

The Human Animal: The Natural and the Rational in Aristotle's Anthropology

ADRIEL TROTT

University of Texas Pan-American

ABSTRACT: I argue that the human being fits squarely within the natural world in Aristotle's anthropology. Like other natural beings, we strive to fulfill our end from the potential within us to achieve that end. *Logos* does not make human beings unnatural but makes us responsible for our actualization. As rational, the human can never be reduced to mere living animal but is always already concerned with living well; yet, as natural, she is not separated from the animal world, a dangerous distinction which inevitably leaves some persons reduced to mere animality.

The impulse to divide the human being from the rest of the natural world extends back to Greek mythology. Prometheus carves out a peculiar place for *anthrôpoi* (humans) between gods and animals by providing them with fire. By granting the human the unique capacity for making and creating—for changing—the world, Prometheus sets us apart from nature. From Plato to Descartes to Heidegger, western philosophy struggles to explain the naturalness of the human in light of her capacity for organizing and manipulating her world, often resulting in what Spinoza has called “a kingdom within a kingdom” of human beings within the animal world (*Ethics* III, Preface). Yet efforts to separate the human from what is natural have resulted in serious logical, ontological and ethical impasses. Assigning different principles for different spheres leads to dualism as well as incongruity within the community of men and women of the elements that are natural and those that are free. The practical result of this division has been that certain ‘natural’ humans who fail to qualify as ‘rational’ and hence, fall short of full humanity, are excluded, pronounced as merely natural and thereby denied political rights and protections. My argument in this paper considers Aristotle's account of nature and reason to show that the human being cannot be reduced to something merely animal, mere body or bare life, yet at the same time arguing

that the human is the reason-using animal and hence is not separate from the principles of the natural animal world.

Two problematic veins of humanism are at work in considering our relation to the animal. On the one hand, when the human is considered in the ethical discourses of human rights, she is reduced to the animal where her basic rights are to her living animal body, to not be harmed, and so as victim, the human seeks to be protected at the level of her mere animality (and human rights are thus no different than animal rights).¹ On the other hand, the equally humanist tendency to separate the human from the animal by the capacity for reason results in the division of human beings between those who have more reason and so are considered less animal and those who exhibit less reason and so are considered to be more animal, and therefore, less human. In what follows, I locate in Aristotle an account of the human being as both natural and rational where neither aspect is prioritized over the other. Such an account can challenge the political consequences that result from assigning a different set of principles to human beings based on reason.

Aristotle defines *anthrôpos* as the being, who, by nature, has *logos*.² This definition appears paradoxical, since having *logos*, the human seems to function otherwise than according to *physis* (nature). Instead of moving steadily to her *telos* (end or fulfillment), as other natural things do unless impeded, the human, by making choices and allowing her *telos* to be a question to her, seems distinct from natural beings.³ But this distinction only holds when we conceive of *physis* as necessity or givenness rather than a source or principle of movement. Based on this latter, more Aristotelian, definition of *physis*, the conception of the human as natural is consistent with the rational capacity for choice. For Aristotle, we exist and act within the very same framework of *physis* in which animals operate. While the human appears to be the source of artifice for even that in which it thrives—the *polis*, for example—Aristotle casts *physis*, not in opposition to what can be otherwise, but as a way of being in movement toward an end. Such a conception makes nature and its end a question for politics instead of a prescription for politics that might be used to exclude certain persons from political life.⁴

Consistent with the naturalness of the human, Aristotle considers the freedom that accompanies reason in terms of the capacity of the human to achieve her *telos*. According to nature, human beings strive toward their completion; according to reason, human beings determine what constitutes completion for them. Reason is the end and the fulfillment of being human and also the source that projects humans to their end. In this way, the human is shown to be free, but that freedom does not compromise her naturalness.

ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPTION OF NATURE

Designating human beings as natural appears problematic because we tend to equate nature with material, with what is given, with what remains the same through any change. Nature seems to dictate a constant certain path for natural things. The human appears to be outside of nature because she, through *logos*, or reasoned discourse, can act or become otherwise than what the process of nature prescribes. *Logos* seems to insert freedom and the capacity to be otherwise into human existence, a state of affairs which would challenge what might be considered the necessity of nature.⁵ In order to understand how humans are natural, we need to re-examine both what Aristotle means by nature and how he conceives of freedom. Insofar as nature for Aristotle is an internal source of movement and *logos* is taken to be the end of human beings, *logos* is both what enables the human to achieve her end and its activity is the actualization of the human. Insofar as human beings achieve their end through this internal source that motivates them to actualize that end, the human is natural.

In this section, I consider the first part of this argument: Aristotle's definition of nature. At *Physics* II.1, Aristotle defines nature as the *archē* or source of change within a thing that motivates it to actualize its end. Three points about Aristotle's definition of nature will lay the groundwork for understanding the naturalness of *anthrōpos*. First and most fundamentally, nature is an internal *archē*. Second, as an internal source (*archē*), what is by nature uniquely relates its *archē* to its *telos* in *entelechia* (fulfillment) (*Phys.* 193b9–11). Natural things hold themselves in their end, because *physis* is what Cornelius Castoriadis calls a "pushing-toward-giving-itself-a-form."⁶ Working from within themselves to become most fully what they are, natural things are self-organizing and ordering. Third, and closely related to the first two, the internal source of natural things is coincident with what they need to be in order to keep on being, the *to ti ēn einai*. In defining nature as an internal source, Aristotle is simultaneously defining nature as that which a thing must be in order to be, that is, with its essence. These apparently distinct definitions are two ways of understanding the same phenomenon.

