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ARISTOTLE AND SLAVERY IN ATHENS[1]

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I

The *New York Daily Tribune* for 20 December 1859 reported a pro-slavery meeting held the day before under the banner of 'Justice for the South' (the Civil War was less than eighteen months away). A lawyer named O'Connor spoke as follows:

> Now, Gentlemen, to that condition of bondage the Negro is assigned by Nature.... He has strength, and he has the power to labour; but the Nature which created that power has denied him either the intellect to govern or the willingness to work. (Applause).... And that Nature which denied him the will to labour gave him a master to coerce that will, and to make him a useful servant in the clime in which he was capable of living useful for himself and for the master who governs him.... I maintain that it is not injustice to leave the Negro in the condition in which Nature placed him, to give him a master to govern him...nor is it depriving him of any of his rights to compel him to labour in return, and afford to that master just compensation for the labour and talent employed in governing him and rendering him useful to himself and to the society.

That thoroughly Aristotelian defence of black slavery was identified as such by Karl Marx, reprinted in *Kapital* as a modern commentary on Aristotle's thinking on the role of the slave-owner.[2]

[1] At the Easter meeting of the Classical Association for 2005, a panel session considered the question 'What's new in ancient Greek history?' My colleagues, Simon Hornblower and Hans van Wees, chose to address broad issues: respectively, social differentiation in archaic Athens and possible themes for development in Greek history. By contrast, I spoke about Aristotle on slavery in his *Politics*: a few pages of Greek on which there have already been written very many pages. This was in the conviction that much of the rewriting of Greek history depends on approaching enduring problems from different perspectives. The original paper was entitled 'A Greek historian (with his 500 or so pupils) looks at Aristotle on Slavery', reflecting the fact that, over the past fifteen years, all my undergraduate pupils have been asked to 'Write a critique of Aristotle's theory of natural slavery'. If this paper has any merits, that is testimony to the value of tutorial-teaching to teacher as well as pupil, repeatedly rethinking and representing the material.

I am grateful to Malcolm Schofield for encouragement in writing this piece; especially as I take issue with his views. Maurie MacInness and Marden Nichols gave prompt bibliographical assistance.

[2] *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 3, *The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole*, 4th impression (London, 1974; first published, 1894), 385–6.

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Aristotle's so-called 'theory of natural slavery', presented in Book I of the *Politics*, proved a godsend to pro-slavers in the Old South, as to those in other times and places wishing to promote or defend chattel slavery as an institution.[3] From the moral high-ground of the twenty-first century, it seems hard to resist the conclusion that 'people will believe what they want to believe', however insupportable their views may seem from a supposedly objective or at least enlightened point of view. The problem faced by Classicists lies in assimilating no less a thinker than Aristotle to this group of self-deceivers. Recent writers have attempted to resolve the difficulty in its own intellectual terms, treating 'Aristotle on slavery' as if in a philosophical vacuum. As will be seen, a majority conclude that Aristotle's theory bears at best a questionable relationship to slavery as it actually was. To an historian, that might seem difficult to sustain on common-sense, let alone epistemological, grounds. My approach in this paper is firmly to locate Aristotle's thinking on slavery with respect to the practices of slavery in Athens; specifically in the context of the household. Without wishing to claim this as a key to unlock the whole problem, it may help to clarify the scope of Aristotle's analysis. It is, however, necessary to begin with a disclaimer. Not the least significant discussion of Aristotle on slavery is by Bernard Williams in his *Shame and Necessity* (n. 18), which he prefaces with the regret that much of what is known about ancient slavery remains unknown to him personally

[3] For use of Aristotle to defend and oppose sixteenth-century enslavement of the South American Indians, see L. Hanke's fascinating book: *Aristotle and the American Indians* (Chicago, IL, 1959); briefly, G. Huxley, *On Aristotle and Greek Society* (Belfast, 1979), 8–12. Aristotle in the Old South: J. D. Harrington, 'Classical antiquity and the proslavery argument', *Slavery and Abolition* 10 (1989), 60–72; E. A. Miles, 'The Old South and the classical world', *The North Carolina Historical Review* 48 (1971), 258–75: esp. 264–7 on the pro-slavery theorist, George Fitzhugh. According to D. S. Wiesen, 'The contribution of antiquity to American racial thought' in J. W. Eadie (ed.), *Classical Traditions in Early America* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1976), 211, Fitzhugh's writings, 'show how Aristotle's natural slave doctrine found a far more comfortable home and exercised greater influence on 19th century Virginia than it ever had in Greece or Rome'.

