

# Interpretation

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# Interpretation

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# Politics and Poetry: Aristotle's *Politics*, Books VII and VIII

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There is customarily something odd about the constitution of Aristotle's writings, the full fifth of the *Nicomachean Ethics* devoted to friendship (Books VIII–IX), for example, and the unaccountably long discussion of the elements of language in the *Poetics* (Chapters 20–21). Book VII of the *Politics* prepares us for the importance of education to the best political regime. Still, we do not expect the extended treatment of music and poetry in Book VIII. As usual there is a reason, but it is not on the surface of it obvious.

## I

Book VII begins with the following claim:

Concerning the best regime, it is necessary for him who intends to make the appropriate inquiry first to determine what is the life most to be chosen. For while this is unclear, the best regime is also necessarily unclear. For it is appropriate that those governing themselves (being governed—*politeuomenous*) best (*arista*) given what exists for them, fare best (do the best things—*arista pratein*), if something does not happen contrary to reason. (1323a14–19)

On the surface it all looks fairly straightforward. Since the best regime is for the sake of the best way of life, one cannot possibly know what regime is best without determining what life is best. However Aristotle's way of making the claim reveals a problem. If *politeuomenous* is in the middle voice it means something like governing themselves; if passive, it means being governed. There is a related ambiguity in the expression *arista pratein* which can be rendered as either faring best or acting best—doing the best things. To fare well means to be satisfied with one's life; to do good things need not mean that at all. Governing oneself well has to do with knowing what one is doing; being governed well implies nothing of the sort.

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If we glance back at the structure of Books I–VI of the *Politics* this ambiguity becomes clearer. Books I–III culminate in the account of all encompassing kingship, *pambasileia*. The best regime is the rule of the best. Rule by the wisest is clearly best insofar as it results in each citizen doing what is best for himself and for the whole city. Such a ruler, says Aristotle, is like the father of a family. However, precisely for this reason such rule is not really political. The *pambasileus* rules; the citizens are ruled. But the middle sense of the verb *politeuomai* has disappeared. To do the best things is not to fare well if one is thereby reduced to the status of a permanent child. Books IV–VI thus have as their underlying theme the tension between freedom and order. The following question therefore governs the final two books of the *Politics*: To what extent can faring best be reconciled with doing the best things?

Aristotle first asks “what life (*bios*) is so to speak (*hōs epein*) most to be chosen by all,” and then indicates that much of what he will say about the best living (*zōē*) has already been said in what he calls here his external speeches (*exōterikoi logoi*). Aristotle’s “so to speak” might well be rendered “so as to speak.” The task is to use what has been said about living (*zoe*) in speeches which look at things from without in order to give an account which is adequate to our experience from within. The goal is not only “living” but living so as to speak—self-conscious living, or life (*bios*).<sup>1</sup> This interpretation of Aristotle’s intent admittedly involves translating what are obviously secondary meanings as though they were primary. The justice of this exegetical zeal is supported by the argument which follows, however.

If there are three sorts of beings, those external, those in the body and those in the soul, it is clear that all three are required for faring well (1323a23ff.). No matter how wealthy or attractive, a person in constant fear of death would live an unenviable life. Accordingly, courage is one of the goods of the soul without which nothing else can be altogether good. The virtues are necessary conditions for getting and keeping those external goods which are thought to contribute to happiness and so are good in the sense of being useful (*chrēsimon*).

This external account “through deeds” (*dia tōn ergōn*) according to which virtues are good makes them seem means to a further end. Aristotle now introduces a second argument rooted not in deeds (*erga*) but in *logos*. External things are good only insofar as they are good *for* something—ultimately for some soul. The sign of this is that they have limits. There is no such thing as too much internal satisfaction with a good, but there is certainly such a thing as too much food. The good as the useful is therefore limited by that for which it is useful. Only that which is good for its own sake is without limit. Such a good is not useful but *kalon*—beautiful or noble. It is internal goods which are unlimited. And yet

generally it is clear, as we will assert, that the best disposition of each thing toward others with respect to preeminence follows the difference which it has received from the things of which we assert these themselves to be the dispositions. So that

if the soul is more honorable than both possession and body, both simply and to us, the best disposition of each is necessarily analogous to these. Further, these things by nature are chosen for the sake of the soul, and all those who think well ought to choose them, but not soul for the sake of them. (1323b13–21)

Now, if the body is to the soul as the goods of the body are to the goods of the soul, and if the goods of the body are, as tools, necessarily limited, while the goods of the soul are unlimited, then it follows that the soul is unlimited. The soul is not a tool and so has no function external to itself. It cannot be understood as directed toward anything outside itself. This seems to be what Aristotle means by calling its goods *kalon*. But is this the human soul?