On the first point, Aristotle differentiates things that exist by nature from all other things by the internal source (*archē*) natural things have for moving and remaining at rest (*Phys.* 192b13–14). Unlike unnatural things, natural things have an impulse to change rooted in their nature (*emphuton*) (*Phys.* 192b19).⁷ Moreover, this source of change is not incidental to what they are, but fundamental to their being (*Phys.* 192b22–23).

Archē here must be understood as the source of a thing being what it is. In *Metaphysics* E, Aristotle explains that we are looking for the causes of things that are and of these, *qua* being what they are, rather than incidentally (*Meta.* 1025b1–2). He elaborates, saying that the study of natural things is of the kind

of being (*ousia*) that has the source of its movement within itself (1025b20–21). The inquiry proceeds by considering what best qualifies for the *archē* that makes a thing what it is. Thus, for natural things, we consider what it is in them that moves them, not incidentally, but according to what they are. What we seek is not a rule that these things follow, as if the *archē* were a natural law or a concept that gathers all things of this kind, but what Sean Kelsey calls the authority within a thing that governs it.⁸ The *archē* is the source that directs a thing to be what it is; in natural things, such a thing is governing it from within.

As the internal source that governs from within, *physis* describes a particular way in which a thing is related to its end, specifically in *entelechia*, holding-itself-in-its-end. *Physis* manifests a natural thing in the world from out of itself, organizing and originating itself according to its end. Aristotle describes the difference between *technē*-governed things and *physis*-governed things by the way the *archē* of each is related to its *telos*. Doctoring, which is a *technē*, directs itself toward something outside of itself. Hence, the *archē* of the product of *technē* is outside of the product, aiming toward something other than itself. The *archē* of the things governed by *physis* is toward more *physis*. So doctoring aims toward health, but human beings toward fulfilling their end as human being. Aristotle writes:

Doctoring must start from the art, not lead to it. But it is not in this way that nature (in one sense) is related to nature (in the other). What grows *qua* growing grows from something into something. Into what then does it grow? Not into that from which it arose but into that to which it tends. The shape then is nature. (*Physics* 193b16–19)

In this passage, the relation of the *archē* to the *telos* in a natural thing is joined to the argument that the nature of a thing is what it is when it is complete. But the way in which the *archē* and *telos* are related tells us something about how a natural thing stands in relation to its own fulfillment. The natural thing stands in contrast to an artificial thing, whose *archē* ceases to be concerned or involved in the completion of the thing, severing itself from its *archē* in its completion as a product (*ergon*) outside of the *archē*. In a natural thing, the source of its being remains at work (where *energeia* can be literally translated as being-at-work⁹) in its fulfillment of its end, which Aristotle describes with the term *entelechia*, holding the end in itself. The natural thing continues to work on its becoming complete and maintaining its completeness, work that is motivated from within itself (from its internal *archē*). Even in generation, the movement that brings a natural thing into existence, the form that comes from the father, is not an external form that is imputed on an external object. In generation, the form that comes from the father becomes the form of the natural thing (*Gen. Am.* 734a2–15, 734b22–24). A sign of this is that the father's form does not need to continue to govern the child's form in order for that form to do the work of the form, as the form in the mind of the builder is at work in the building of the house until it is complete,

at which point it ceases to move toward its fulfillment. The child's form, drawn from the father but not itself the father's form, governs itself when joined with the maternal matter (*Gen. Am.* 716a5–7, 729a21–31, 729b13–14).

We can better see how the natural end is internal to a natural thing when we see that what makes a thing what it is—its nature—is its *morphē* or form, which is more than mere arrangement (*rhythmos*). It is natural things, things that have an internal source of movement, that have a nature. We should not take this apparent dual use of *physis* to mean that nature is sometimes understood as a source of movement in a thing by virtue of what it is and sometimes understood as that which makes a thing be what it is, but rather see that these two uses are different ways of speaking of the same thing focused around the way in which a natural thing is *morphē* more than anything else.

Morphē is that which, from within natural things, moves them toward more of themselves, as Aristotle concludes the passage quoted above. *Morphē* brings the natural thing to stand as what it is, in its fullest appearance (*eidōs*). Not merely the arrangement of the material incidentally imputed on a thing, as we might suppose a sculptor to arrange material to make a statue, the *morphē* shapes and continues to shape a thing in its end. For this reason, Aristotle speaks of the end as *morphē*, where a thing is fulfilled by continuing to shape itself from within itself.

Things have a nature which have a principle of this kind (192b33), because this principle from within the thing is the internal form. Hence, in natural things, the form is the final cause and the form appears in doing the work that makes the natural thing appear as what it is, in its end, as Aristotle explains at *Physics* B.7.198a25–29. This unity of the *morphē* of a thing and the form's work to achieve this end shows that the source of movement internal to a thing is also what makes it what it is. We will see in what follows how *logos* serves as this source of achieving one's end, that which leads us to that end, as well as the end.

THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN: LOGOS

In this section, I consider the second part of the argument: the sense in which the human being is rational and free while still governed by the same principles of nature that govern other animals. This sense of the human being requires us to understand Aristotle's definition of the human as having *logos*. At *Politics* I.2, Aristotle argues that a human being is by nature (*physei*) a political animal (1253a3). He explains that the reason a human being is more political than any other animal is that we have *logos* which makes it possible for us to discern alongside others what is beneficial and just (1253a14–18). In *Nicomachean Ethics* I.7, Aristotle determines the end of the human being according to the element that distinguishes us from other living things. While all living things are nutritive and growing, and all sentient things perceive, the human acts having *logos* (*praktikē*

tis tou logon echontos) (1098a5). The proper function of the human is according to this element that sets it apart from the animals (1098a7). The good of the human—the highest end of the human being—is the life lived according to *logos* (1098a12–16). Such an end is achieved by displaying the virtue appropriate to it (*EN* I.8.1098b32–1099a3).

As natural beings motivated toward our end by the source within that leads us to fulfill ourselves, we reach that end—rational activity—from within ourselves. The way the human accomplishes the life that amounts to happiness will be unique to each person, but achieved in each case by rational activity according to virtue. The end is given and so necessary, but what amounts to that end, what rational activity will mean and look like, will depend on the deliberations in which we engage in order to consider how to achieve happiness (*EN* 1095a19–21). The human being is stable in its projection toward an end, but variable regarding how to achieve that end, and which life so constitutes that end.

While *logos* is the natural end toward which we aim (*EN* 1098a3–9), it has the capacity, unlike other natural ends that are capable of only one effect, for contrary effects (*Meta.* IX.5.1048a7–8). A doctor, for example, can make a patient healthy or sick. Human beings are capable of choosing contrary to what is good for them because rational capacities are determined according to desire or choice (1048a10). In this way, it seems that *logos* is the cause of that which could be otherwise than it is.

Yet *logos* is still the internal source that forms us and remains in the work of leading us toward the end of living out of *logos*. While on the one hand, human beings can act contrarily to that which leads us to the end, we can also differently interpret what counts as the *telos* to which we aim. Aristotle writes at *EN* III.3 that we deliberate not about ends, but what leads to the end, which has been generally established to include either an instrumental or constitutive sense. The plurality of lives that has led to the sense that ethical and political life is conventional because multiple is located in the *ta pros ta telē* (that which is toward the end) not in the *telos*. It is a matter of differently determining which life is the life that is according to *logos*.

A growing number of distinguished scholars maintain that deliberation's concern, *ta pros ta telē*, includes more than means and should be translated as “what is toward the end.”¹⁰ These commentators have argued in various forms that Aristotle does not consider the specification of the end as a distinct activity from discerning the means, where the virtuous person deliberates about the particular situation, but always with a view to the good life in general which requires consideration of what that life is. What this interpretation of the task of deliberation shows is that the human being, while functioning within the same principles of natural life, takes as an issue for herself what life would satisfy her end. So, since *logos* is required for achieving the end, and deliberation is that

manifestation of *logos* and since it is a matter of determining how to achieve that end, we as human beings take up the question of what counts as the end just as much as what we will do to achieve it.

CHOICE AND NATURE: RATIONAL CONTRARIES AND THE END

Having situated *logos* firmly within the natural relation of the *archē* to the *telos* in human beings, we have seen how choice (*prohairesis*) is the *archē* of action in such a way that this action remains natural. Choice appears to present a problem for this unified account of the human within nature because choice, which adds reason to desire, seems to make the human being free in a way that stands in contrast to natural things, which certainly act according to desire, but not reason. Yet this relation we have to our end makes reasoned discourse both our natural end and the capacity we have for choice in relation to that end, and choice is what we generally take to be the basis of the freedom that characterizes being human. Choice in relation to our end appears to make us other than natural because it is the capacity to be otherwise. But we do not thereby find a separate and distinct structure for action in human beings. While other natural things fulfill their end unless something external intervenes, persons can intervene in their own attempt to fulfill their end.

Since the rational capacity is for contraries, as Aristotle tells us (*Meta.* 1046b2–4), the “good” actuality is not necessitated or predictable by the presence of the potential. The rational capacity itself in the human being can know contraries and lead to contraries, but it is not evident that it can lead to the contrary of itself within human beings. Notably, reason is the natural capacity in human beings, the source of being human in human beings. Our rational potential does involve some capacity for determining our end insofar as through it we work to determine what it means to be rational, but it does not include the capacity to be other than rational.

From Aristotle's examples in the passage that describes rational potentiality as of contraries—“the hot is capable only of heating, but the medical art can produce both disease and health” (*Meta.* 1046b5–7)—we note that the difference between non-rational potential is that there is no need to discern what the proper end for the situation would be. What is capable of heating cannot cool, at least not as that which is capable of heating. But what is capable of healing must in the situation before it determine first what the end is and then consider how to reach that end. We can see here explicitly how rational capacities require a consideration of the end as much as the means to achieve that end.