In drawing on the experience of slavery in the Old South, three classics here stand as proxy for a mountain of literature: U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1966; first published, 1918); K. M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution. Negro Slavery in the American South* (London, 1964); E. D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll. The World the Slaves Made* (London, 1975). Each responds to the work of his predecessor: see Genovese's foreword to the reprint of Phillips' groundbreaking but paternalistic and frankly racist study. The peculiarity of southern slavery is evident from the books reviewed by P. Kolchin, 'Some Recent Works on Slavery outside the United States. An American Perspective', *Comparative Studies in History and Society* 28 (1986), 767–77; *inter alia*, capitalism and racism set it apart from slavery in Athens. The diversity of slavery as an institution is brought out by O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death. A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA, 1982).

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(106). By the same token, what follows is very much a social historian's encounter with Aristotle on slavery.[4]

II

Aristotle's substantive discussion of slavery begins in ch.3 of Book 1 of the *Politics* (1253b1); but chs. 1 and 2 show Aristotle engaging with ongoing debates, using modes of argument, including appeals to conventional wisdom and other forms of rhetoric, that resonate through his analysis of slavery.[5]

Having established (1252a1–7) that the polis is a type of *koinonia* (commun[al]ity), and, being the supreme *koinonia*, aims at the supreme good, Aristotle's initial concern is with the nature of rule. This is an underlying theme of Book 1, linking slavery, household, and polis. From the outset, Aristotle disputes the view of unnamed predecessors (primarily Plato) that the difference between ruling over a state, a kingdom, an estate, and over slaves is merely one of scale (1252a8–24).[6] This he counters by application of his 'usual method'; that is, breaking down the composite whole into its indivisible parts. The best way to identify these uncompounded components is to study how the broader *koinoniai* have developed from their beginnings. Aristotle designates two relationships as fundamental: the instinctive union of female and male (as occurs with other animals and plants) so as to leave behind replicas; and the union of natural ruler and the naturally ruled for the sake of security (*soteria*), meaning the necessities of life, without which the good life is impossible (1252a24–35). The person with foresight is naturally (*phusei*) ruler and master; the one that can carry out labour is naturally a slave. In this way, master

[4] Closest to my approach is P. A. Brunt, 'Aristotle and Slavery', in his *Studies in Greek History and Thought* (Oxford, 1993), 343–66. Helpful general studies are: P. A. Cartledge, '"Like a worm i'the bud?". A Heterology of Classical Greek Slavery' *G&R* 40 (1993), 163–80; N. R. E. Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece* (London, 1993); R. Osborne, 'The Economics and Politics of Slavery at Athens' in A. Powell (ed.), *The Greek World* (London, 1995), 27–43; T. Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery* (London, 1981).

[5] References are to the Loeb edition by H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA, 1977); also helpfully consulted: Penguin Classic by T. A. Sinclair, rev. T. J. Saunders (London, 1992); introduction, text, and commentary by W. L. Newman, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1887). R. G. Mulgan, *Aristotle's Politics* (Oxford, 1977), 38–52 locates the analysis of slavery within the *Politics*. The structure of Aristotle's argument is summarized in P. D. Garnsey's indispensable *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to St. Augustine* (Cambridge, 1996), 35–8 (in detail 107–27); likewise P. A. Cartledge, *The Greeks. A Portrait of Self and Others* (Oxford, 1993), 120–8, though the whole chapter 'Of inhuman bondage' (118–51) repays study.

