisitive art. One reason is that man can only attain completion upon transformation, by discarding and forgetting his natural beginnings. Aristotle facilitates man's shedding of his youth. He does this not by ignoring but by reclaiming man's deep past; man's transformation is accomplished by a transformation of his history. Those youthful activities which seek to fulfill limited needs are ennobled and consequently, while remaining limited, are no longer essentially descriptive of man's youth. Second, nature, even when understood in terms of man's completion, cannot simply govern the legislative art, since it only passes upon the arts. It remains for law to permit those arts necessary for moral life. The necessity of law reveals the impotency of nature. Without assistance from law the passions of the body reign unbridled; in the presence of lawless nature man wars, not with the gods, but with the beasts.

In another sense, the legislative art resembles the ordinary arts. Of the two natural arts, only the legislative art is concerned with production. It is responsible for the polis or that association which completes man's growth. Its concern is with nobility and hence its designation as the supreme or manly art. Its practitioner, according to Aristotle the greatest of "benefactors,"<sup>80</sup> provides for human nature in the presence of mere nature. No comparable legacy precedes his work; his art neither can be attributed to nor characterized by bodily needs. Hence maternal nature cannot instruct the legislator. Man's ultimate production can only be attributed to man. As a result, man is no longer a creation requiring servile care. He is now the proud moral product of a new, if final, natural association—the polis. But in producing, man, of necessity, must imitate the nature from which he withdraws. Within a civil setting the legislative art gives birth and destroys.

In its moral war with the unnatural art of acquisition and the desires which it shields, the legislative art's creations are its weapons. It, unlike its powerful

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barren, more especially if, in place of fruits of grape and olive, it bear thorns and briars of dispute and contention" (Bacon, *Essays*, pp. 216–17). Aristotle's contentiousness must be replaced by a philosophic tolerance, and his conquering hunter or warrior much succumb, in the first instance, to productive, not "barren," "lovers of quiet" (Bacon, *Works*, III, p. 435).

80. Barker, *Politics*, 1253<sup>a</sup>32–33.

opponent, can dignify. Its creations possess the advantage of being understood, in the first instance, apart from their birth. And, despite the limitation in creating for those which it has not created, the legislative art possesses the power of imagination. It can dignify that which does not exist or recreate that which does. Yet this imaginative power is neither unbounded nor arbitrary—it has a logos. This is why the legislative art, unlike maternal nature, relies on no other art to justify its products. And this is why the products of the legislative art can never be understood as “constructs.” To describe Aristotle’s teaching in this way robs that teaching of its logos, of its reasonability. It assumes that moral principles are constructed by man but unauthorized by nature. Any principle presented in the name of nature becomes evidence of deception. And deception, given nature’s disinterest, is unjustifiable for it can no longer be part of a natural edifying order. Such an approach returns us to unadorned nature, to birth and creation but without first having significantly considered man’s completion. The result, from the perspective of nobility, is a distortion of nature, a still birth. Man’s moral life dies even while he survives. With the demise of his moral end, his survival cannot even be described as a beginning.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The theoretical section on the art of acquisition is concluded with a summary. It begins with natural birth and ends with usury. Some hint of the connection between the two is supplied by the Greek term for usury, *τόκος*, which literally means offspring, and, in this case, “child of the ‘parent’ principal.”<sup>81</sup> Aristotle’s point is simple—money cannot breed. One commentator has charged that Aristotle is “merely playing with words,”<sup>82</sup> for money can breed, while another commentator has attributed Aristotle’s misunderstanding of usury to difficulties springing from the term itself. Aristotle’s mistaken claim that money is barren, his play upon the identification of currency and birth, blinds him to its beneficial effects.<sup>83</sup> Both of these assessments fail to ask, “Who is the parent of principal?” Despite its conventional status, usury is not far removed from man’s birth. Like nature, it gives life to the body. It breeds not only money but desire into men who are taken with the conventional version of their initial life. In reproducing money from money, usury appears as

81. Barker, *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, p. 386.

82. Michell, *The Economics of Ancient Greece*, p. 32.

83. Barker, *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, p. 386; also note Ross: “Here again a justifiable moral prejudice against iniquitous usury blinds him [Aristotle] to the economic services rendered by lenders of capitalism . . .” (Ross, *Aristotle*, p. 243); Barker: “It is easy to show that Aristotle has not understood the theory of interest” (*Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, p. 386); Michell: “The argument that money is a dead thing and does not breed must be rejected absolutely” (*The Economics of Ancient Greece*, p. 30).

the fulfillment of nature's providential promise. It allows some men to live with ease in circumstances of abundance. But the offspring of usury is a slavish, not a warlike, disposition. The debtor's servile obligation to the usurer and the usurer's servile obligation to interest remove any likelihood of nobility. Usury creates a child of man by paralleling in civil life his dependence on maternal nature. In an important sense art not only imitates but supersedes nature. Procreation is attributed to art—the usurer breeds interest from money. But money breeds without thought of need or limitation. Natural parentage and care have been forgotten. No Midas exists to remind man of his foolishness. In their absence usury cannot be naturalized. It remains the most unnatural form of acquisition.

Given Aristotle's account of natural and unnatural acquisition, the following passage from *The Economics of Ancient Greece*, referred to as “the currently standard work in English on Greek Economics,”<sup>84</sup> is distinguished from many other texts only by the concise clarity with which it misses the point:

Their [the Greek philosophers'] thought was entirely dominated by ethical ideas; there was an absolute separation of the ideas of right and wrong in human conduct from that of economic advantage and disadvantage. It might, at first sight, be thought that in this the Greek philosopher was superior to the modern economist who is, apparently, too prone to overlook the ethical in favor of the practical, and to preach a materialism in which spiritual values have no place. Reflection will reveal that such would be far from the reality. The Greek philosopher's outlook was too constricted for him to appreciate the fact, which the modern economist has grasped, that economic advantage or disadvantage is, in the last analysis, conditioned by ethical values.<sup>85</sup>

Aristotle is found wanting in this respect: he views the human condition from a perspective “dominated by ethical ideas” which consequently causes a separation of the moral from the economic sphere. The result is a “constricted outlook” which fails to “appreciate” the fact that economic advantage and disadvantage are “conditioned” by morality. What Michell, the author of the above passage, and others fail to understand is that Aristotle did precisely what they claim he did not do. It is Aristotle who refuses to present economics independent of the household, an association which cannot be understood apart from its moral purpose; and it is Aristotle, not “modern economists,” who, through the art of the hunter, infuses nobility into economic life.

Where Michell goes wrong is in failing to see that domination reveals a “separation only” in light of unification. This perspective, far from constricting man's horizon, directs us to maximum clarity—natural completeness or wholeness. This is not to deny that nature, which is the basis for clarity, is contrary. It clearly is complex and apparently inconsistent. Man may appear as

84. Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, p. 26.

85. Michell, *The Economics of Ancient Greece*, p. 34.

other than man. The answer for Aristotle lies with moral edification which preempts procreation and demands obfuscation in the service of subjugation: money cannot naturally breed, for it can only be unnaturally bred. But, at the same time, obfuscation, however moral, encounters those passions which seek base clarity by their persistence. Their continual presence and intensity are an ever-present truth. They are opposed by a moral truth, not as persistent but equally enduring, with which Aristotle concludes his consideration of usury and his theoretical section on the art of acquisition; he reminds us that those desires originating with our birth outlive their surroundings, and if we take our bearing by such desires, however natural, we are at an early unnatural end.