

Husband and Wife in Aristotle's Politics

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HUSBAND AND WIFE IN ARISTOTLE'S POLITICS

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This thesis examines the place of the family in Aristotle's politics with a specific concentration on the place of the husband and wife. It argues that the husband and wife share in both the public and the private according to Aristotle. This thesis is meant to contribute to the ongoing debate about the relationship between public and private, and male and female, in the political science of Aristotle and aims to disprove interpretations that claim that there is sharp public-private or political-household divide between males and females. It does so in part by considering the household in relation to the city, the husband in relation to the wife, and the functions of man and woman in the household.

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Introduction

Many scholars interpret Aristotle's account of politics as strictly separating male from female and public and private in such a way that males are in the public realm and women are in the private household. Scholars such as Hannah Arendt and Jean Elshtain, for example, claim that there is a distinct public-private or political-household divide between males and females in Aristotle's politics because all members of the household, with the exception of the husband, have natural deficiencies that prevents them from participating in politics.¹ Arendt writes: "in ancient feeling of the privative trait of privacy...meant literally a state of being deprived of something, and even of the highest and most human of a man's capacities".² Similarly, Elshtain interprets women in Aristotle as "persons who either could not or did not participate in the *polis* or the "good" of public life, individuals without a public voice, condemned to silence as their appointed sphere and condition."³

However, this interpretation of Aristotle is now being brought into question by scholars including, but not limited to, Judith Swanson, Harold Levy, Catherine Zuckert, and Dana Stauffer. Zuckert argues directly against Arendt: "it is not true, as Arendt

¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 38; Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man Private Woman, Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 45-47.

² Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 37.

³ Elshtain, *Public Man Private Woman*, 47.

claims, that the *polis* is characterized by a sharp distinction between public and private.”⁴ Swanson argues against Arendt’s claim that Aristotle “exalts the public realm over the private realm.”⁵ For there is evidence in Aristotle’s *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* that the distinction between public and private is not as absolute as previously thought.

This thesis addresses the question of the place of the family in Aristotle’s political science, concentrating in particular on the relationship between husbands and wives and the place of the relationship between husbands and wives and the place of that relationship. This thesis argues that the place of the family in Aristotle’s political science is neither completely private nor completely public. In terms of the relationship between husband and wives, this means that husband and wife do not play an entirely political or private role within the family in Aristotle’s political science.

This thesis will attempt to show, first, that the city and the household are not completely separate as public and private. Rather, the city and the household have a complex relationship in which the household and the city have separate functions, yet are connected by their shared concern for “virtue or excellence.”⁶ This section will prove that the city and the household have this complex relationship by examining Aristotle’s account of the naturalness of the city found in the *Politics*. Second, the relationship between husband and wife, in the form of marriage, is not distinctly public or private, but is rather a mix of both, as one sees by examining Aristotle’s discussion of marriage in

⁴ Catherine H. Zuckert, “Aristotle on the Limits and Satisfactions of Political Life,” *Interpretations* 11, no. 2 (1983): 185.

⁵ Judith Swanson, *The Public and the Private in Aristotle’s Political Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 3.

⁶ Dana Stauffer, “Aristotle’s Account of the Subjection of Women,” *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 4 (2008): 930.

both the *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. Third, husband and wife are not simply restricted to the public or the private, or to politics and the household, as becomes clear from Aristotle's account of the functions of the husband and wife in the *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. Finally, husband and the wife, like the relationship they share, are neither distinctly public or distinctly private but rather partake of both the public and the private.

1.0 CHAPTER 1: THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE HOUSEHOLD TO THE CITY

This section argues that there is a complex relationship between the city and the household in which the city and the household have separate and functions but the household and the city are both connected by their aim for “virtue or excellence.”⁷ This section argues, first, that Aristotle’s account of the relationship of the city and the household is found in the discussion of the naturalness of the city in book one chapter two in the *Politics*; second, that the city and the household are distinguished by their functions and connected by their “aim of virtue”⁸; and, third, that the relationship between the city and the household is significant for understanding the question of whether the relationship between husband and wife and husband and wife themselves, are essentially public or private or both.

1.1 ARISTOTLE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE CITY

The relationship between the household and the city can be seen in Aristotle’s discussion of the naturalness of the city or “how things developed naturally from the beginning” (1252a24-25). There are two different accounts of “how things developed naturally from the beginning” in Aristotle’s account of the naturalness of the city. The first account is found at the beginning of book one chapter two.⁹ There Aristotle claims that he will describe “how things developed naturally from the beginning so *that one may*

⁷ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 929.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 929.

⁹ Aristotle, *Politics* 2nd ed., trans. Carnes Lord (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 1252a25-1253a1.

best study them” (emphasis mine).¹⁰ Aristotle describes “how things naturally developed from the beginning” starting with individuals joining together.¹¹ The second account of “how things developed naturally from the beginning” can be found towards the end of book one chapter two.¹² According to this second account, “how things naturally developed from the beginning” starts with the city being “prior” to both the household and the individual.¹³ Thus, “how things developed naturally from the beginning that one may best study them” may be different from “how things actually developed naturally from the beginning.”¹⁴

The order in which “things developed naturally from the beginning that one may best study them” starts with individuals joining together to create the household.¹⁵ Second, households come together to create the village.¹⁶ Third, “several” villages come together to create the city.¹⁷ Two types of individuals join together. One is the “male and female” and the other is “naturally ruling and the ruled.”¹⁸ “Male and female” and “the naturally ruling and the ruled” join together from “necessity.”¹⁹ For “male and female” and “the naturally ruling and the ruled” cannot live without one another.²⁰ “Male and female” join together “for the sake of reproduction.”²¹ The “conjoining” of male and

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a25.

¹¹ Ibid., 1252a25-27.

¹² Ibid., 1253a1-1253b.

¹³ Ibid., 1253a20.

¹⁴ Ibid., 1252a25.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1252a24-1252b13.

¹⁶ Ibid., 1252b14-26.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1252b27-1253a1.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1252a25-1252b1

¹⁹ Ibid., 1252a25-26

²⁰ Ibid., 1252a25-26

²¹ Ibid., 1252a25-29

female “for the sake of reproduction” does not occur “from intentional choice,” but rather “from a natural striving to leave behind another that is like oneself.”²² The “naturally ruling and the ruled” join together “on account of preservation.”²³

The household comes about from the joining of men and women for the “sake of reproduction” and the joining of “naturally ruling and naturally ruled” for the sake of “preservation.”²⁴ The household “is the community constructed by nature for the needs of daily life” since the desire for reproduction and preservation is natural and can only be completed if daily needs are met.²⁵ As a result of the desire to “leave something behind like oneself,” or reproduction, the household consists of male (husband), female (wife), and children.²⁶ As a result of the need for preservation, or “the naturally ruling and the naturally ruled” coming together, the household also consists of master and slave.²⁷ Thus, the purpose of the household is to meet the daily needs of these members.²⁸

After the household arises, multiple households come together “for the sake of non-daily needs” to create the village.²⁹ The village is an “extension of the household” due to “kinship.”³⁰ The village consists of “milk-mates” and “the children and the children’s children.”³¹ In addition, like the household, the village is under a “king.”³² For, when several households joined together they “were already under kings” who

²² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a29.

²³ Ibid., 1252a30.

²⁴ Ibid., 1252a25-30, 1252b10.

²⁵ Ibid., 1252b11.

²⁶ Ibid., 1253b5-6.

²⁷ Ibid., 1252b11-12.

²⁸ Ibid., 1252b11-12.

²⁹ Ibid., 1252b11-15.

³⁰ Ibid., 1252b21-22.

³¹ Ibid., 1252b16-22.

³² Ibid., 1252b20.

tended to be the “eldest.”³³ Thus, the village takes a form similar to that of the household as a result of the village’s being an “extension” of the household “kinship,” and the household’s being “under the eldest as king.”³⁴

When “several villages” come together the “complete community,” or city, arises.³⁵ The “complete community,” or the city, “comes into being for the sake of living.”³⁶ Although the “complete community” or city “comes into being for the sake of living,” the purpose of the city is not just “for the sake of living.”³⁷ For, the city has reached “a level of full self-sufficiency.”³⁸ Since this is so, the purpose of the “complete community” or the city is not just “living” but “living well.”³⁹

Aristotle’s account of the development of the city from individuals shows that human beings have the desire to live and to “live well.”⁴⁰ Human beings desire to have more than just their daily needs met. The desire to ‘live well’ is the desire for “happiness.”⁴¹ Happiness is living in accordance to virtue.⁴² In order to live in accordance to virtue, human beings need to engage in virtuous activities which differ from activities performed to meet daily needs.⁴³ In order to engage in virtuous activities, human beings need the city. For the city by nature is “self-sufficient” as a result of the

³³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b20-2.1

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1252b15-25.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1252b27.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1252b27-30.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1252b27-30.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1252b27-30.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1252b27-30.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1252b27-30.

⁴¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), x.

⁴² *Ibid.*, x.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, x.

household's concern with meeting the daily needs of its' members.⁴⁴ Thus, the self-sufficient nature of the city allows human beings to participate in virtuous activities. Therefore, the city results from the natural desire of human beings to "live well."⁴⁵

Thus, the city "exists by nature" and is an "end."⁴⁶ The city "exists by nature" as a result of coming naturally from the "first communities" through the process Aristotle has described.⁴⁷ Nature itself "is an end."⁴⁸ For, when a things "coming into being is complete, we assert the nature of that thing."⁴⁹ The nature of a thing cannot be asserted until it has come into complete being because in any other state of being the thing would have an incomplete nature. In order to know what the nature of the city is, the city has to be complete. For, any less than the complete city, despite its similarities, lacks a certain nature that the complete city possesses.

