developed their methods and theories and systems just under the influence of and in response to existing and previous 'academic', abstract, or theoretical ideas. Aristotle developed a very sophisticated method for trying to sort all known animals into coherent groups. But he may have been prompted to do that not just because, for example, his empirical work revealed clearly the inherent weaknesses of the methods he inherited, but *also* because every Theo, Dion, and Hippias might laugh at him, as they had laughed at Plato, if he over-simplified the case.[77] Would he ever have thought to define man as a political animal if people had not laughed at Diogenes' plucked chicken? I suspect not.

[77] Going too far in the opposite direction could lead to ridicule too, as seems to have happened to Aristotle, though he is the butt of a lot fewer jokes than many others in the surviving literature.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

STEPHANIE WEST: Tutor in Classics and Fellow Librarian, Hertford College, Oxford

T. E. RIHLL: Lecturer in Classics, University of Wales, Swansea

GIDEON NISBET: Lecturer in Classics, St John's College, Oxford

ARMAND D'ANGOUR: Fellow and Tutor in Classics, Jesus College, Oxford

VICTORIA BAINES: School of Humanities Research Scholar, University of Nottingham

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