Aristotle tries to make sense of persons who appear to pursue an end that is not good in the context of wishing. He argues that what is wished for that is not well-selected is not wished for at all since what is wished for is what is good and

an ill-selected thing would be bad (*EN* 1113a18–20). But Aristotle denies that each person pursues only the apparent good, making the person who is of serious moral stature the measure of what is to be wished for (1113a26). Someone whose perception of what is good has been corrupted by pleasure has a distorted view of what she pursues, but she is not thereby less rational or less responsible for the pursuit of what she pursues, as if that pleasure has made her an animal. Rather, as Aristotle explains, such a person is responsible for having become the sort of person who wishes for what is not good, for what does not lead her to the end (1113b6, 1114a3–7, 1114b30–1115a3). At the heart of this argument is that human beings, unlike other animals, are responsible for becoming incapable of achieving their end or of judging poorly regarding what constitutes that end. It is in this sense that human beings have a capacity for contraries, but this capacity does not make them other than rational. We must not suppose that there is an animal existence that at some point becomes human by using reason. Rather, being human always involves using reason and the development of it. We use reason to fulfill our end as oak trees use their capacity to be oak trees to fulfill their end as oak trees. While nonrational potentialities are like those of the animals, for pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain, rational potentialities make it possible for us to perceive these things in light of the further intellection of what is good for us so that we weigh pleasures and pains according to what we deem good. The rational potentialities first consider what constitutes the end (What is health? What does health look like in this situation? What is *eudaimonia*? What would *eudaimonia* look like in this situation?), and then which action would lead to that end.

In this way, the potential for contraries at work in rational potentialities does not remove us from the structure of natural internal movement toward an end. The rational contraries show that we could have chosen otherwise because we could have taken this situation to call for some other opposite action, but we judged it to be this situation. On that basis, we rationally directed our desire toward action. Yet insofar as natural movement is driven by an internal principle toward an end from the potentiality for that end, human beings as much as acorns are natural.

The capacity for deliberation is the virtue whereby we consider what constitutes the end. As Aristotle writes at *Physics* II.3.195a21–22, “But the seed and the doctor and the deliberator, and generally the maker, are all sources whence the change or stationariness originates.”¹¹ The deliberator is the source of an action, but not as the doctor is—external to the object of health—but as internal, the source of the action and the actor herself. This choice and its resulting action, which are both a result of habit and a producer of habit, constitute the character of the actor. This character and the choices that follow from it signal the end the actor counts as *eudaimonia*.

Aristotle acknowledges the disagreement over what counts as *eudaimonia* at *Nicomachean Ethics* I.4. We generally identify living well and doing well with

eudaimonia, but we disagree regarding what counts as living well (*peri de tēs eudaimonias, ti estin*). The many tend to think it is a life of pleasure, and the wise, a life according to reason (*EN* I.4.1095a19–24). By *Nicomachean Ethics* I.7, Aristotle has shown that the life according to reason is the life that achieves *eudaimonia*, but it remains in question what will constitute that life. In *Politics* VII.3–4, Aristotle considers the political life and the philosophical life as candidates for that life and there concludes (in contrast to his conclusions in *Nicomachean Ethics* X.6–8) that both lives are worthy candidates for living well. Yet even here, the virtuous person must continue to consider what would count as the best life in politics for that person and what the best philosophical life would look like. One can easily see the different manifestations of political life and that deliberation is required to judge which would be best: a political life might be in elected office, in a think tank, as a community organizer, or even within the academy; a philosophical life might be supported by family wealth, academic institutions, or pursued in retirement. Aristotle acknowledges that the outline that his *Ethics* offers is not sufficient for showing individual persons how to live their lives (*EN* 1094b12ff.). Deliberation (*bouleusis*) and practical wisdom (*phronēsis*) must be at work in each life in order to determine how that life will be manifested.

CHOICE AND NATURE: PARTICULAR ACTIONS IN ANIMALS AND HUMANS

Reason as our natural end, we are coming to see, positions us firmly within the structure of the natural world even as it grants us the capacity to be otherwise than we are. In this section, I explain how choice works in particular actions to show how humans act within the same structure that animals do. Just as it is so for the animals, human action follows from a desire for an end that leads to action when the desire is accompanied by the perception of a situation as one which will achieve the goal to which the desire aims (*EN* 1112b12–19, 1113a10–13). In sum, as recent commentators on the *de Anima* and *de Motu Animalium* from Charles Kahn to Martha Nussbaum have shown, human beings, as both embodied and rational, join judgment to their perceptions, so that perception aids in judgment as judgment always accompanies perception, and that this is true of animals as well.¹² Sentient beings generally engage in some form of judgment of their perceptions. Judgment and determination of what we perceive does not set us outside the animal kingdom. There is considerable debate concerning which faculty is at work when human beings perceive the world in order to make ethical choices,¹³ but there appears to be agreement that both animals and humans act out of the coupling of desire with some sort of discernment of the world that leads us to judge what action would achieve the posited end. Whether through *aisthēsis* or *phantasia*,¹⁴ animals, like humans in deliberation, consider the world selectively in light of their goals and ends: for animals, what is pleasant and for human be-

ings, what is good. Both act in relation to their end, propelled by desire for that end and perception of the world in terms of that end.