The individual, household, and village all lack the "self-sufficient" nature that the city possesses.⁵⁰ Self-sufficiency is natural, because self-sufficiency is the end of the natural desire to live well. It is "an end" because living well can only occur when there is self-sufficiency."⁵¹ An "end" or "that for the sake of which a thing exists" is "what is best."⁵² For, being complete is best.⁵³ The self-sufficient nature of the city makes the city

⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b30-35.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 1252b27-30.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 1252b29-30.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1252b27-30.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 1252b30.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 1252b30-35.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 1252b30-35.

⁵¹ Ibid., 1252b30-35.

⁵² Ibid., 1252b30-35.

⁵³ Ibid., 1252b30-35.

the “end” of the “first community.”⁵⁴ since human beings cannot “live well” without the city.⁵⁵ Since the desire to “live well” exists by nature and “self-sufficiency” exists by nature, the city exists by nature.⁵⁶ For the city has reached, “a full level of self-sufficiency.”⁵⁷ In addition, the city exists by nature and is an end because the nature of the city can be asserted as a result of the city’s being “complete.”⁵⁸

The second account of “how things naturally developed from the beginning starts with as discussion of why “man is by nature a political animal.”⁵⁹ Man is a “political animal as opposed to being just an animal as a result of man’s ability for “speech.”⁶⁰ “Speech” is important because it reveals the “advantageous and the harmful, and hence also the just and the unjust.”⁶¹ Thus what is “peculiar to man” as opposed to animals is “that he alone has perception of good and bad and just and unjust and the other things of this sort.”⁶² It is “community” in the “perception of good and bad and just and unjust” that “makes a household and a city.”⁶³ For virtue and “living well” is the aim of both the household and the city.⁶⁴ Thus, in his discussion of “man as a political animal” lies a discussion of the city and the household in relation to virtue.⁶⁵ It is not reproduction and

⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b30.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 1252b30-35.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1252b30-35.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1252b30-35.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1252b27-35.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1253a1-2.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1253a1-10.

⁶¹ Ibid., 1253a10-15.

⁶² Ibid., 1253a15-20.

⁶³ Ibid., 1253a15-20.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1252b27-30.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 1252a24.

preservation that “makes” the household and the city, but rather “community” in the “perception” of virtues.⁶⁶

Immediately after the introduction of virtue, Aristotle reverses the order of how things develop by nature and claims that the city is “prior” to the household and individuals by nature.⁶⁷ For, “the whole must of necessity be prior to the parts.”⁶⁸ The parts could not exist without the whole. Aristotle explains that if the “whole body” of a being is destroyed there will be no foot or hand, “unless in the sense that the term is similar, but the things itself will be destructive.”⁶⁹ This means that if something is not complete, then, despite being similar, it cannot be called the same thing as the complete thing.⁷⁰ The incomplete thing will be “destructive” because it will not possess its’ full nature⁷¹. Therefore, it will not perform its’ proper function or reach its’ full capacity.⁷²

Aristotle uses this example of the “foot and hand” to the “whole body” to explain the relationship between the city and the household.⁷³ The household is a “part” of the “whole” which is the city.⁷⁴ The household is like a “hand” or a “foot” on the body, the “body” being the city.⁷⁵ In terms of the city and the household Aristotle’s example means that if the city or the “whole body” is destroyed, then the household will be destroyed,

⁶⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a15-20.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1253a20.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1253a20.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1253a21-22.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1252b30-35.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1253a21-22, 1252b30-35.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1253a20-24.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1253a20-30.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1253a20.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1253a20-30.

unless there is something similar to the household, but the thing similar to the household in itself would be “defective.”⁷⁶

Although something similar to the household could exist even if the city is destroyed, the existence of the thing similar to the household would be “defective” because “everything is defined by its function and its capacity.”⁷⁷ In other words, the household is defined by its “functions and capacities.”⁷⁸ If the “functions and capacities” of the household change, then what is left is something only similar to the household.⁷⁹ Something similar to the household cannot be “spoken of in the same way” as it “but only as something similarly termed,” because the “functions and capacities of the household define it.”⁸⁰ The “functions and capacities” of the household cannot be changed without changing the meaning of the household altogether.⁸¹

The example of the foot and hand’s relationship to the “whole body” can also be used when discussing the relationship between the individual and the city. For, when a part is separated from the whole it is not “self-sufficient,” as is the case with individuals.⁸² In addition, “one who is not capable of sharing or who is in need of nothing through being self-sufficient is no part of a city and is either a beast or a god.”⁸³ As a result of not being self-sufficient, “there is in everyone by nature an impulse” towards a

⁷⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a20-22.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1253a20-24.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 1253a20-24.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 1253a20-24.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1253a20-24.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1253a20-24.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 1253a25-30.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1253a29.

self-sufficient community.⁸⁴ For everything is at its “best” when completed.⁸⁵ In addition, when a human being is “separated from law and adjudication he is the worst of all.”⁸⁶ For there would be no justice since “justice is a thing belonging to the city.”⁸⁷

Although Aristotle’s example of the “whole body” in relation to the “foot or hand” can be applied to both the individual and the household, the relationship of individuals and the city is different from the relationship between the household and the city.⁸⁸ The individual cannot exist without joining together with other individuals, whereas the household can exist in a form without the city.⁸⁹ However, the form that the household would take would not be called the household but rather something “similarly termed,” and this form would be defective, since the household’s “functions and capacities” connect to the city.⁹⁰ Both accounts make it clear that the individual cannot survive without joining with other human beings, which eventually leads to the creation of the city. In the first account, individuals cannot survive unless they create households.⁹¹ In the second account, individuals cannot survive unless the individual is a part of the city.⁹² It is not clear whether this “part” of the city means the being part of the

⁸⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b30-1253a.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1252b30-35.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1253a35.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1253a35-1253b.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1253a20-25.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1253a20-30.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1253a20-24.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 1252a25-1252b.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 1253a25-30.

city itself or if this part of the city includes the household.⁹³ For Aristotle claims that the household is a “part” of the “whole” which is the city.⁹⁴

1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE CITY

The household is connected to the city by virtues, yet is separated from it because each has different functions. This can be seen by examining two different accounts that Aristotle presents of “how things naturally developed from the beginning.”⁹⁵ Towards the end of book one chapter two of the *Politics*, Aristotle reverses the order of “how things developed naturally from the beginning.”⁹⁶ The question then becomes why the account of “how things developed naturally from the beginning that one may best study them” differs from how things actually “developed naturally from the beginning.”⁹⁷ First, both accounts discuss the relationship of human beings to animals. Second, both discussions fail to mention the village. Examining these aspects of the accounts of “how things developed naturally from the beginning” will lead to an examination of the relationship between the household and the city.⁹⁸

Both accounts start with a description of individual human beings and compares individual human beings to animals.⁹⁹ As stated before, in the first account of “how things developed naturally from the beginning,” Aristotle describes why individuals

⁹³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a25-30.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1253a20-30.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1252a25.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1252a25.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1252a25.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1252a25.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1252a25-30, 1253a1-20.

come together.¹⁰⁰ Individuals come together out of necessity for the sake of reproduction and preservation.¹⁰¹ In addition, Aristotle compares human beings to animals in the case of reproduction claiming that the desire to “leave behind another that is like oneself” is not something that is peculiar to human beings.¹⁰² Rather, animals, plants, and human beings all desire to “leave behind another that is like oneself.”¹⁰³

In the second account of “how things developed naturally from the beginning,” Aristotle distinguishes man from animals rather than comparing man to animals.¹⁰⁴ As stated before, what distinguishes man from animal is the capacity for “speech.”¹⁰⁵ Although animals can express the “painful or pleasant,” animals cannot use speech as human beings can.¹⁰⁶ For human beings use of speech leads to thoughts about virtue.¹⁰⁷ Thus, in relation to the relationship between human beings and animals, there are two differences in the accounts of “how things developed naturally from the beginning.”¹⁰⁸ The first account shows a similarity between human beings and animals and the second account shows why animals and human beings differ. Second, the topic of virtue is absent from the first account of human beings and animals whereas virtue is present in the second account of human beings and animals.

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a25.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 1252a25-30.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 1252a29-30.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1252a29-30.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 1252a25.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 1253a10.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 1253a10-11.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 1253a15-20.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 1252a25.

Virtue also accounts for the differences between the account of the village in the two versions of “how things developed naturally from the beginning.”¹⁰⁹ In the first account of “how things naturally developed from beginning,” the village vanishes from the discussion.¹¹⁰ The village is also missing from the second account of “how things naturally developed from the beginning.”¹¹¹ Once again Aristotle only mentions the individual (or “man”) and animals, the household, and the city.¹¹² Thus, the question arises of why the village is excluded for Aristotle’s discussion. As described earlier, the village is an “extension” of the household.¹¹³ Yet, the village is connected to the city and the household and becomes consumed by the city. The village serves as a physical step between household and the city. In addition the village acts as a sort of public and private realm as a result of being an extension of the household and being larger than the household. However, the village as both public and private becomes consumed by the city.