Virtue was first understood to be good in the sense of useful, then in the sense of *kalon*. Aristotle now cites as an example the god for whom there is no necessity and so no external goods whatsoever, and who is therefore happy and blessed “himself on account of himself.” A god, for whom there is no distinction between the good as useful and the *kalon*, is never an instrument. Aristotle had claimed that the soul was more honorable “both simply and to us.” “To us” must mean “to soul.” Soul serves both as subject—that for whom things are good—and as object—that which is good. To the extent that these two are identical, the good as useful will be the same as the good as *kalon*. But to the extent that what is good for soul is external, the two will be different, and soul will be good for something. Human beings differ from gods insofar as for us virtue must be understood as double, as means to external goods which are then in turn necessary for internal satisfaction. Virtue is a composition of the *kalon* on the one hand, and the *chresimon* (or, when understood in the proper way, the *agathon*) on the other. The virtuous man is the *kalos k'agathos*. This doubleness is signaled by the city itself in which men are the purpose or end of the regime; it is for the sake of their happiness, their faring best, while at the same time, as citizens who perform functions in the city, they are the means to that end—as tools they do the best things. In the best regime these two must be one. The activity which preserves the city must somehow be that for which the city is preserved. This is of course easier to say than to do.

## II

If the virtuous citizen is an instrument, his purpose is something like the happiness of the city as a whole. Aristotle is therefore forced to ask what the relation is between the happiness of the individual and the happiness of the city as a whole. He seems to finesse the issue.

Whether the same happiness must be asserted to be both of each single human being and of the city or not the same remains to say. But even this is apparent. For all would agree that it is the same. For whoever posit living well in wealth

concerning one person, these will also call the whole city blessed if it be wealthy, and whoever especially honor the tyrannical life, these would assert the city ruling the most men to be the happiest. And if someone allows the one man [to be happy] on account of virtue, he will also assert the more excellent (*spoudaioteran*) city to be the most happy. (1324a5–13)

All, of course, do not agree on what is good for the city; they rather agree that what they think good for themselves is also good for the city. What is the case in all cities is that *something* is honored. But even this is not to overcome the tension between the happiness of the individual and that of the city. To pursue wealth as good is not the same as to wish to be honored for one's wealth. Only the latter requires a city in which wealth is celebrated. But to the extent that such a city pursues wealth itself, its citizens may have to subordinate their own pursuit of wealth and so sacrifice their own good as they understand it. Imperialism can be expensive. A citizen might donate a ship to the navy and be honored for doing something kalon, where the kalon has to do with supporting the city's overall purpose, its pursuit of wealth. But he would be in fact sacrificing his own wealth. Even when the city and man are understood to have a good in common, it is therefore not self-evident that the two goods will not conflict.

The real issue, however, is not the pursuit of wealth but philosophy. The life of contemplation seems to stand as the model for the inner life par excellence—the life virtually independent because it requires so little from without. Consequently Aristotle says two inquiries must be made: (1) whether the life most to be chosen is political or that of a stranger released (*apolelumenos*) from the political community and (2) what regime is best regardless of whether life in the political community is best for all or only for some. He justifies the second question as following from what we have intentionally chosen (*proëirēmetha*), i.e., political thought and contemplation. He then specifies that the alternative to the political or active life is the life released (*apoleleumenos*) from everything external, such as a contemplative life which some assert to be the only philosophic life. These are the two ways of life intentionally chosen (*pro-airoumenoi*) by those most ambitious with regard to virtue. We need to notice in passing that Aristotle has stipulated his own intentional choice as a sort of hybrid of the two—political philosophy.

If political virtue is instrumental virtue, the danger is that the city in the name of which it is instrumental will also come to be understood as instrumental. The man with instrumental virtue exerts himself solely for the sake of what is external to him. When the same understanding of virtue guides the city, it will define itself by its ability to extend its rule over others; the city will become the imperialistic city, the city at war. Aristotle's examples suggest that this is the truth of all actual cities. The doubleness of virtue can then be understood according to the following proportion: the internal : external :: philosophical : political :: nonimperialistic : imperialistic. As the best city must combine

two sorts of virtue, the internal and external, it looks as though it has to combine elements of this proportion which are not obviously compatible. The best city needs political virtue but must be nonimperialistic. Put somewhat differently, its citizens must practice political virtue, but it must itself be modeled on philosophy.