Such perception that sees in the world what is required of the virtuous person seems precisely what *phronēsis* is for Aristotle. Aristotle notes that Pericles and similar men were considered *phronēmoi* because they could see (*dunatai theōrein*) what was good for themselves and for everyone in general (EN 1140b9). *Phronēsis*, like perception, is of particulars and of external things not the universals in the soul (*De Anima* II.5.417b19–27, see also EN VI.9.1142a14, 1142a25–27). *Phronēsis* requires seeing what the situation is and judging what is good in light of one's character. Aristotle remarks that while it is true that all aim at the apparent good, the end appears to each according to her character and we are responsible for having become such a character (one who cannot perceive what is good but only what seems good to a poorly developed character) (EN 1114a32). We learn from this treatment of *phronēsis* that while not everyone is phronetic, we do all perceive the world in terms of what we take to be good and what we judge to be the right action to achieve our end within a given situation.

Phronēsis is a way of seeing the situation in light of the good life. This perception is needed by those who must deliberate, and this perception is corrupted, Aristotle tells us, by pleasure and pain, which make the goal no longer appear as a motivating principle (1140b16–17). When pleasure and pain affect the actor, she no longer sees the situation as one that calls for this particular action for the sake of and because of this end. Deliberation as the thinking involved in determining how one ought to act requires seeing the situation through *phronēsis* as well as determining what would constitute good living in the current circumstances and actions. Hence, deliberation is the principle in the actor in the same way that *aisthēsis* or *phantasia* is the principle in animals. That they are different in the respect of the end does not change the structure of action for the human being.

This view of action shows that Aristotle offers one unified account of action that applies to animals and human beings based on seeing that involves judging in relation to an end coupled with desire. Against the view that Aristotle offers a simple account of action that applies to all animals and a more complex account that applies only to human action, Nussbaum argues that the simple account makes room for the complex account so that deliberative desire has an animal basis for the ethical attitudes and practices from which it follows.¹⁵ A distinction drawn between the account for voluntary action and responsible action supposes that a child makes some mysterious shift from voluntary to responsible action, from acting from an internal principle to acting according to decision. But there need not be such a mysterious shift where we can easily understand a development from perception to intellection.

CHOICE WITHOUT WILL: POWER AS FREEDOM

In the beginning of this paper, I said we needed to re-examine what Aristotle means by nature and what he means by freedom. We have examined Aristotle's notion of nature and how human rationality fits into that account, and I will now turn, before closing, to an examination of freedom in Aristotle. The rational contrary structure might lead us to assume an underlying will that affirms or denies. Yet we must understand the rational capacity in terms of a potential striving to actuality rather than as an underlying thing between desire and reason that functions like the will and directs a person to follow reason or desire. Such a strong distinction between reason and desire appears in Plato, in the *Republic*, for example, yet Aristotle does not oppose these capacities, but aligns them to achieve our end.

The part of the soul marked by desire falls under the sway of reason in the development of character. We form our character through activity and we must continue to act in a certain way in order to be able to act in that way. The capacity to choose well follows when we have directed our desires toward what we take to be good for us accompanied by the ongoing work of deliberation for discerning how to achieve those ends through the actions that are possible for us. No underlying will makes our activity possible; only our previous activity that has formed a character capable of acting according to what will fulfill us makes our continued activity in that vein possible.

This internal principle of action presents freedom as more akin to power than to the will. There is choice, but choice that follows from deliberation.¹⁶ The object of choice is of "things that might be brought about by our own efforts" (*EN* 1112b26–28, cf. 1112a31, 1112a36–37). When Aristotle speaks of voluntary action as according to an internal source of movement he explains it in terms of power:

Now the man acts [*prattei*] voluntarily [*echon*];¹⁷ for the principle that moves [*te archē tou kinein*] the instrumental parts of the body in such actions [*prax-essin*] is in him, and the things of which the moving principle [*tē archē*] is in a man himself are in his power to do or not to do [*ep' autō kai to prattein kai mē*]. (*EN* III.1.1110a15–18)¹⁸

This last phrase while translated as "power to do or not do" does not include the typical Greek terms for power (*kratos* or *dunamis*). While Ross translates it in this way (as do Ostwald and Rackham), translating the phrase more literally as "to act or not to act from out of oneself" brings to the fore the sense of internal principle involved in voluntary action. An action is done voluntarily if the action originated with the actor, if she exhibits the power for it. And the determination of an action is based on what one is capable of accomplishing (see 1141b20–25).¹⁹

Conceiving freedom as power rather than will allows us to see the human as free insofar as she is empowered to fulfill her end. That we can fall short of fulfill-

ing our end because we can fail to flourish (when in choosing that which leads us to our end we misconstrue what constitutes *eudaimonia* and how to achieve it) shows that we, as human, are responsible for our end in a unique way. Indeed, the notion that the human can be unfree, while plants and animals cannot be, further suggests that we need the power to determine our end in order to fulfill it. In this way, we act freely. We are still using our potential for reason to reach our rational end, and so we remain firmly within the natural world. This sense of freedom is in my view more consistent with Aristotle's ethical philosophy and suggests freedom as power or what Arendt calls virtuosity.²⁰