The vanishing of the village connects the city to the household. Not only is the village the step between the household and the city, but the village is also a mixture of both the public and the private. However, the village is absent from Aristotle’s second account of how things naturally developed from the beginning because there the village is not what connects the household and the city. Rather, the city and the household are connected by the aim of “virtue or excellence.”¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a25.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1252a25.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1252a25.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 1253a1-20.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 1252b15-16.

¹¹⁴ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 929.

In order to see the connection between the city and household as the aim of “virtue or excellence,” one needs to return to Aristotle’s example of the relationship between the “whole body” and the “foot or hand.”¹¹⁵ This example of the “whole body” as the city and the “foot or hand” as the household is Aristotle’s way of explaining that city and the household are necessarily connected in some way.¹¹⁶ The way in which the household and the city are connected is by their “functions and capacities.”¹¹⁷

The “functions and capacities” of the household are different than those of the city a the primary focus of the household is to meet the daily needs of the members of the household.¹¹⁸ Thus, the primary function of the household is preservation.¹¹⁹ However, the “functions and capacities” of the household are important for the city.¹²⁰ The household supplies men with food which makes them able to engage in politics. Thus, the “functions and capacities” of the household provides what is necessary for the “functions and capacities” of the city to be carried out.¹²¹ For, the “functions and capacities” of the city involves legislating. In other words, the city functions by making or creating laws and carrying out the laws.

Although the “functions and capacities” of the city and the household are different, the ends or “aim” of the “functions and capacities” of the city and the household are the same.¹²² The aim of the city and the household are “virtue or

¹¹⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a20-25.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1253a20-25.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1253a24.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1252b14.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1252a30.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1253a24.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 1253a24.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 1253a24.

excellence.”¹²³ Although the aim of the household is to provide for the “basic necessities” in life, the household still aims to fully develop the virtues.¹²⁴ In addition, satisfying the daily needs of its members the household is “sustaining political health.”¹²⁵ For, without meeting the necessities required for life, human beings would not be able to do politics. Thus, the households function to satisfy “basic necessities” is not “absent from political life.”¹²⁶

The household provides what is necessary for the “functions and capacities” of the city to be carried out because the household “liberates free men from concern with daily needs and provides them with the leisure to devote their time and energy to politics.”¹²⁷ In addition, the “reasoning about the good and bad and the just and unjust” found in the city is not “absent from the household.”¹²⁸ For, the household is “the primary vehicle of moral education” which is “the political community’s most serious task.”¹²⁹

Household management requires dividing tasks based upon merit. In order to divide tasks based upon merit, there needs to be an understanding of the virtues and capacities of the members of the household. Thus the household manager needs to reason about “the good and the bad and the just and the unjust.”¹³⁰ This reasoning gets passed

¹²³ Aristotle, *Politics*. 1253a24; Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 929.

¹²⁴ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 929-930.

¹²⁵ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 929.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 931.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 929.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 929.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 930.

¹³⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a15-20.

down to the children in the household because they are the future of the regime.¹³¹ Thus, children too are forced to reason about “the good and the bad and the just and the unjust” or virtue.¹³²

The difference between “how things developed naturally from the beginning so that one may study them” and that of “how things developed naturally from the beginning” is as a result of the role of virtue in each.¹³³ As a result, the overlapping of the aims or ends of the household and the city shows that the distinction between the household and the city or the public and the private is not as “stark” it may first seem.¹³⁴ Therefore, as a result of the complex relationship between the city and the household, the household is not entirely public nor is the household entirely private.

1.3 THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE CITY’S CONNECTION TO HUSBAND AND WIFE

The relationship between the city and the household is significant for answering the question of whether the husband and wife have an entirely public or private role in the family. For in order to understand if the husband and wife, a part of the household, are entirely public, entirely private, or a mix of both public and private, one first needs to understand if the household itself is entirely public, entirely private, or a mix of both public and private. For if the household as a whole were entirely public or private, then the parts of the household would have to be such too.

¹³¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a15-20.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 1253a15-20.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 1252a25.

¹³⁴ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 929.

Since the household is not entirely public or entirely private due to the complex relationship that the household has with the city, it is now a possibility that the relationship between husband and wife and the roles of husband and wife are not entirely public or entirely private, but are rather a mix of public and private. The next two sections will break down this complicated relationship between the city and the household in terms of the relationship between the husband and the wife and the individual functions of both the husband and the wife in both the city and the household to show that just as the household is not entirely public or private, the relationship between husband and wife and the individual functions of both husband and wife are a mix of the public and the private.

2.0 CHAPTER 2: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE

This section argues that the relationship between husband and wife, or marriage, is both political and private. This can be seen by comparing Aristotle's account of marriage in both the *Politics* and the *Ethics*. This section will do four things. First, it will explain and examine Aristotle's account of marriage in the *Politics* and second, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Third, this section will compare and contrast the two accounts of marriage in order to show that marriage is both political and private. Finally, this section will explain the implications of this fact for answering the question of whether husband and wife are both political and private.

2.1 MARRIAGE IN ARISTOTLE'S POLITICS

Aristotle discusses both directly and indirectly the relationship between husband and wife, or marriage, in the *Politics*. Aristotle directly discusses it in book seven chapter sixteen in a highly political account that describes how marriage and procreations should be legislated (1134b30-1136a1). Aristotle indirectly discusses the relationship between husband and wife in book one of the *Politics* (1252a25-1260b25). This discussion too is political, but it brings into question whether marriage is entirely political. Aristotle's indirect discussion of marriage includes the reasons why men and women get married and what the relationship between husband and wife is in marriage.

Aristotle's direct discussion of marriage results from Aristotle's political account of procreation. He claims that "the legislator should see to it from the beginning that the

bodies of those being reared are to become the best possible.”¹³⁵ The legislator should be responsible for making sure that the children that are produced are created in a manner that will provide the best circumstances for the children to become the “best possible” human beings.¹³⁶ In order to do so, the legislator must take care in “connection with the union of men and women to determine when and with what quality of persons marital relations ought to be brought about.”¹³⁷ Thus, the legislator must, with a view to the rearing of children, be careful about which men and women marry.¹³⁸

There are three ways in which a legislator should “legislate” in order for “the bodies of those being reared . . . to become the best possible.”¹³⁹ First, “one should legislate with respect to this community with a view to the partners themselves and the length of time of their lives together.”¹⁴⁰ Legislating in this manner will insure that husband and wife “arrive together in terms of their ages at the same juncture and their capacities not be dissonant.”¹⁴¹ In other words, one should legislate so that both the male and the female are “capable of generation,” or reproduction, at the same time.¹⁴²

Second, “one should legislate with a view to the succession of the offspring.”¹⁴³ The child should not be too close nor too far from their father’s age.¹⁴⁴ If the child is too close to the father’s age, the child will not benefit from the “assistance rendered from

¹³⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1334b30.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1334b30.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1334b31.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1334b30-35.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1334b30-1335a6.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1334b33-35.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1334b35.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 1334b36-37.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1334b40.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1334b40-1335a1.

their father” and there will be “accusations in connection with management of the household.”¹⁴⁵ Since there can only be one household manager, the father, such “accusations” would prevent the household from functioning properly.¹⁴⁶ If the child is too far from the father’s age, the father will not “benefit from the gratitude” of the child.¹⁴⁷ For when children are too far away from the father in age, children have “less respect” for their fathers as a result of being “contemporaries of their fathers.”¹⁴⁸ A child’s respect for their father is important for the maintenance of the household because if the child does not respect the father, the father cannot mitigate tasks important to the household and the child to the child.¹⁴⁹

Third, “one should legislate so that the bodies of offspring in the process of generation become available in a way that answers to the will of the legislator.”¹⁵⁰ Aristotle does not provide the reason why one should legislate in this way. Rather, he turns instead to the issue of the age of the parents in relation to procreation.¹⁵¹ A possible explanation why Aristotle does not provide a reason why the legislator should legislate so legislate is that it is self-evident that a ruler would want the citizens to follow the will of the ruler.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1335a1-5.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1335a1-5.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1334b40-1335a1.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1334b40-1335a1.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1259b1.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1335a5.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1335a5-1335b4.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 1335a5.

The best condition for procreation occurs when “women to unite in marriage around the age of eighteen, and for men at thirty-seven or a little before.”¹⁵³ For those are the ages that both the bodies of men and women are “at their prime.”¹⁵⁴ In addition, Aristotle claims that it should be legally mandated that pregnant women “make a trip every day to worship the goddesses who have been granted the prerogative connected with birth.”¹⁵⁵ For “offspring in the process of generation evidently draw resources from the one bearing them, just as plants do from the earth.”¹⁵⁶ While in the womb, babies receive nutrients and “matter” from their mothers.¹⁵⁷ Thus, the mother has a responsibility to create the best possible conditions for the child.¹⁵⁸

Aristotle suggests legislating these three things because marriage and procreation leads to the creation of the future citizens of the regime by producing physical beings and raising them to be virtuous. For children should be raised “with a view to the actions belonging to liberal persons” or virtuous actions.¹⁵⁹ Thus, Aristotle claims procreation is a “public service.”¹⁶⁰ As a result of procreation being a “public service,” marriage is in this sense political.¹⁶¹ Marriage, in part, is the coming together of man and woman for procreative purposes. This means leaving behind a being that is “like oneself” both physically and morally.¹⁶² The intention of procreation is to “leave behind another that is

¹⁵³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1335a29-30.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1335a30-34.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1135b15.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1335b15-20.