[6] Plato, *Statesman* 258E, 294A, 300E. Terms in the text are *politikos*, *basilikos*, *oikonomikos*, *despotikos*.

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and slave have the same interest. The terms used here (and almost everywhere else in the *Politics*) are *despotes* and *doulos*.[7]

Aristotle insists that female and slave are distinct categories, drawing on the analogy of the multi-functional 'Delphic knife': each tool is finest that serves not many uses but one (1252a35–1252b15). Amongst barbarians, however, slaves and women have the same rank. This is because they have no class of natural rulers, so that the *koinonia* necessarily consists of female and male slaves. That explains why the poets (specifically Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1400) say: 'It is fitting for Greeks to rule over barbarians', in that slave and barbarian are the same by nature.[8] From these two *koinoniai* (for reproduction and for security) arises first the individual *oikia*, normally translated as 'house' but here equivalent to the *oikos* or household. Aristotle quotes with approval Hesiod's *Works and Days* (405): 'First and foremost an *oikos* and a wife and an ox for the ploughing.' He glosses the verse to correspond to his own analysis, explaining that, 'for the poor, the ox stands in the place of a slave'.

The *oikos* is therefore the *koinonia* that comes about by nature for coping with the everyday business of life. The remaining stages of development may be considered more briefly (1252b15–53a40). To meet more-than-daily needs of self-sufficiency, the *koinonia* of several households was established to create a *kome* or village. The final stage of *koinonia* is achieved by the coming-together of several villages to form a polis. This constitutes the closest approach to self-sufficiency, with the polis coming into being for the sake of life, and existing for the good life. Every polis comes into being by nature, in that the primary *koinoniai* exist by nature, and the polis is their natural and complete outcome. This notion leads into the characterizing of man as by nature a 'polis-creature'. His superiority in this regard is explained anthropologically, through the possession of speech, making it possible to give expression to perceptions of right and wrong: 'and it is *koinonia* in these things that makes up the *oikia* and the polis' (1253a18). The polis therefore has priority in nature over household and individual. The man who first encouraged this natural impulse to form the polis-*koinonia* was a great benefactor on the grounds that

[7] Reading Gomperz's emendation *diaponein* ('carry out labour') in place of the MSS's *tauta poiein* ('do these things'). For Aristotle's use of *doulos*, see 202.

[8] The verse quoted by Aristotle is followed by 'The one sort are slaves, but the other are free men.' The context is the end of a speech by Iphigenia (1368–1401), trying to persuade her mother that her sacrifice is entirely appropriate. The elliptical nature of Aristotle's argument, combining two meanings of 'slave', is traced by R. Just, 'Freedom, Slavery and the Female Psyche' in P. A. Cartledge and F. D. Harvey (eds.), *CRUX* (London, 1985), 169–88.

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man is worst of all when apart from law and justice. Those individuals who are not capable of forming such a *koinonia* are not men but beasts. In fact, later in the *Politics* (1280a31–4, 1283a16–19), slaves 'and other creatures' are explicitly denied the ability to constitute a polis. Aristotle continues (1253a36–7): 'When devoid of virtue (*arete*), man is the most unscrupulous and savage of animals, and the worst in regard to sexual indulgence and gluttony.' This bleak appraisal effectively foreshadows the introduction of the natural slave, presumed to be entirely lacking in *arete* before being taken in hand by his master.[9]

Having distinguished the component parts of the political community, Aristotle turns to management of the *oikos*, the basic building block of the polis (1253b1–15). The complete household (*oikia teleios*), he says, consists of free and slave; the implication being that those too poor to have slaves should not head households as citizens. Again, proper investigation begins with smallest parts; in this case, master and slave, husband and wife, father and child. The head of each family therefore plays a key role, mediating with the polis as a citizen, and controlling the household through the three specified relationships: 'We ought therefore to examine the proper constitution and character of each of these relations' (1253b8–9). He begins with master and slave.