Freedom as power that arises from an internal principle is not a given essence but a developed capacity, and as a developed capacity affects one's power to continue to act (*EN* I.1.1110a17, 1111b25–26, 30, 1112a31–12b4). This internal principle is not the will, the site of freedom for Augustine and Descartes, but a capacity developed through habituation both to deliberate and to act on the choice made as a result of deliberation (*EN* 1113a3–4). Action, for Aristotle, produces the capacity for more activity by developing character, and thereby increases the power to live a virtuous life (1103b21–25, 1104a26–04b2). This interplay between the potential and its actualization is found in the freedom of the individual and mirrored in the freedom of the polis: both move from an internal principle to develop habits (or institutions) that increase the potential for further activities, and yet are not determined or necessitated by those habits or institutions.

Choice and freedom in Aristotle should be understood in terms of power and the *archē* internal to me that prompts my actions. Nature and reason are unified, on this account, in so far as deliberation works in the human according to nature—an internal principle of change that drives us to fulfill our end of *logos* from out of *logos*. Just as the natural being is natural because the principle by which she fulfills her end is internal to her, so the human being is natural because her rational end is fulfilled by her potential for reason and language.²¹ The freedom to develop contrary actualities—the rational capacity for contraries—enables me to become the character that fulfills my end. Yet even in this freedom, I am not free to be otherwise than aiming myself toward my end of rational activity nor do I move toward that end (even where I go wrong) outside of my rational capacities to achieve the end.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have argued from Aristotle that *anthrōpos* for him is firmly situated within the natural world. *Physis*—the internal principle of nature—governs the human in the same way it governs natural things. As in all natural things, human beings aim to fulfill their end. We are the animals whose fulfillment consists in having *logos*. Furthermore, like animals, human beings act by perceiving a situ-

ation as one in which our end will be achieved, and then we act in because we desire to achieve that end. This structure is the same as that whereby animals act; the difference revolves around what is included in our perception—judgment in perception for animals, judgment in reason for us. Deliberation is the work of discerning what the situation is and what it calls for.

The distinctiveness of the human is in its relation to its end, but this distinctiveness does not make it unnatural. The human unlike other natural things keeps the problem of fulfilling its end before it; the task of reaching its end endures as a concern. The end of the human being is the active use of *logos*, but what it means to fulfill that end is not given. A person develops a character according to her conception of what constitutes that end, but that character too is not given and leads to certain kinds of action, but could lead to others. When situations that have not been encountered before are presented, we return to the question of what counts as *eudaimonia* and what that means in the situation before us.

My argument shows how Aristotle's principle of nature governs the human being as it does other natural things. Such a case furthers Aristotle's insistence on the unity of the natural world, especially the unity of principles of perishable living things in the natural world. By affirming this unity, Aristotle denies that there is a subset of natural entities that operate by principles other than those that govern the rest of nature. Within this unified science, wherein the definition of the genus applies equally to all members, Aristotle does not present different principles for beings with rational souls and beings with sentient souls. The souls have different capacities, but the principles of organization and of becoming govern all natural perishable beings in the same way. The political significance of this argument is important. This account of the human being prevents us from constituting political life as the division between those who transcend nature and those who do not, thereby excluding from political life those who are more associated with the natural world. In Aristotle's account, even political life is a natural phenomenon of human life. Living rationally is the natural end toward which we strive.

NOTES

1. See Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (London: Verso, 2001), 10–1.
2. The Greek word *logos* carries the interrelated senses of reason and speech. Liddell and Scott's *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Vol. 7 [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992], 476–7) divides its definition between these two senses, but it is noteworthy that the word's use as reason is related to speaking and giving account, so that it means both word, language, speech, discourse and conversation, and thought and reason, giving an account, offering grounds, finding the proper relation.