¹⁵⁷ Swanson, *The Public and the Private*, 47.

¹⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1335b10-15.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1335b10-15.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1335b29.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1355b29-30.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 1252a29-30, 1253a25.

like oneself” one needs the city.¹⁶³ Thus, there is a connection between marriage and politics.

Aristotle’s legalistic or political account of marriage is not the only such account in the *Politics*. Although Aristotle does not use the word marriage, Aristotle describes it, or the relationship between men and women, in many parts of the *Politics*. There Aristotle indirectly addresses two questions: why men and women get married, and second, what type of relationship men and women have in a marriage.

The first part of the relationship between husband and wife, or marriage, is the “origin” or “root” of the marriage.¹⁶⁴ In other words, why do men and women get married? In the *Politics*, the answer is found in Aristotle’s discussion of “how things naturally developed from the beginning.”¹⁶⁵ As stated in the previous section, men and women come together “for the sake of reproduction.”¹⁶⁶ In addition, the “the naturally ruling and the ruled” come together “on account of preservation.”¹⁶⁷ The conjoining of “the naturally ruling and the ruled” applies not only to the relationship between “master and slave,” but also to the relationship between husband and wife.¹⁶⁸

That the relationship of husband and wife is not the same as the relationship of master and slave is seen first in Aristotle’s reference to Hesiod's *Works and Days*: “first a house, and a woman, and ox for ploughing.”¹⁶⁹ Hesiod gives advice to his brother,

¹⁶³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a29-30, 1253a25.

¹⁶⁴ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 933.

¹⁶⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a25.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1252a23-30.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1252a30-31.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1260a5.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1252b10.

Perses, to live a “life of honest work” as a result of Perses’ living a degenerate life.¹⁷⁰

Rather than urging Perses be with a woman for purposes of procreation, Hesiod “counsels Perses to get a woman to work for him, to drive his plow.”¹⁷¹ Hesiod advises Perses to obtain a woman for labor rather than procreation because fulfilling this “natural impulse” leads to “entanglements” where the woman is only looking out for “her interests.”¹⁷² Thus, Hesiod advises Perses to first “get a house, and a woman and an ox for the plough - a slave woman and not a wife, to follow the oxen as well.”¹⁷³

At first glance, it appears Aristotle’s reference to Hesiod’s *Work and Days* shows that the relationship between men and women is the same relationship as the relationship between master and slave. For, the reference to Hesiod seems to contradict Aristotle’s prior claim that “the female is distinguished by nature from the slave.”¹⁷⁴ However, this is not the case. First, it is important to note that like Aristotle, Hesiod separates a woman as a slave and a woman as a wife.¹⁷⁵ For, Aristotle criticizes the barbarians for having “the same arrangement for female and slave” as a result of the barbarians lacking the “naturally ruling element.”¹⁷⁶ Aristotle later distinguishes women from slaves because women are “free persons” that have the capacity to deliberate as opposed to slaves.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁰ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 933.

¹⁷¹ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 933.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 937.

¹⁷³ Hesiod, *Work and Days Theogony*. trans. Stanley Lombardo. (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993) 35.

¹⁷⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b1.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1260a10-25.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1252b1-9.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1255b16-21.

In addition, the “ox” in the *Work and Days* is significant to understanding Aristotle’s distinction between slaves and wives.¹⁷⁸ Aristotle emphasizes the difference between the wife and the oxen by claiming that “poor persons have an ox instead of a servant.”¹⁷⁹ Thus, the ox is a substitute for the servant in the household as opposed to wife’s being the substitute for a slave in the household. Therefore, “Hesiod’s verse is rightly spoken” because the household consists of the wife and the slave, not the wife as the slave.¹⁸⁰

Although Aristotle’s reference to Hesiod shows that the relationship of husband and wife is not the same as the relationship of master and slave, women as wives are still ruled in some way. Aristotle classifies the husband’s rule over the wife as “political rule” which is rule “over free and equal persons.”¹⁸¹ Political rule over “free persons” means rule “over those free by nature.”¹⁸² Thus, thus the wife is not a slave.¹⁸³

Yet Aristotle does not start by claiming that the relationship of ruler and ruled in the case of husband and wife is “political rule” but rather “martial rule.”¹⁸⁴ What then is the difference between the rule of the husband and wife as “political rule” and as “martial rule?”¹⁸⁵ Martial rule “lacks the main characteristic of political rule, namely, that it is temporary” since political rule requires an “alternation of the ruler and ruled.”¹⁸⁶ For “political offices...tend by their nature to be on an equal footing and to differ in

¹⁷⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b10-11; Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 933.

¹⁷⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b10-15.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1252b10-11.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1255b18.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 1255b17.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1254a15.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 1253b9-10, 1255b17.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1253b9-10, 1255b17.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1259b5-6.

nothing.”¹⁸⁷ However, those who do rule, wish to “establish differences in external appearance, forms of address, and prerogatives.”¹⁸⁸ Aristotle references “the story of Amasis told about his footpan” in relation to rulers who want to create differences between themselves as rulers and those whom they rule.¹⁸⁹

According to the story about Amasis, Amasis “from low beginnings ascended to Egypt’s throne.”¹⁹⁰ Once Amasis was king, he “had his golden footpan reshaped into a divinity that he compelled his subjects to worship.”¹⁹¹ The story of Amasis assists Aristotle’s argument that rulers seek to distinguish themselves from those whom they rule “in external appearance, forms of address, and prerogatives.”¹⁹² For, Amasis started out the same as those he ruled over and remained to be equal to those he ruled over after he became king.¹⁹³ Amasis used the “footpan” as a means to distinguish himself from those he ruled over.¹⁹⁴

Aristotle connects the story of Amasis to the discussion of the relationship of the rule of the husband over the wife as political. Immediately following the reference to Amasis, Aristotle writes, “the male always stands thus in relation to the female.”¹⁹⁵ The story of Amasis shows that “rulers tend to overestimate superiority and neglect their

¹⁸⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1259b5-6.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1259b10.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1259b10.

¹⁹⁰ Thomas K. Lindsay, “Review: Was Aristotle Racist, Sexist, and Anti-Democratic? A Review Essay,” *The Review of Politics* 56, no. 1 (1994):135.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁹² Aristotle, *Politics*. 1259b9-10.

¹⁹³ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 936-937; Lindsay, “Was Aristotle Racist,” 135.

¹⁹⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1259b9-10.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1259b10.

similarity to the ruled.”¹⁹⁶ In the relationship between husband and wife there is a possibility that the rule of the husband over the wife can turn into a despotic rule rather than political rule. For “even though men rule their wives as equals, nevertheless, as rulers, men seek the marks of inequalities.”¹⁹⁷ Like Amasis, the husband is ruling over someone who is considered in a sense to be equal and the husband becomes distinct from the wife as a result of being the ruler.¹⁹⁸

What then is the relationship between political rule and martial rule? As stated before, “marital rule” differs from political rule because the rule of husband over wife is not temporary but permanent.¹⁹⁹ What accounts for the difference between rule being temporary and martial rule being permanent is traceable to equality.²⁰⁰ Equality in the case of political rule is a sort of “strict or absolute equality” whereas the equality in the case of the relationship between husband and wife is not that of “strict or absolute equality” whereas the equality in the case of husband and wife is not that of “strict or absolute equality but is “proportional.”²⁰¹ This “proportional” equality between husband and wife can be seen in Aristotle’s discussion of friendship between husband and wife in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.²⁰²

2.2 MARRIAGE IN ARISTOTLE’S ETHICS

¹⁹⁶ Lindsay, “Was Aristotle Racist,” 136.

¹⁹⁷ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 936-937.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 936-937.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 936-937.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 936-937.

²⁰¹ Richard Mulgan, “Aristotle and the Political Role of Women.” in *Aristotle, Critical Assessments*. Vol 4, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (New York: Routledge, 1999), 116.

²⁰² Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1158b25; Mulgan, “Political Role of Women,” 116.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, marriage is “rooted” in “a natural complementarity between man and woman.”²⁰³ This “natural complementarity” results in “friendship.”²⁰⁴ In book eight chapter seven of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle explains how it is possible for husband and wife to be friends.²⁰⁵ Although the relationship of husband and wife is a relationship of “superiority,” it is still possible for husband and wife to be friends.²⁰⁶ For the friendship between husband and wife is “proportional.”²⁰⁷ It is “proportional” in the sense that the husband and wife contribute to and receives from the relationship in accordance to need and merit as opposed to evenly dividing everything by “quantity.”²⁰⁸ The husband receives from and contributes to the friendship is different from what the wife receives from and contributes to the friendship.²⁰⁹ For “in each case there is a different virtue and work involved, and different too are the reasons why they love each other.”²¹⁰ Thus, friendship of the “husband for the wife” is not the same as friendship of “a wife for a husband.”²¹¹

Although the husband and wife do not receive from and contribute to the friendship in the same way, the types of friendship that the husband and wife have with each other are the same.²¹² The three types of friendships are “friendship based on

²⁰³ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 929.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 929.