Aristotle introduces his aim as twofold (1253b15–23): to observe what has a bearing on practical utility (*pros ten anagkaian chreian*), and to improve on ideas currently held. In terms of theory, Aristotle harks back to those who (wrongly) see only one type of ruling. As will emerge, he wishes to identify rule over slaves as despotic, primarily in the interests of the masters, only incidentally for the benefit of the slaves, and having no particular dignity. Aristotle then identifies a second group of theorists, 'who maintain that for one man to be another man's master is contrary to nature (*para phusin*), because it is only convention (*nomoi*) that makes the one a slave and the other a freeman and there is no difference between them by nature, and that therefore it is unjust, for it is based on force (*biaion gar*).' As the only indication from antiquity of opposition to slavery as an institution, this passage helps to explain why Aristotle felt obliged to contribute his unique analysis of slavery. If the legitimation of slavery was not exactly under attack, it was evidently the subject of ongoing

[9] The stereotypical presentation of slaves in Athens as lazy, greedy, lustful, treacherous, cowardly, and stupid (even worse, scheming) complements the natural slavery argument: Garnsey (n. 5), 73–4; servile characteristics: K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford, 1974), 114–6.

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debate.[10] This may be supported by the absence from Aristotle's subsequent analysis of any complementary consideration of 'marriage' (*gamike*) and 'progeniture' (*teknopoietike*) as natural relationships. The perceived need to defend slavery as natural prompts the sequence of arguments so regretted by admirers of Aristotle. The exposition that follows combines his own words with emphasis on aspects marked down for subsequent comment.

III

Aristotle begins by defining a slave (presumed to be male) as follows (1253b24–54a13). With a view towards supporting the good life, heads of households need to acquire the necessities of life, which include tools, both lifeless and living. 'Property generally is a collection of tools, and a slave is a live article of property (*ktema ti empsuchon*).' He differs from other tools in being a self-acting tool which can use other tools. But the slave is an instrument or tool of action (*praxis*), not production or making (*poiesis*); this is on the grounds that life (*bios*) is about doing not making. The slave belongs absolutely to the master and all he does is to serve the master's interest. His whole function is to be a tool and possession of his master; and, since he performs only physical tasks, he is part only of the master's physical nature. As Mulgan points out (n. 5), 40, 'As a definition of the status of the slave, particularly the domestic slave, this is ruthless but reasonably accurate.' That is perhaps because 'nature' (*phusis*) has been almost entirely absent from the discussion. Problems crop up as soon as Aristotle sums up his slave-criteria with the emphatic admixture of nature: 'These considerations therefore make clear the nature of the slave and his essential quality (*dunamis*): one who is a human being (*anthropos*) belonging by nature not to himself but to another is by nature a slave…' (1254a14–20). He then harks back to the theoretical view that 'all slavery is against nature', opposing it with the notion that such people do exist by nature and that slavery is advantageous and just for them (*beltion kai dikaion*).

[10] For the identity of those debating: G. Cambiano, 'Aristotle and the anonymous opponents of slavery' in M. I. Finley (ed.), *Classical Slavery*, new edition (London, 1999), 28–52. Antiphon's *On Truth* is no longer thought to represent the view of one such opponent: Fisher (n. 4), 89–90. Garnsey (n. 5), 76–7 traces their intellectual lineage back to the Sophists, identifying the disjunction between slavery as presented in *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* as reflecting Aristotle's intervention in the debate (107–8, 125–6).

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Who is a natural slave? Aristotle states that the answer is not difficult to discern both theoretically (*toi logoi*) and empirically (*ek ton ginomenon*). In fact, in the arguments by analogy that follow, it is difficult to distinguish between theory and observation (1254a20–54b23). The conditions of authority and subordination are both inevitable and expedient. Wherever things are composite, combined to make a single, common whole, there is always a ruling and a subject factor: present by nature, as is shown even by lifeless things, such as the dominant note of a musical scale. Living creatures consist of a soul (*psuche*) and a body (*soma*), with the former by nature ruling the latter. The soul rules the body with the power of a *despotes*, the intelligence (*nous*) rules the appetites (*orexis*) with a constitutional or royal rule. 'It is manifest that this is both natural and expedient. Similarly, it is expedient for tame animals to be ruled over by man in the interests of their security.' The analogy is extended across to the sexes: the male is by nature superior and ruler, the female inferior and subject. The connection is then made back to slavery: the same consideration must necessarily apply in the case of mankind in general.