3. While it is generally agreed that Aristotle does not think women can fulfill the end of being human since they do not have fully developed rational capacities, I find it nonetheless worthwhile to use the feminine pronoun as the universal in order not only to show this to be untrue and hence, to insert women into this discourse, but also to open the possibility of reading Aristotle such that who we are and who we are judged to be is based on activity that makes us appear as such, as recent commentators such as Jill Frank have argued; see note 4.
4. Jill Frank diagnoses this same problem of reading nature in Aristotle's practical work in terms of aligning nature with necessity in "Citizens, Slaves, and Foreigners: Aristotle on Human Nature," *American Political Science Review* 98 (1994): 91–104; and in *Democracy of Distinction: Aristotle and the Work of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 17–53. For the view that nature is necessity in Aristotle's practical work, see Richard Kraut, *Aristotle: Political Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) and Judith Swanson, "Aristotle on Nature, Human Nature, and Justice," in *Action and Contemplation: Studies in the Moral and Political Thought of Aristotle*, ed. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 225–47.
5. Nature is not necessity for Aristotle. See *Metaphysics* V.5.1015a25–34. Note the distinction in that passage between necessity and impulse or choice. Here, impulse (which one might be inclined to define as nature in one reading of Aristotle's *Physics*) and choice are aligned together against the compulsion and unchangeability of the necessary. In the next definition of necessity in this chapter, Aristotle calls necessary "that which cannot be otherwise" (1015a35), explaining that all other definitions of necessity are derived from this one. Nature, of course, can be otherwise because it is defined as a principle of change and rest. Hence, the rational is not opposed to nature as it might be opposed to necessity because nature, like reason, can be otherwise, though in different senses. From its potential, for example, to be rational, the human moves toward its end and may fulfill its end or not. Reason, on the other hand, because it can choose contraries, can determine one means toward achieving that end over another and hence can be otherwise.
6. Cornelius Castoriadis, *World in Fragments*, ed. and trans. David A. Curtis (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), 333.
7. David J. Furley considers whether everything that has an internal principle of movement is a self-mover, an issue that is raised by Aristotle's argument in defense of the eternity of movement in *Physics* VIII, a different issue that is addressed in *Physics* II. The object of desire in that account is seen as the mover of a thing, yet Furley concludes that for Aristotle, "An animal is correctly described as a self-mover, because when it moves, its soul moves its body, and the external cause of its motion (the *orekton*) is a cause of motion only because it is 'seen' as such by a faculty of the soul" in "Self-Movers," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 64. Furley's argument is concerned with movement in terms of locomotion while the movement that *Physics* II.1 is the movement that ontologically determines a thing as natural. So David Bostock argues in "Aristotle on the Principles of Change in *Physics* I," in *Language and Logos*, ed. Malcolm Schofield and Martha Nussbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 179–96, that

- Aristotle is interested in the principles of natural processes, specifically, generation, rather than the principles of natural objects. Note that it is the principles of natural processes that make sense of natural objects (p. 180, see 189b30–31).
8. Sean Kelsey, "Aristotle's Definition of Nature," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 25 (2003): 78–9.
 9. See Joe Sachs's translation of the *Metaphysics* (Sante Fe, N.M.: Green Lion Press, 2002).
 10. David Wiggins, "Deliberation and Practical Reason," in Rorty, *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, 221–40; Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 296–7; John M. Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1986), 14; R. Sorabji, "Aristotle on the Role of Intellect in Virtue," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, 201–19; Sarah Broadie, "The Problem of Practical Intellect in Aristotle's *Ethics*," in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 3 (1987): 229–52; J. L. Ackrill, "Aristotle on *Eudaimonia*," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, 15–34. See Richard Kraut, *Aristotle on the Human Good* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), for a contrasting intellectualist view of the good.
 11. W. Charlton translation, *Physics: Books I and II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).
 12. Charles Kahn argues in, "Aristotle on Thinking," in *Essays on Aristotle's de Anima*, ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty and Martha Nussbaum (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 359–80, that human reason is pervaded by *aisthesis*. Martha Nussbaum argues in *The Fragility of Goodness* and in her commentary and essays on *De Motu Animalium*, that *aisthesis* and *phantasia* function in animals as the perceiving that also includes judging. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, and *De Motu Animalium* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978).
 13. Charles Kahn reads *aisthēsis* expansively in Aristotle's *De Anima* arguing that *phantasia* belongs to *aisthēsis* ("Aristotle on Thinking," in *Essays on Aristotle's de Anima*, 359–80, 364). *Nous*, intellection, remains related to *aisthēsis* in human beings because we remain ever embodied, so *nous* is never entirely distinguished from *aisthēsis* in the human. He argues that *aisthēsis* in the human is informed and influenced by the noetic capacity of the human being since the capacities of that embodied being remain informed by the capacity of its noetic soul (*ibid.*, 369).

Henry Richardson argues that *phantasia* does the work in animals that *nous* does in human beings: it serves as a capacity to judge a thing as worth pursuing in order to achieve the posited good ("Desire and the Good in *De Anima*," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, 381–99, 387). Andrea Falcon agrees in *Aristotle and the Science of Nature: Unity Without Uniformity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Richardson suggests that *phantasia* plus *orexis* is parallel to *nous* plus *boulēsis* (rational wish) as Aristotle seems to say in *EN* 1142a22–25. In both cases, there is a determination of what is good since animals seem to have a local sense of what is good by having *phantasmata* of objects of desire as good, where that is perceived through *nous* in human beings ("Desire and the Good in *De Anima*," 395). Where Kahn seems to have expanded *aisthēsis*, Richardson has expanded *phantasia* to show that this capacity seems to do the same work in the human and the animal, one accompanied by *aisthēsis* (sensitive *phantasia*) and the other by *nous* (deliberative *phantasia*) (*de An.*

434a7–10). Jean-Louis Labarrière argues in “Le Rôle de La ‘*Phantasia*,’” in *Aristote Politique*, ed. Pierre Aubenque (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993), 231–52, 248, that the difference between the *logos* of the human and the *phonē* of the animal is that between *phantasia logistikē-bouleutikē* and *phantasia aisthētikē*.