²⁰⁵ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1158b14-30.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 1158b14.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 1158b25.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 1158b30-35.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 1157b25.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1158b17.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1158b17-18.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 1158b17-18.

pleasure,” “friendship based on utility,” and “friendship on account of virtue.”²¹³ In a “friendship based on pleasure” both individuals “come to possess simultaneously what they long for, if they delight in going through life together.”²¹⁴ For, if they did not receive pleasure out of the relationship then they would cease to be friends.²¹⁵ “Friendship based on pleasure is a part of marriage because the “aim of marriage is pleasure.”²¹⁶

“Friendship based on utility” is a friendship based upon receiving “some benefit” from the other individual.²¹⁷ As a result of basing friendship on the receipt of benefits, friendship based on utility is “prone to accusations.”²¹⁸ For the individuals in this type of friendship will “always want more and suppose they obtain less than what is proper.”²¹⁹ Utility is a part of marriage because the husband and wife need the virtues and skills of the other in order to survive and meet their daily needs.²²⁰ However, utility takes a different form in marriage, because the husband, or household manager, is responsible for distributing things based upon merit.²²¹ Therefore, the relationship of utility found in marriage is not “prone to accusations.”²²²

In addition, utility in marriage is not “prone to accusations” as a result of the husband and wife also having a friendship based on virtue.²²³ In a friendship based on

²¹³ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1162b5-20.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 1162b13-15.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 1162b13-15.

²¹⁶ Swanson, *The Public and the Private*, 53.

²¹⁷ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1162b17-20.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 1162b17-20.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 1162b17-20.

²²⁰ Ibid., 1158b17.

²²¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253b1.

²²² Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1162b17-20.

²²³ Ibid., 1162b6-13.

virtue both individuals are “eager to benefit each other.”²²⁴ As a result of wanting to benefit the other person in addition to being benefitted himself, “there are no accusations or fights”; both parties are benefitting and loving the other party and receiving both benefits and love in return.²²⁵

Although both parties are giving and receiving benefits and love from the other party, each individual “does not come to possess the same things from the other, nor ought each to seek the same things.”²²⁶ For there is still a sense of equality in this “proportional” friendship between husband and wife.²²⁷ The friendship between husband and wife is based on “merit” since the husband and wife are contributing things to the friendship, and receiving things from it, based on their virtue and ability.²²⁸ This “merit” based upon virtue and ability creates proportional equality.²²⁹

The relationship between husband and wife as one that distributes things based on merit, or virtue, to create a “proportional equality” fits Aristotle’s claim that the description of the “community of husband and wife appears to be aristocratic.”²³⁰ For “if people are not equal, they will not have equal things.”²³¹ As a result of this inequality among human beings, things need to be distributed according to merit.²³² For to distribute things based upon merit is just.²³³ Merit has a different meaning in different regimes.²³⁴

²²⁴ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1162b6-13.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1162b6-13.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1158b20.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1158b25-27.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1158b25-27.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1158b25-27.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1160b32-35.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 1131a23.

²³² *Ibid.*, 1131a25-30.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 1131a25-30.

In an aristocracy, the “merit” on which things are distributed is “virtue.”²³⁵ Resulting from the need to distribute things among unequal human beings on the merit of virtue, “the just, therefore, is a certain proportion.”²³⁶

Thus, the “community of husband and wife appears to be aristocratic” because “the man rules in accord with merit regarding the things over which a man ought to rule, whereas all things suited to a woman, he hands over to her.”²³⁷ As in an aristocracy, the relationship between husband and wife can become corrupted if things are not distributed according to merit.²³⁸ An aristocracy becomes an oligarchy as a result of the “vice of the rulers, who distribute what belongs to the city contrary to merit.”²³⁹ In other words, an aristocracy becomes an oligarchy when rulers “distribute all or most of the goods to themselves and the political offices always to the same people.”²⁴⁰ Rulers distribute goods contrary to merit as a result of the vice of making “being wealthy their greatest concern.”²⁴¹ Similarly, when the husband “takes control of all things” things are distributed “contrary to merit and not inasmuch as he is better.”²⁴² Therefore, when the husband “takes control of all things” the rule of the husband turns into an “oligarchy.”²⁴³ In addition, Aristotle claims that sometimes women get to rule as a result of being

²³⁴ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1131a25-30.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1131a29.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1131a30.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1160b32-35.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1160b10-15, 1160b31-35.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1160b10-15.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1160b14.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1160b15.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 1160b31-1161a1.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1160b31-1161a1.

“heiresses.”²⁴⁴ Becoming rulers in this way is becoming a ruler as a result of “wealth and power” as opposed to “virtue.”²⁴⁵ Therefore, the rule of “heiresses” would be an oligarchy instead of an aristocracy.²⁴⁶

As a result of the distribution of things based on virtue and friendship in marriage, marriage is a balancing of friendship and justice. For “what is equal in matters of justice does not appear to hold similarly in the case of friendship.”²⁴⁷ Equality in matters of justice prioritize “merit” first and “what accords with a certain quantity” second.²⁴⁸ Equality in friendship prioritizes “what accords with a certain quantity first” and “merit” second.²⁴⁹ Therefore, in marriage, there is a constant struggle for equality based on the political, justice, and the private, friendship.

Although husband and wife in a marriage have to deal with the differences in equality in friendship and justice, the element of friendship in the relationship between husband and wife seems to be stronger than the political elements of the relationship.²⁵⁰ For, Aristotle writes, “a human being is by nature more a coupling being than a political one, inasmuch as a household is earlier and more necessary than a city and the begetting of children is more common to animals.”²⁵¹ Human beings are more of a coupling being, because “human beings are disposed by nature to live with others” as a result of their

²⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1161a1.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1161a1.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1161a1.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1158b29-30.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1158b30-34.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1158b30-34.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1158b29-35, 1156a15-20.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1162a15-20.

“natural affections” for each other.²⁵² The affection that spouses have for each other and for their children is different than feelings or “concerns” people have for their “fellow citizens.”²⁵³ The relationship of being citizens is not as strong as the relationship that family members have for one another. Members of a family are more likely to be concerned with each other’s happiness as opposed to citizens.²⁵⁴ As a result of the citizens lacking the attachment or “natural affection” that family members have for each other, human beings are more of a “coupling being” than a political being.²⁵⁵

2.3 EXAMINATION OF MARRIAGE

The descriptions of the relationship between husband and wife, in both the *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, show that marriage is a complex mixture of both the public and the private. Although Aristotle’s descriptions of the relationship between husband and wife appear different, both accounts of the relationship between husband and wife have a lot of commonalities. First, although the terms used to describe the relationship between husband and wife are different, all the terms used to describe the relationship between husband and wife show that marriage is both political and private. Second, both accounts show that there is a fundamental difference between male and female or husband and wife.

The terms used to describe the relationship between husband and wife in the *Politics* are “political rule” and “marital rule.”²⁵⁶ The relationship between “political

²⁵² Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1169b15-17; Jean Roberts, “Political Animals in the “Nicomachean Ethics”,” *Phronesis* 34, no. 2 (1989): 190.

²⁵³ Roberts, “Political Animals,” 190.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 190-191.

²⁵⁵ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1162a15-20; Roberts, “Political Animals,” 190-191.

²⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253b9-10, 1255b17.

rule” and “marital rule” correlates with the terms “aristocratic” and “friendship” which are used to describe the relationship between husband and wife in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.²⁵⁷ For, both the description of “political rule” and the relationship between husband and wife as “aristocratic” show that marriage is in fact, political.²⁵⁸ Marriage is political in two senses. First, marriage is political in the sense that marriage is directly connected to political activity. For, marriage leads to the actualization of the city.²⁵⁹ For, the development of the city started with human beings joining together for the sake of reproduction and for preservation.²⁶⁰ Reproduction and preservation in marriage are important for maintaining politics since the regime cannot survive without the creation of new citizens.²⁶¹ Not only are husband and wife responsible for creating the future citizens, husband and wife are responsible for the maintenance and development of the future citizens of the regime.²⁶² Thus, marriage directly impacts politics as a result of creating and maintaining the future citizens of the regime.

Second, marriage is structured in a political way. Marriage is structure according to a hierarchy as a result of the natural differences between household members.²⁶³ Thus, marriage is structured so that the husband rules over the wife.²⁶⁴ The husband rules over

²⁵⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253b9-10, 1255b17; Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1160b32-35, 1161a24-25.

²⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1255b17, 1259b1; Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1160b32-35.

²⁵⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a25-30, 1252b25-30.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1252a25-30.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1335a5.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 1335b5.

²⁶³ Arlene W. Saxonhouse, “Family Polity & Unity: Aristotle on Socrates’ Community of Wives,” *Polity* 15, no. 2 (1982): 204.

²⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1255b17, 1259b1.

the wife for two reasons. First, the males are by nature more “fit” to rule.²⁶⁵ For, “the male has adapted manners of dress and style that are appropriate for rulers” and males have the “authority” to “carry out” their “deliberations.”²⁶⁶ Males have distinguished themselves in “external appearance, forms of address, and prerogatives.”²⁶⁷ All of these differences are necessary for political rule because “political rule requires a degree of inequality.”²⁶⁸ Second, the age gap between husband and wife may account for why the husband rules over the wife.²⁶⁹ According to the requirements for marriage in the *Politics* there is approximately nineteen to twenty year age difference between husband and wife.²⁷⁰ Therefore, the husband will be more developed in his capacities than the wives as a result of being alive longer.²⁷¹

Thus the rule of the husband over the wife is structured in accordance to an aristocracy, or politically, as a result of justice.²⁷² In other words, rule in a marriage is distributed according to merit as opposed to being distributed evenly.²⁷³ Marriage is structured according to aristocracy rather than kinship or mastery because kings and masters are not capable of being friends with those whom they rule over.²⁷⁴ Since friendship is an important part of marriage, marriage has to be structured so that husband

²⁶⁵ Leah Bradshaw, “Political Rule, Prudence, and the “Women Question” in Aristotle.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 24, no. 3 (1991): 570.