> Therefore all men that differ as widely as the soul does from the body and the human being from the lower animal…these are by nature slaves, for whom to be governed by this kind of authority is advantageous, inasmuch as it is advantageous to the subject things already mentioned.

We will return to consider the implications of these arguments by analogy (193).

At this juncture (1254b23–5), Aristotle briefly states two criteria of the natural slave. He is naturally capable of belonging to another, and he participates in reason (*logos*) so far as to apprehend but not possess it (*aisthanesthai alla me echein*). This may be complemented by a glance backward to the beginning of Book 1 (1252a31), where slaves are identified as those lacking foresight; and ahead to the closing section of the Book, exploring the *arete* of the various members of the household (1259b18–60b8). Specifically (1260a13), Aristotle suggests that slaves entirely lack the deliberative part of the soul (*to bouleutikon*). What emerges from these passages is a hierarchy: animals have no share in *logos* but respond to feelings, slaves merely apprehend *logos*, but free men fully possess it. The deliberative element, denied to slaves, is possessed by women, though without authority (*akuron*), and by children in an undeveloped form (*ateles*).[11]

[11] Something of the complexity of Aristotle's conception of the rational soul is conveyed by the 'family tree' constructed by F. Susemihl and R. D. Hicks, *The Politics of Aristotle, Books I–IV*

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Aristotle seems aware of a potential difficulty, admitting initial bafflement (*aporia*) as to whether slaves possess *arete* beyond their usefulness as tools and in service (1259b22–32). If slaves do possess moral virtue, he asks, how are they different from freemen? If they do not, how is their status as human beings, participating in reason, to be explained? He concludes that they need only a small amount of virtue, just enough to prevent them failing in their tasks through indiscipline and cowardice (1260a34–7). But later in the *Politics* (1280a32–4), slaves and animals are explicitly said to lack the *prohairesis* or purposive decision-making, which enables moral choice in advance of action. According to the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1105a29–33), *prohairesis* is an essential precondition for moral virtue. Possession of moral virtue, however slight, suggests a share in reason, which implies identity with free men.[12]

Apart from the problematic relationship of the natural slave to *logos* and *arete*, Aristotle acknowledges two practical difficulties. The first concerns the physical appearance of slaves (1254b25–55a2). Subservience of animals to their feelings prompts the thought that the usefulness of slaves differs little from domestic animals: both produce bodily services for the necessities of life. Nature therefore intended to distinguish slave from free in their physical makeup: freemen should be erect so as to serve as citizens in war and peace; slaves (by implication, stooped) are to be strong for necessary service. In fact, notes Aristotle, frequently (*pollakis*) the reverse comes about: slaves have bodies appropriate to freemen, and freemen have only souls that are appropriate. If there were a clear physical superiority (as demonstrated by statues of the gods), no one would disagree that those inferior in physique deserved to be subordinated. Still less, then, is there scope for disagreement if souls are inferior; it is just that beauty of the soul is less easily discerned. Aristotle was evidently persuaded by his own arguments: 'It is manifest therefore that there are cases of people of whom some are…slaves by nature, and for these slavery is an institution both expedient and just' (*sumpherei to douleuein kai dikaion estin*).

(London, 1894), 159–6. The popular association of slaves with children, and possibly with women, is explored by M. Golden, '*Pais* "child" and "slave"', *L'Ant. Class.* 54 (1985), 91–104; and R. Just, *Women in Athenian Law and Life* (London, 1989), 188–93.