Just as the city devoted to wealth need not contain wealthy men, the city modeled on philosophy need not contain any philosophers. In fact it looks as though it would be hard for it to contain useful parts which were themselves altogether independent of the larger whole. Nevertheless philosophy serves as the model for what Aristotle calls autotelic action:

But it is not necessary that the active [life] be in relation to others, as some consider, nor that thinking alone to be active which comes to be from acting for the sake of the things which will result, but much more contemplations (*theōrias*) and thoughts (*dianoēseis*) which have their ends within themselves (*autoteleis*) and are for the sake of themselves. (1325b17–22)

The contemplative life is not passive but active in the highest sense. Its action is not externally directed, however; it is instead characterized by internal motion. The city based on it will therefore be active and at the same time self-contained. Accordingly, Aristotle likens these two, the contemplative life and the best city, to the cosmos; all three are *kalon*. Needless to say, just as it is hard to place the autotelic contemplative within the autotelic city, it is hard to understand either of them in their relation to the autotelic cosmos. How is it possible for a whole to be made up of parts which are at the same time perfect wholes in their own right? Aristotle's response to this question begins to emerge in his treatment of the parts of the best regime in the remainder of Book VII.

### III

The best regime may be autotelic, but, as the regime of a city, it would have to confront certain necessities of nature. It would have to be situated in a place, have a certain size and have a certain number of citizens each of a particular age, sex and character. And of course there are tasks that have to be performed for any city to survive, and yet more for it to survive well. Aristotle acknowledges that the best regime must have equipment (1325b29) which, as equipment, is not a product of the regime but must be present by hypothesis. It is "what one would pray for," what is external to the regime and makes it possible.

The number of parts of the city without which it cannot exist are related to the number of necessary tasks (*erga*). Aristotle mentions six such tasks: sustenance, arts for the production of tools, arms for both internal order and external

defense, wealth, care for the divine and judgment with regard to the advantageous and the just. It looks as though the parts of the city will follow accordingly: farmers, artisans, soldiers, the rich, priests and deliberators. Instead Aristotle excludes artisans from citizenship on the grounds that their way of life is incompatible with virtue, which is after all the goal of the regime (1328b25ff.). And he not only excludes farmers on the grounds that their lives lack the leisure necessary for citizenship but indicates that what we pray for is that they will be slaves (1330a26–27). The remaining four tasks are in fact fulfilled by the same people, albeit at different times of their lives. Those who own property are citizens. When young they are soldiers, in middle age they are deliberators, and as old men priests. Throughout the *Politics*, but especially in Books IV–VI, the most difficult problem has been what to do with the lower class, the *dēmos*. Here in Book VII Aristotle solves the problem by praying them away. Those men absolutely necessary to the polis because they produce its sustenance and its tools, who make its life possible, have been transformed into tools. The *demos* seems to be the limit on the combination of virtue as means with virtue as end in itself. Good farmers don't make good men.

Aristotle, of course, knows how problematic this all is. When he suggests that freedom be held out as a reward for slaves (1330a30ff.), he tacitly admits that these cannot be the same as the slaves he previously argued to be so by nature. However, slavery for any but these is unjust, and so the best regime would seem to require either unjust slavery, and so imperfection in its deliberative element, or an ineducable *demos*, and so ignobility in its citizen body generally. Aristotle's "solution" here is obviously no solution at all. The *demos* represents an insurmountable obstacle to the coincidence of virtue as an end with virtue as means. But abolishing it in speech allows Aristotle to address those features of political life in which such a coincidence is possible.

What sort of citizen does the best regime require? People who rule themselves cannot be too malleable, but neither can they be too stubborn. Accordingly Aristotle describes their natures as the proper mix of thinking and art with spirit (*thumos*). The polis as we have seen is a combination of order and freedom. Aristotle then goes on to say that in Europe men have an excess of *thumos* in relation to thought, while in Asia the disproportion is reversed. But "the race of the Greeks, just as it is in the middle with respect to places, so it participates in both . . . and the tribes of Greeks also have the same difference in relation to one another" (1327b29–34). Thus a difference in soul—an internal difference—is explained in terms of geography. Locate a city on the map, and you can read off the character of its citizen body. Later, and perhaps somewhat more plausibly, he does something similar in terms of age (1329a15–16, 1332b36–39). The old are by nature more suitable to rule than the young.