²⁶⁶ Bradshaw, “Women Question,” 570.

²⁶⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1259b9-10.

²⁶⁸ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 936-937.

²⁶⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1335a29-30.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1335a29-30.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1335a29-30.

²⁷² Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1158b29-30.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1158b29-30.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1151a1.

and wife can be friends.²⁷⁵ Husband and wife can be friends even though there is a relationship of the “superior” to the inferior because there is still a “proportional equality” involved.²⁷⁶ Thus, marriage is structured politically according to aristocracy.²⁷⁷

In addition, structuring marriage in any manner rather than politically or like an aristocracy would be failing to “do justice.”²⁷⁸ For, the structure of marriage allows for the “acquiring” of the “degree of virtue” of which both the “nature” of the husband and wife are “capable.”²⁷⁹ This development of virtue is important politically for both the maintenance of the city through citizenship and child-rearing.²⁸⁰ In addition, the development of virtue is important privately for both the husband and the wife. For, the development of virtue allows the individual to become the best possible self and if done correctly, leads to happiness.²⁸¹

The description of the relationship between husband and wife as “marital rule” and “friendship” show that marriage, in addition to being political, is private.²⁸² Marriage is private as a result of marriage coming about not only from the desire to reproduce or to live. Marriage is private because marriage also results from friendship on based on virtue.²⁸³ For, friendship does not develop with the sole purpose of creating a city. Friendship develops as a result of “virtue,” “pleasure,” and “utility.”²⁸⁴ Friendship

²⁷⁵ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1161a24-25.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 1158b25.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 1160b32-35.

²⁷⁸ Lindsay, “Was Aristotle Racist,” 138.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 138.

²⁸⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1335a10-1335b10.

²⁸¹ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1162a15-30.

²⁸² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253b9, Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1158b13-15.

²⁸³ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1162b5-10.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 1165b5-20.

developed on “pleasure” or “utility” can be considered political because they coincide with human beings joining together “for the sake of reproduction” and “preservation.”²⁸⁵ However, friendship based on virtue is more private than public. For, friendship based on virtue is aimed towards happiness not only for oneself, but for the other person as well whereas the aim of the city is virtue in the sense of being fully “self-sufficient.”²⁸⁶

Although friendship is not mentioned in the discussion of marriage in the *Politics* marriage as “marital rule” brings into question if there is room for more than just the political in marriage.²⁸⁷ The private aspects of marriage can be seen in Aristotle’s reference to Amasis where he writes, “the male always stands thus in relation to the female.”²⁸⁸ Since “the male always stands thus in relation to the female, marital rule cannot be characterized simply as political.”²⁸⁹ Male and females have “different kinds of virtue.”²⁹⁰ It is the role of virtue that makes marital rule private. For, virtue “begins from the nature of the soul.”²⁹¹ The “nature of the soul” is private as a result of coming from the individual.²⁹² Political rule does not establish the “nature of the soul.”²⁹³ Thus, virtues in relation to the “nature of the soul” and how they are carried out in the formation of marriage is private.²⁹⁴ Therefore, within marriage there is a complicated relationship

²⁸⁵ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1162b12-20; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a25-30.

²⁸⁶ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1162b5-10; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b22-12523a.

²⁸⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253b9.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1259b10.

²⁸⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1259b10; Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 937.

²⁹⁰ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 937.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 937.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 937.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 937.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 937.

between the public and private in which marriage affects politics and is affected by politics.

In addition to showing that the relationship between husband and wife, or marriage, is both public and private, both accounts of the relationship show that there are fundamental differences between husband and wife. The fundamental difference between husband and wife can be seen in the *Politics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* in the discussion of equality and virtue.²⁹⁵ For, as seen earlier, the husband and wife both give and receive different things from their marriage as a result of having different merit or participating in virtue differently.²⁹⁶ Thus, the question becomes: how do husband and wife participate in virtue differently and what does the different participation of virtue mean for the relationship of the husband and wife to the public and the private? This question will be discussed in the next chapter of this paper.

2.4 RELATION OF MARRIAGE TO ROLE OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

Aristotle's account of marriage in both the *Politics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* is important for understanding the husband and wife individually, because that is a starting point for understanding the distinctions between husband and wife. These distinctions are found in their contributions to the marriage and in what they receive from the marriage in the form of virtues and material goods.²⁹⁷ In addition, Aristotle's account of marriage is important for understanding the relation of the husband and wife individually to the public and the private. For the contributions to marriage of both the husband and the wife

²⁹⁵ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1158b25-27.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1158b25-27.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1158b25-27.

in addition to what is received from the marriage are significant to politics and to life in the household.

3.0 HUSBAND AND WIFE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

This chapter argues that males do not have a completely public role or women a completely private one. Rather, males and females have a mixed role that is both public and private. Husband and wife as essentially public and private can be seen in the roles they have in the education of children and household management. This chapter will explain the role of the husband and wife in the education of children and its private and political character. It will also explain Aristotle's account of household management, the role of husband and wife in household management, and private and political character of it. Finally, this section will examine why the role of husband and wife are different and how, despite having different roles, the roles of the husband and wife are similarly public and private.

3.1 THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

The education of children in itself is both public and private. It is private because it must adapt to the individual.²⁹⁸ Although "good laws are invaluable in support of education," the laws are not the best teacher for children.²⁹⁹ Rather, in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*, Aristotle claims that private education of children is the best.³⁰⁰ For, when "care is private and directed to the particular case...each is more likely to meet with what is suitable."³⁰¹ Since every child is a different and unique individual, there is not one common approach to education or teaching method that works

²⁹⁸ Darrell Dobbs, "Family Matters: Aristotle's Appreciation of Women and the Plural Structure of Society," *The American Political Science Review* 90, no. 1 (1996): 76.

²⁹⁹ Dobbs, "Family Matters," 76.

³⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1180b13-25; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1337a20-26; Dobbs, "Family Matters," 76.

³⁰¹ Dobbs, "Family Matters," 76.

for all children. Thus, education needs to be attentive to the abilities of a child in order to help the child develop in the “best possible” way.³⁰²

In addition, “private sorts of learning” that parents give their children are what “he [the child] holds best.”³⁰³ For, “paternal speeches and habits have more of a commanding strength than civic laws” as a result of “the natural affection and predisposition to obedience that exist in the household.”³⁰⁴ Parents have a closer bond to their children than does the city.³⁰⁵ Thus, the parents are more influential in the education of children than is the city.³⁰⁶ Therefore, both the husband and wife have a responsibility to educate their children.

The education of children is also a matter of public concern, however, because children are the future “citizens, homemakers, and parents of the regime.”³⁰⁷ Children become “those who are sharers in the regime.”³⁰⁸ The future of the regime and their future depend on their education because the future of the regime is dependent on future adults, Aristotle claims that children “must necessarily be educated looking to the regime.”³⁰⁹ The education of children “looking to the regime” requires that they be “necessarily be one and the same for all.”³¹⁰ The education of children as “one and the same for all” does not mean that children are educated in the same way but rather that the

³⁰² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1334b30.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1337a25-30.

³⁰⁴ Dobbs, “Family Matters,” 76.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 76

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 76

³⁰⁷ Swanson, *The Public and the Private*, 59.

³⁰⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1260b20.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 1260b15.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1337a22.

content of the education of children is “one and the same for all.”³¹¹ The “same” or “common” education that children should receive consists of their being educated about the “character” of the regime.³¹² For example, if a child lives in a democracy, the child should be educated about its character.³¹³

In addition, the “common” education that is required for them requires children to be educated in “letters,” “gymnastics,” “music,” and “drawing.”³¹⁴ All four of these activities start as lessons for the purpose of “utility.”³¹⁵ Learning “letters” has many practical purposes such as “money making, management of household, learning, and many political activities.”³¹⁶ “Drawing” too has many of the same practical purposes of “letters” with the addition of being “useful with a view to judging more finely the work of artisans.”³¹⁷ “Gymnastics” is useful for the development of the body or “health and vigor.”³¹⁸ “Music” is useful for “leisure” and “pleasure.”³¹⁹

However, all four activities open the possibility for “other sorts of learning.”³²⁰ These “other sorts of learning” lead to virtue.³²¹ For, through “letters” and “drawing” one “becomes expert at studying the beauty connected with bodies.”³²² “Gymnastics”

³¹¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1337a22.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 1337a15.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 1337a15.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1337b24-25.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1337b24-25.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1338a15-21.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1338a15-21.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1338a15-21.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1338a1-5.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1338a35-1338b1.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 1338a35-1338b1.

³²² *Ibid.*, 1338b1-5.

contributes to the development of “courage.”³²³ “Music” leads to one “living blessedly” as a result of teaching the importance of leisure and rest in relation to work.³²⁴ Thus, the education of children requires teaching children not only practical things, but also virtue.