Richard Sorabji agrees both human beings and animals have a capacity (for Sorabji it is *aisthēsis*) that discriminates (*kritikē*) which involves taking something as better for a task than another (Sorabji, “Intentionality and Physiological Processes: Aristotle’s Theory of Sense-Perception,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s de Anima*, 195–226, 199). Frede concurs and argues that perception is the critical faculty that judges what it receives, but *phantasia* is able to judge the panoramic view of the whole situation giving an overall impression of it (“The Cognitive Role of *Phantasia* in Aristotle,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s de Anima*, 279–96, 279–83). Nussbaum maintains that *phantasia* does in the human what *aisthēsis* does in the animal (*The Fragility of Goodness*, 277), and argues, with Putnam, that broadly speaking, *aisthēsis*, *phantasia*, and *noesis* interact with desire to lead to an action (Martha Nussbaum and Hilary Putnam, “Changing Aristotle’s Mind,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s de Anima*, 27–56, 38). Pace Nussbaum, Schofield places *phantasia* on the side of the human being by arguing that *logos* is what distinguishes *phantasia* as a faculty from *aisthēsis*. Schofield appears to align himself with Irwin (“Reason and Responsibility,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics*, 117–56) by denying the parallel work involved in *phantasia* and *aisthēsis* for explaining human and animal work in the same structure (Schofield, “Aristotle on the Imagination,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s de Anima*, 249–78, 273).

14. Malcolm Schofield argues that by tracing *phantasia* and *phantasm* back to *phantazō*, which means to make apparent, to cause to *phainesthai*, and noting the absence of active forms of this verb in pre-Hellenic texts, we can define *phantasia* and *phantasm* as the faculty to which things are presented and the thing which is presented (where nouns of the *-sia* type that are formed from *-zō* verbs connote the action signified by the verb while *-sma* nouns connote the result of action) (“Aristotle on the Imagination,” 251n11). Dorothea Frede maintains that *phantasia* is derived from *phainesthai* or *phantazesthai* which both connote appearance in a wider sense such that it is central to the meaning of all the terms related to these words (“The Cognitive Role of *Phantasia* in Aristotle,” 279).
15. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 285. Contra Terrence Irwin, “Reason and Responsibility in Aristotle,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics*.
16. Aristotle’s response to Socrates and the sophists here is further evidence for considering choice and deliberation in terms of power. His explanation of the phenomenon of *akrasia* in response to these opposing views confirms that our actions are not based on a choice of will, but a result of deliberation that leads to action. Aristotle takes the phenomenon of *akrasia* seriously but wishes to explain that we are not acting against knowledge, but that knowledge is powerful enough that action follows from it and is not against it. Aristotle explains *akrasia* according to his division of knowledge into universal (major premise) and particular (minor premise) knowledge (*EN* VII.3.1147a1–3). A person could have the universal (the principle of what is virtuous) and not the particular (what this situation is, what it requires), and in that way could have knowledge and act against it (*EN* 1147a4–6). Furthermore, it is in order to

address the notion of *akrasia*, which seems to be the beginning of theories of the will, that Aristotle speaks of having knowledge potentially or actually (*EN* 1147a10–17). I argue that Aristotle's commitment to denying unqualified *akrasia* is a result of his account of action as a result of deliberation which serves as the *archē* of it and is based on the power to act, and not on the will to act.

17. As French classicist Jean-Pierre Vernant explains, the opposition between *hekōn*, *hēkousias*, and *hakōn*, *hakousias* does not correspond to our contrast between what is willing and what is not willed. In their commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Gauthier and Jolif use the terms “*de plein gre*” and “*malgre soi*,” or “of one's own volition” and “despite oneself” (Vernant and Vidal-Nacquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, trans. Janet Lloyd [Cambridge, Mass.: Zone Books, 1990], 56). Vernant explains that Greek has no term that connotes something like our concept of will. *Hekōn*, he explains, is a vaguer term referring to action not performed under external compulsion. In the Greek, this term makes not distinction between the premeditated and the intentional—a distinction that has largely developed for the sake of our legal system, a very different system than these terms that serve the Greek legal system, as Vernant, following Gernet, notes (*Myth and Tragedy*, 60). Greek law wished to curtail the use of private vengeance by distinguishing various forms of murder. Excusable murders included execution of an adulterer and accidentally killing committed in the course of games or war. The distinction is not between what is willed and not willed but between what is reprehensible and what is excusable (*Myth and Tragedy*, 61). It is interesting to note that knowledge not will is the language of virtue for the Greeks, from the tragedians to Plato and Aristotle.
18. W. D. Ross translation, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. II, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984).
19. The entire passage is as follows: “But neither is it wish, though it seems near to it; for choice cannot relate to impossibles, and if any one said he chose them he would be thought silly; but there may be a wish even for impossibles, e.g. for immortality. And wish may relate to things that could in no way be brought about by one's own efforts, e.g. that a particular actor or athlete should win in a competition; but no one chooses such things, but only the things that he thinks could be brought about by his own efforts.”
20. Hannah Arendt, “What is Freedom?,” in *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1961), 143–72, 153.
21. As T. D. Chappell writes, “Now as for flames and stones, so for humans: the way to understand what Aristotle thinks counts as uncompelled human behaviour is to ask: What does he think counts as natural human behaviour—behaviour characteristic of humans as such? The brief answer to the question is that Aristotle counts as natural human behaviour all voluntary action.” *Aristotle and Augustine on Freedom* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 33.