What all of this means becomes clearer when Aristotle discusses the physical characteristics of the best city. It must be both near the sea, since it does need external trade, and away from the sea, since it is to be to the greatest

extent possible autotelic. This double demand will be physically satisfied by establishing a port area separated off from the city proper (1327a30–39). Later Aristotle does something similar with respect to ownership of the land (1330a9–20). Reflecting the split between the whole and its parts, Aristotle divides the land first into a common part and privately owned parts. The common part is then divided into a part which treats the city's needs as a whole—i.e., the part concerned with meeting needs of services to the gods—and a part which serves the public needs insofar as they are used by citizens severally—i.e., providing for common messes. Each privately owned part is then also divided in two, with a part near the center of the city and a part on the periphery. The goal is to make each citizen reproduce in himself the external differences in the city which might lead to differing assessments of the good of the whole. Everyone is simultaneously from upstate and downstate.

Perhaps most revealing is Aristotle's description of where the city should be located. For purposes of health and defense, it is to be on a slope. The locations of fortified places will vary depending on the regime. Monarchy and oligarchy fortify a height—an acropolis—democracy occupies level places, and aristocracy has a number of strong places. As to walls, Aristotle is quite clear: You need them. While there is something to the old-fashioned view that it is more *kalon* to defend the city with men, a city with walls can always choose to ignore them, but a city without walls cannot suddenly choose to have them when it is outnumbered. Walls are an artifice fulfilling Aristotle's earlier "prayer" that the city be located in a place easy of exit but difficult of access. He adds that these walls "must be cared for in order that with respect to the city they may hold suitably both in relation to order (or ornament—*kosmon*) and in relation to the needs of war" (1331a12–14). That walls are to be both ornamental and useful points to the most striking thing about the physical ordering (*diakosmeō*—1331a23) of the best city. The houses given over to the gods and those where the rulers have common meals are highest on the slope of this city, although significantly not on the top. Their location has a double justification. It "is sufficiently conspicuous both in relation to the position of virtue and in relation to being more fortified than the neighboring parts of the city" (1331a28–31). Farther down the hill is what is called a free market, which is purged of all merchandise and purged as well of all the nonfree members of the city—artisans and farmers. It is where free men are at leisure, whereas the commercial market further down the slope is the place where necessities are dealt with.

Now this external arrangement of things on a slope is interesting because it corresponds perfectly to the internal hierarchy of the city itself. This is a city in which the higher things are really higher and in which necessities are simultaneously adornments. Aristotle excludes the *demos* as most recalcitrant to this sort of coincidence and then transforms the city into a place where nothing is accidental. It becomes a poem in which the parts seem at first as haphazard as

the events of real life but in the end fit together like a book. Aristotle has made a city in which all things external and bodily—geography, age, place, property, even the walls of the city—are really images for other things. To be sure, body and externality are present, but they have lost their defining features as limits on the autotelic character of political life. They are like the bodies in books—Oedipus' swollen feet or Ahab's missing leg. As all the details of the city are now meaningful, no private good or preference could be irrelevant. That is, when all difference is of generalizable significance, the split between the public and the private disappears. This city, where nothing occurs contrary to reason (*paralogon*—1323a19), where necessities are ornaments, is the city that one would pray for.

Now it is only in a political order of this sort that the distinction between the good as useful and the good as *kalon* can be overcome. If my ownership of land is not only necessary for the existence of the city but structured in such a way that it is symbolic of the very being of the city, then owning it is not only a means to an end; it somehow embodies the end to which it is a means. When the walls of the city are not only necessary for protection but are also an image of that which they are protecting, then building them is not simply a means to an end but a celebration of the end itself. When I open my eyes and see not only where things are, but in seeing where they are see also what they are, then the objects around me become not only things utilized by the city, but the city itself.

Aristotle is not the first to have seen this point. In Plato's *Laws* the Athenian Stranger proposes the following response to the poets who wish to be admitted to the regime being founded:

Best of strangers, we ourselves to the greatest extent possible are the poets of a tragedy at once the most beautiful and best. At least all our regime has put together an imitation of the most beautiful and best life which we say really to be the truest tragedy. (817b)

The best political order requires men in two ways; as ends their virtue is *kalon*, as means it is *chresimon*. To succeed completely the best regime would have to make this double virtue one. The same activity would have to be both for itself and for some external or exoteric end. The exoteric becomes esoteric when it becomes symbolic. The best regime therefore must be a poem, making meaningful what is dictated by necessity but is otherwise meaningless. When in the *Poetics* (1451b5–11) Aristotle remarks that poetry is something more philosophic than history, he means that, while both seem to deal with particular events, this is something of an illusion in poetry, the very being of which is to make generally significant what is on the face of it particular and insignificant. Only in a regime which is like a poem can the tension between the good of the part and the good of the whole be resolved. To the extent that it is possible not only to serve the whole but in the very same action to embody the whole one serves, it will be possible for the man who does the best things to fare the best.