In order for children to develop virtue there is a “preparatory education and habituation” of children that must take place in such a way that the development of “all capacities and arts” will be done clearly “with a view to the action of virtue.”³²⁵ Developing the capacities and arts in children so that they will learn and act according to virtue is important for the maintenance of the city and the household, because the city and the household cannot survive without capable and virtuous individuals.³²⁶ This “preparatory education and habituation” takes place in the household and is done by the husband and wife.³²⁷

Both the husband and the wife have a political and private role in this education of children. The education of children by the husband is political because that education must be “attentive to individual needs” and, “at the same time,” “directed” by someone who has “practical wisdom” .³²⁸ It is necessary for children to be educated by someone who has the “practical wisdom” because only one with practical wisdom has the “capacity for making good judgments in the peculiar case.”³²⁹ Practical wisdom consists of “political science” and “household management” and comes only from being “engaged

³²³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1337b25-26.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1338a1-5.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1337a15-20.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1337a15-20.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1337a15-20.

³²⁸ Dobbs, “Family Matters,” 76.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

in political life” directly through action rather than indirectly “by means of thought.”³³⁰

The husband usually possesses “practical wisdom” necessary for the education of children because he has the experience of directly participating in politics and is household manager.³³¹

Although practical wisdom results from having “political experience,” practical wisdom is important for teaching children to make “judgments” about things in both public and private.³³² Making judgments about particular things in politics, or the city, is different from making judgments about particular things in private, or the household.³³³ Judgments about politics and judgments about the household differ in terms of “natural affection” and in the “end each aims to realize.”³³⁴ Judgments about the city are made in terms of what will benefit the city as a whole whereas judgments about the household are made in terms of what will benefit each member of the household and will benefit the household as a whole.³³⁵

In addition, the variety of members in the household means that there is a “variety of virtue” in the household.³³⁶ As a result there are a “variety of judgments” in the household.³³⁷ Thus, the difference in judgment between the city and the household is that judgments about the city are made with reference to “legal knowledge,” whereas judgments about the household are made with reference to “moral virtue” because

³³⁰ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1181a1-3; Reeve, 191-192

³³¹ Dobbs, “Family Matters,” 76; Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1181a13.

³³² Dobbs, “Family Matters,” 76; Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1181a13; Reeve, C.D.C. *Aristotle on Practical Wisdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013): 191-192.

³³³ Swanson, *The Public and the Private*, 21.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

³³⁵ Reeve, “Practical Wisdom,” 192.

³³⁶ Swanson, *The Public and the Private*, 23.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

children need to learn the two different types of judgment, the husband uses his “practical wisdom” to teach his children about public and private things such as politics, household management, and virtue.³³⁸

The education of children does not end with the husband. Aristotle suggests that “men will not be educated unless their mothers also are.”³³⁹ Mothers are educated about the public and the private. Although the wife does not have the “political experience” that the husband has, the wife still has knowledge of the regime. Aristotle claims that both women and children should be “educated looking to the regime.”³⁴⁰ For, the “excellence” of the city also depends upon the “excellence” of the wife and children.³⁴¹ Thus, mothers teach their children things that are necessary for the “excellence of the city” including “self-control.”³⁴² Children learn self-control through learning “shame.”³⁴³ Self-control and having a sense of shame prepare children for the political life by providing something that can check “political excess” which “threatens” the city.³⁴⁴ Self-control and a sense of shame are taught in the household.³⁴⁵ Thus, the wife is a “moral educator,” and as such the wife has a “strong” connection to politics.³⁴⁶

In addition, mothers are educated about things concerning the household. For, in order for husband's to participate in politics, wives need to be educated in matters

³³⁸ Swanson, *The Public and the Private*, 24.

³³⁹ Zuckert, “Aristotle on the Limits,” 194.

³⁴⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1260b15-20.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1260b15-20.

³⁴² Stephen G Salkever, “Women, Soldiers, Citizens: Plato & Aristotle on the Politics of Virility,” *Polity* 19, no. 2 (1986): 247.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 247.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 247.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 247.

³⁴⁶ Harold L. Levy, “Does Aristotle Exclude Women from Politics.” *The Review of Politics* 52, no. 3 (1990): 408.

concerning to household so that the household is taken care of while the husband is gone.³⁴⁷ As a result, the wife has some rule over slaves and children. In order to do so, the wife needs to be educated in matters concerning household management. Thus, the mother teaches children about matters concerning household management such as the function of possessions and the guarding and preserving things of the household (all of which will be discussed in the next part).³⁴⁸ As a result of the mother's being educated in both matters of politics and matters of the household, mothers are responsible not only for the education of "future farmers and their wives," but "property-owning, arms-bearing citizen-farmers, and their wives."³⁴⁹

Although the role of the husband and that of the wife in the education of children are different, they are both private and political. For husband and wife educate children about politics and about the household. In addition, the husband and wife both have knowledge of the public and the private if in different ways. The husband has knowledge of the public and private through experience and "practical wisdom."³⁵⁰ The wife has knowledge of the public as a result of being educated "looking to the regime" and knowledge of the private as a result of experience.³⁵¹

³⁴⁷ Stauffer, "Subjection of Women," 929.

³⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1277b24-25.

³⁴⁹ Nagle, Brendan. *The Household as the Foundation of Aristotle's Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 6.

³⁵⁰ Swanson, *The Public and the Private*, 24.

³⁵¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1260b15-20.

3.2 HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT

In addition to the education of children, the husband and the wife have a role in household management. Household management includes acquiring, being “master” over slaves, “marital rule” over the wife, and “paternal rule” over children.³⁵² Household management takes the form of a “monarchy” since “every household is run by one alone.”³⁵³ The household is so run because the husband is best by nature at for dividing tasks according to the merit or virtue in the members and according to what will best help develop the members merit or virtue.³⁵⁴ The husband is best by nature because his “deliberative capacity” naturally possesses an “authority” which no other member of the household possesses.³⁵⁵ Thus, “household management gives more serious attention to human beings than inanimate property, to the virtue of these rather than to that of property (which we call wealth), and to the virtue of free persons rather than to that of slaves.”³⁵⁶

The husband has the role of household manager.³⁵⁷ For, the husband is most apt to promote the development of virtues in each member of the household insofar as he has “practical wisdom.”³⁵⁸ For with practical wisdom comes a certain authority and “obedience” from others.³⁵⁹ As household manager the husband is responsible for

³⁵² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1255b9-10.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1255b18-19.

³⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1131a25-30.

³⁵⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1260a10-15.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1259b19-21.

³⁵⁷ Dobbs, “Family Matters,” 76.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 76.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

acquiring.³⁶⁰ In addition, the husband rules as a master over slaves, rules politically over his wife, and rules paternally over the children.³⁶¹

The “art of acquiring” is an important part of household management.³⁶² For, “without necessary things it is impossible either to live or to live well.”³⁶³ Acquiring means getting “possessions.”³⁶⁴ Possessions are “an instrument of action” for “the purpose of life.”³⁶⁵ Possessions are an “instrument of action” because possessions perform certain “functions.”³⁶⁶ Inanimate possessions perform their functions through the use of slaves.³⁶⁷ However, possessions remain “separate from their owner.”³⁶⁸ A possession is separate from its owner in the same way that a part is separate from the whole.³⁶⁹ As Aristotle writes, “a part is not only part of something else, but belongs wholly to something else.”³⁷⁰ In terms of possessions this means that the possession is wholly owned by the husband and wife, but the husband and wife do not belong wholly to the possession.³⁷¹ Rather, the husband and wife are only “masters” over the possession.³⁷²

Aristotle also explains ownership of possessions in terms of masters and slaves.

Aristotle writes that, “while the master is only master of the slave and does not belong to

³⁶⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253b24-25.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1253b9-10

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 1253b24-25

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1253b24-25

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1253b30-35.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1253b30-35, 1254a4-5.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1253b30-35, 1254a4-5.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1253b30-35.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1254a10-15.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1254a10-15.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1254a10-11.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1254a10-15.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 1254a10-15.

him, the slave is not only slave to the master but belongs wholly to him.”³⁷³ The slave does not “belong to himself by nature” but rather the slave is “another’s.”³⁷⁴ Despite being human, it is by “nature” that a slave is a slave.³⁷⁵ In terms of household management, the relationship between the husband and the slave is “mastery.”³⁷⁶ The husband tells the slave what to do in accordance to the natural virtue and ability of the slave.³⁷⁷ Since the slave is naturally an “animate possession,” the husband tells the slave what functions to perform using “inanimate possessions.”³⁷⁸

In addition to being master over slave, the husband, as the father, also rules over children through “procreative rule.”³⁷⁹ As a result of household management’s being a monarchy, procreative rule takes the form of a “kingship.”³⁸⁰ Children are “potentially reasoning and reasonable beings - or free persons” and need to learn virtues, such as moderation, that will help them “live well.”³⁸¹ Since children are “not inclined to be “moderate,” they must be ruled in a “kingly fashion.”³⁸² Thus, children are ruled in a “kingly fashion” so as to develop reason and virtue.³⁸³

In addition to the husband ruling over children in a “kingly fashion,” he as household manager rules the wife according to “marital rule,” which was discussed in the

³⁷³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1254a11-14.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1254a11-14.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1254a11-14.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1253b9-10.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1253b1-9.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 1253b30-35.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 1253b9-10.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1253b9-10, 1259b11.