By articulating what is beautiful or noble within the sphere of the necessary, poetry makes political life possible. Poetic education is therefore the necessary feature of political life. Accordingly, Aristotle considers it in some detail in the final book of the *Politics*.

#### IV

By arguing that the pursuit of the necessities of life can in the best regime be made coincident with the pursuit of the *kalon*, Book VII seems to lead to the happy conclusion that political virtue which is a means to an end can be reconciled with that virtue which is an end in itself—philosophical virtue. The good life and the means to the good life consist in the same activity. Book VIII, less sanguine, seems to argue that esoteric philosophic virtue depends on exoteric political virtue. If Book VII tells us that building the city's walls can be satisfying for its own sake, Book VIII tells us that poetry and music cannot be understood other than as reflections on building walls. If the city itself were the perfect poem, then poetry would not need to be taught within the city.

The argument about education concerns first of all whether it is education of thinking or of character, and secondly whether it should be directed at the useful, at virtue or at what Aristotle calls here extraordinary or odd things (*ta peritta*). It looks as though education of character means education to virtue. Education of thinking clearly has to do with the useful, as Aristotle's subsequent account indicates. At *ta peritta* we are left to wonder. The sequel makes clear that while of course one has to learn certain things for the sake of other things, and so education will of necessity be to some extent concerned with the useful, its ultimate goal is virtue understood as autotelic activity. On the level of the individual Aristotle gives that activity the name *scholē*, leisure. Education to the useful is permissible only to the extent that it is not at cross purposes with the primary goal of education, virtue. Hence the young are not to be educated in anything which will make them vulgar (*banauson*). Aristotle then says that he means by a banausic or vulgar deed or art "whatever renders either the body, soul, or thinking of the free useless with respect to the uses and actions of virtue" (1337b8–12).<sup>2</sup> This warning against the useful goes so far as to include the "free sciences" when they become too concerned with precision. Leisure is to be the goal of education, because virtuous, i.e., autotelic, action is the goal of the best regime. Music, the model for such action, is good because it is useless.

Aristotle's examples of what he has in mind are quite odd, however. He quotes two passages from the *Odyssey*.<sup>3</sup> In the first, the swineherd Eumaeus is defending Odysseus who, disguised as a beggar, is sitting at table with the suitors and listening to a singer. Odysseus of course is in the midst of planning to kill them. This musical activity of free men at leisure is in fact a disguise for

utilitarian activity of a rather brutal kind. In the second quotation Odysseus himself speaks. He is at a banquet at the house of Alcinous in Phaeacia; the song he praises, which has constituted their leisure, is an account of the Trojan War. Is that what leisure consists in, listening to songs about war? In both of these instances leisure proves parasitical upon lack of leisure. Contrary to initial appearances, it is leisure, *scholē*, which is the negation of lack of leisure, *ascholia*.<sup>4</sup> Music, which was introduced as free and *kalon* and which is now distinguished even from political activity, requires the slavish and ugly to be what it is. This is perhaps more manifest in epic poetry, but, if Aristotle is correct about the manner in which musical mode can render human mood—about the way music provides a direct representation of what is in the soul—it is clear that the beauty of a musical representation of, for example, anger would require the existence of anger and so of things to get angry about. What is done for its own sake seems always to consist in a reflection on what is done for the sake of something else. The reflection may be autotelic, but it exists only as a sort of supervention on action which is heterotelic. Those fare best (*arista prattein*), and so are happy, who in leisure reflect apparently unselfconsciously on doing the best things (*arista prattein*) in the face of adversity.

In Book VII this problem repeatedly takes the form of the question whether education in music requires that one learn to play an instrument. That is, is it important that one become an instrument for one's own leisure activity? On the one hand, to play an instrument means to acknowledge necessity. On the other hand, something like acknowledging necessity is a condition for understanding and appreciating music. To ask how much one should play then amounts to asking how much one should acknowledge necessity. In the midst of asking this question Aristotle introduces a second issue:

At the same time, children should (*dei*) have some pastime, and the rattle of Archytus, which they give to children in order that, using it, they will break none of the things of the household, [should] be considered to have come to be beautifully. (1340b26–29)

This rattle (invented by a philosopher) is given to children so they won't break the things of the household. That is, music keeps us from breaking up the home. It substitutes simulated motion for real motion. The sentence itself is revealing. The necessity for children to have some pastime and the necessity to consider this pastime to have come to be beautifully are expressed by one and the same word, *dei*. They are quite literally the same necessity. It is because thinking and moving, while admittedly different, are governed by the same necessity that music and poetry can have such power. The education of Book VIII is double; it may either be directed toward the useful or the *kalon*, but, like the virtuous actions of Book VII, it is nevertheless one education.

The power of music and poetry, on which the city depends, is their capacity

to appeal to men in a twofold way. Our actions must simultaneously be understood as autotelic and as directed toward external goods. That the exoteric admits of being read esoterically provides a problematic unity to this dyad. Still, there remains a difficulty. Aristotle had begun Book VIII with the suggestion that there are *three* competing understandings of the purpose of education; virtue, the useful and *ta peritta*—the odd or outstanding things. The expression is used sparingly but in interesting ways in the *Politics*. It appears twice in Book II, once referring admiringly to the speeches of Socrates (1265a12) and once not so admiringly to the way of life of Hippodamus, the first man to give an account of the best regime (1267b22). It comes up again in Book VIII in the discussion of how to avoid vulgarity in education. Aristotle indicates that the young should not toil too long at those works which are wondrous and outstanding or odd (*ta thaumasia kai peritta*). There seem then to be connections on the one hand between philosophy and *ta peritta* and on the other between banausic, or vulgar, and *ta peritta*. Aristotle nudges us to a conclusion by saying that it is vulgar to master sciences completely as it is to master instruments and then referring us to the philosophers for precise speech (*akribologia*) about which musical modes have which effects (1341b26ff). Philosophy is vulgar.

The best political order is one where the good man is happy and is a good citizen. He can fulfill his function as part while reaping his satisfaction as a whole. For that to be possible, the distinction between virtue as a means and virtue as an end in itself must be slurred. Music, and finally poetry, accomplish that end. They are also suited to lots of other ends, however, and can corrupt as easily as educate. Consequently in the best regime they need to be regulated. There would have to be someone aware of the symbolic import of the location of the free *agora* in order for it not to be relocated for apparently sensible and utilitarian reasons. (One might say the same of the Electoral College.) But to be aware of this symbolism is no longer to be enchanted by it in the same way. The last book of the *Politics* is notable for having introduced censorship without having described how the censors are to be educated. Aristotle began Book VII by saying what the actions of the legislator must be, but never does he indicate that these are actions which the legislator does for their own sake. The education of the legislators would require a reflection on the connection between the useful and the *kalon* which, in revealing the utility of the *kalon* for the city, would (to stretch a point) render it ugly.

The coincidence of the autotelic and the useful, of the philosophic and the political, in Book VII is therefore something of a myth. We knew that already, given the prayerful disposal of the *demos* in the best regime. But there is a third sort of education mentioned in Book VIII. Education directed toward *ta peritta* is on the surface of it akin to education directed at vulgar utility. At the same time, as a reflection on the relation between the useful and the *kalon*, it is both useful (necessary for censorship) and autotelic and so in its way *kalon*. At one point in Book VIII Aristotle calls what he is doing a prelude to the tune (*endo-*

*simos*—1339a13) of the speeches that will follow. He thereby indicates the “musical” character of his own work. The true coincidence of the useful and the kalon is not a philosophical politics, but perhaps it is political philosophy. If the relation between the useful and the kalon is the same as the relation between the external and the internal, the exoteric and the esoteric, this would go a long way toward accounting for Aristotle’s mode of writing in the *Politics*.

#### NOTES

1. See *Politics* 1253a15–16 and my “Cannibalism and Nature,” *Metis*, 4, No. 1 (1989), 33–50.
2. It looks as though there is a suppressed standard of utility here, perhaps what is useful for the regime.
3. With the exception of the quotation about the Cyclops in Book I, all of the previous quotations from Homer in the *Politics* are from the *Iliad*, the poem about war. Predictably enough the quotations here are from the *Odyssey*, the peace poem.
4. This may have something to do with the increased frequency with which Aristotle uses double negations to describe what he is doing in Book VIII, e.g. 1337b5,16,20; 1339a27; 1340b22.