³⁸¹ Swanson, *The Public and the Private*, 20.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 20.

previous section.³⁸⁴ In terms of household management, marital rule results in the husband giving the wife tasks based upon her virtue and ability.³⁸⁵ Therefore, the tasks that the wife receives are a mix of being a ruler and being ruled. For, the wife is ruled by the husband in household management so that the wife is not deciding herself which tasks to accomplish, but she has some say and rule within the household itself.³⁸⁶

The husband as household manager does not explicitly exclude the wife from household management. Aristotle writes: “household management differs for a man and a woman.”³⁸⁷ Where the “work of the man to acquire,” it is the “work of the woman to guard.”³⁸⁸ The role of the wife is to “guard” or “preserve” and starts with “what is most fundamental for life, nourishment and food.”³⁸⁹ Thus women “oversee” the “use and consumption” of possessions.³⁹⁰ Since some of the possessions are “animate possessions,” such as slaves, the wife also “commands them” since animate possessions function “to assist the use of other possessions.”³⁹¹ Thus, the wife has a role in household management similar to that of the husband insofar as the wife has some command over slaves and is responsible to “guard” their property.³⁹²

In addition, the role of the wife makes it possible for the husband to participate in politics. Thus, when the husband is not in the household the wife temporarily takes the role of household manager. The husband is out doing politics, the husband needs

³⁸⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1255b9-10.

³⁸⁵ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1131a25-30.

³⁸⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1277b24-25.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1277b24-25.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1277b24-25.

³⁸⁹ Swanson, *The Public and the Private*, 23.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁹² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1277b24-25.

someone to make sure all of the members of the household are performing their proper function. The most qualified member, after the husband, is the wife. For the wife only differs from the husband as a result of “lacking” the authority that the husband has.³⁹³ In order for politics to happen, the daily needs of men need to be met.³⁹⁴ The daily needs of men could not be met without the wife.³⁹⁵ Thus, the role of the wife allows for politics to occur.³⁹⁶ In addition, the wife’s role in the rearing of children is the wife’s way of indirectly participating in politics. For, the wife is raising the future citizens of the regime. Since the husband is out of the household acquiring and acting, it is the wife who spends the majority of time with the children. Therefore, the wife has a big influence on the development of the future members of the regime.

Although Aristotle does not directly address the question of whether the wife directly participates in public, Aristotle leaves the possibility for the wife to participate fully in politics.³⁹⁷ The possibility for women to participate fully in politics can be seen in Aristotle’s reference to Sophocles’s *Ajax*: “to a woman silence is an ornament.”³⁹⁸ In this poem, *Ajax* commits a “senseless act” which leads *Ajax* to going insane and wanting to kill himself.³⁹⁹ *Ajax*’s wife, *Tecmessa*, tries to convince her husband to live only to be “silenced” by *Ajax*.⁴⁰⁰ *Ajax* then goes and kills himself.⁴⁰¹ In addition, the only man who

³⁹³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1260a10-15.

³⁹⁴ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 929.

³⁹⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a25-30.

³⁹⁶ Levy, “Does Aristotle Exclude Women,” 405.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 400.

³⁹⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1260a29-30.

³⁹⁹ Nichols, Mary P. *Citizens and Statesmen, A Study of Aristotle’s Politics* (Savage: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1992): 32.

⁴⁰⁰ Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen*, 32; Dobbs, “Family Matters,” 84.

⁴⁰¹ Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen*, 32; Dobbs, “Family Matters,” 84.

could have prevented Ajax's death, Odysseus, is the one who "provoked Ajax in the first place."⁴⁰²

Two things can be taken from the story of Ajax. First, it is not the case that the husband always knows what is best. Ajax had gone insane and therefore was incapable of knowing what was best. Aristotle claims that political rulers should consist of those who are most virtuous.⁴⁰³ It is not always the case the men are the most virtuous. Men can act according to self-interest rather than in accordance with virtue.⁴⁰⁴ For Aristotle, it is better for a virtuous woman to rule rather than a wicked man.⁴⁰⁵ Also, there are very few in general who will ever "fully participate" in politics.⁴⁰⁶ Thus, there is an implication that most men will not "fully participate" in politics.⁴⁰⁷

Second, although the husband is household manager and rules over the wife, the wife still has an important role in developing the virtues of her husband. The wife can teach the husband many things in respect to "their own," "what is given," the "male activity of acquiring and ruling," and to "build on what is given rather than destroy it."⁴⁰⁸ The wife has to help the husband control his "spiritedness" by teaching the husband that "life itself is good" rather than just "activities" being good.⁴⁰⁹ Thus, the wife participates

⁴⁰² Dobbs, "Family Matters," 84.

⁴⁰³ Levy, "Does Aristotle Exclude Women," 411.

⁴⁰⁴ Zuckert, "Aristotle on the Limits," 197.

⁴⁰⁵ Levy, "Does Aristotle Exclude Women," 411.

⁴⁰⁶ Zuckert, "Aristotle on the Limits," 186.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁴⁰⁸ Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen*, 32.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

in politics by teaching her husband to control his “spiritedness” since the husband goes out and engages in politics.⁴¹⁰

Although there is no indication in Aristotle that the wife will directly participate in politics, it is clear that the wife indirectly participates in politics. For, the role of the wife in the household influences the ability of the husband to do politics and influences the development of future citizens of the regime. Thus, although the wife has a more private role, the wife still has a public, or political, influence. In addition, despite having different roles in household management, the roles of husband and wife are public and private. For, household management leads to human beings having their daily needs met which is required for politics to occur.⁴¹¹

3.3 WHY ARE THE TASKS OF THE HUSBAND AND WIFE DIFFERENT?

The difference between the roles of the husband and wife seem to be based on the distinction between “body” and “mind.”⁴¹² For the wife’s role of “guarding and preserving” is more concerned with the “body” and other material things while the husband’s role of household manager is more concerned with the “mind.”⁴¹³ For, guarding and “preserving” are more concerned with material possessions whereas household management is more concerned with the virtues and abilities of each member.⁴¹⁴ In addition, the education of children starts off as an education about “utility” and ends up being an education about virtue.⁴¹⁵ In traditional Greek families, the wife

⁴¹⁰ Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen*, 32.

⁴¹¹ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 929.

⁴¹² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1338b5-9.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 1338b5-9.

⁴¹⁴ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1131a25-30.

⁴¹⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1337b24-25.

started the education of children and the husband took over when the child reached seven to “socialize” the child. Thus, children learn different things from the husband and the wife.⁴¹⁶

The roles of the husband and wife are different because both participate in the virtues differently.⁴¹⁷ The reason for this is a subject of debate. Many scholars cite the lack of authority in a woman’s “deliberative capacity” as a reason.⁴¹⁸ However, it is unclear whether the deliberative capacity of women lacks authority in her own soul (i.e. the woman is “intellectually inferior” to men) or whether the deliberative capacity of women lacks authority “in the world”/ “with men.”⁴¹⁹ If the only difference between male and female is that the woman’s deliberative capacity lacks authority in her own soul, then males have an advantage over females that makes them more capable of developing their virtues.⁴²⁰ If the only difference between male and female is that the woman’s deliberative capacity lacks authority “in the world”/ “with men,” then the strength of men would be behind the different roles of men and women.⁴²¹

In addition, scholars still question the importance of Aristotle’s biology in answering questions about the relation of virtue to husband and wife and questions about male and female in general. Scholars question whether the biological procreative process Aristotle describes in his biology accounts for the differences between males and

⁴¹⁶ Nagle, *The Household*, 6.

⁴¹⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 121260a1-5.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1260a10-15.

⁴¹⁹ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 937.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, 937.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 937.

females.⁴²² Despite the scholarly debate about the importance of Aristotle's biology in determining why husband and wife are different, an adequate answer to the question can be found using the *Politics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

The *Politics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* establish that both husband and wife participate in the same virtues but do so differently as a result of the natural differences between ruler and ruled.⁴²³ In addition, husband and wife come together as “complementary” beings incapable of surviving without the other.⁴²⁴ Therefore, it is not necessarily the case that the husband has an advantage over the wife. However, it still remains unclear what the cause of the natural differences between the husband and wife is. Despite the uncertainty behind Aristotle distinguishing the roles of the husband and wife, it is clear that the husband and wife have different roles but that both have a public and a private influence.

⁴²² See Scholars such as Bradshaw, Dobbs, Salkever, Swanson, and Modrak.

⁴²³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 121260a1-5.

⁴²⁴ Stauffer, “Subjection of Women,” 933; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a25-30.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This thesis started by questioning the interpretation of scholars such as Hannah Arendt and Jean B. Elshtain, who claim that there is there is a distinct public-private or political-household divide between husband and wife in Aristotle's politics. By referring to the works of scholars including Dana Stauffer, Judith Swanson, Harold Levy, and Catherine Zuckert, and by examining the relevant sections of Aristotle's *Politics and Nicomachean Ethics*, this set out to prove that there is no such distinct public-private or political-household divide between husband and wife. Through the examination of Aristotle's account the naturalness of the city, Chapter One proved that the city and the household are separated by their function but connected by their shared concern for virtue or excellence. Chapter Two examines the relationship between husband and wife, or marriage, in the *Politics and Nicomachean Ethics*, and establishes that marriage is a mix of public and private concerns. Finally, Chapter Three proves that the husband and wife are not simply restricted to the public or the private, or to politics and the household, as Aristotle's account of the functions of husband and wife made clear. Thus, husband and wife partake in both the public and the private in Aristotle's presentation of them.

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