[12] Detailed argument by Brunt (n. 4), 361–3: 'If there is no difference, or only one of degree, Aristotle sees that his justification of slavery collapses (1259b34–8).' He further concludes (363–6) that Aristotle has unwittingly 'reduced to vanishing point the difference in potential virtue between the natural slave and the natural master…'.

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Aristotle is more exercised by the second problem: how non-natural slaves might justly be reduced to slavery; evidently, the focus of contemporary debate (1255a3–55b4). He begins by conceding that those who oppose the existence of slaves by nature are, in a way, right (*tropon tina legousin orthos*). This is because there is a convention that whatever is conquered in war belongs to the conquerors. (cf. Xen. *Cyrop.* 7.5.73). In this way, it is possible to create a 'slave by law' (*kata nomon doulos*). Many of those involved with the law (*en tois nomois*) hold that it is a terrible thing if those superior in power have the victims of their force as slaves. Even among the wise (*kai ton sophon*) some think this way.

Aristotle resolves the disagreement in such a way as to turn the tables on his notional opponents. The upshot of a notoriously tangled discussion seems to be as follows.[13] At the end of the day, those who uphold the right of conquerors to enslave restrict their claim to the right of Greeks who overcome barbarians. They cite their own superior nobility as though (absurdly) well-born barbarians are only well born at home. In effect, their case hangs on an appeal to what is, after all, a natural distinction.

Aristotle concedes that there are two paradigms of enslavement (1255b4–16): one where freedom and slavery are not sanctioned by nature; the other where the existence of such a distinction causes the contrasting conditions to be advantageous (*sumpherei*) to both parties, and the relationship between them to be just (*dikaion*); so long, that is, as ruling is properly regulated as despotic (*hoste kai despozein*). Ruling badly is disadvantageous for both parties, as the slave is part of his master. Aristotle further explains that, in this way, there is 'a certain community of interest and friendship between slave and master (*kai sumpheron esti ti kai philia*)'. But in wider Aristotelian terms, the idea of friendship between master and slave is fraught with inconsistency. The reciprocity at the heart of Greek ideas of friendship ('for utility' in Books 8 and 9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*) might be thought to be impossible if the slave is merely part of his master.[14]

The *Ethics* at first sight offers a possible resolution (1161a33–b8), turning on a distinction between the slave as a slave and as a man.

[13] Fullest discussion by T. J. Saunders, 'The Controversy about Slavery Reported by Aristotle, *Politics*, I vi, 1255a4ff' in A. Moffat (ed.), *Maistor* (Canberra, 1984), 25–36; briefly by Newman (n. 5), i.150–2, Brunt (n. 4), 353–4, Garnsey (n. 5), 77 n. 4.

[14] On the difficulty of establishing *koinonia* between master and slave: Mulgan (n. 5), 15–16. Reciprocity as central to Greek friendship: P. Millett, *Lending and Borrowing in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge, 1991), 109–26; qualified by M. Schofield, 'Political Friendship and the Ideology of Reciprocity' in P. A. Cartledge et al. (eds.), *Kosmos* (Cambridge, 1998), 37–51.

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Where there is nothing in common between ruler and ruled, as with master and slave, there can be no friendship since there is no justice in the relation; though the slave benefits by being used, there is no friendship or justice towards lifeless things, or animals, or towards a slave *as a slave*.

> Though it [friendship] can exist towards him as a human being: for there seems to be some room for justice in the relations of every human being with any other that is capable of participating in law and agreement (*koinonenai nomou kai sunthekes*); and hence friendship also is possible with everyone so far as he is a human being.

Apart from the puzzling association of slaves with law and contract, we are returned to the unresolved problem of the slave's humanity.[15]

The final section of Aristotle's initial consideration of slavery rejoins his overarching argument about ruling over slaves (1255b16–40). From the foregoing it is apparent that rule over slaves is not identical to that of a statesman, or other kinds of rule: a statesman controls men who are free and equal, but a master rules over those who are by nature slaves. To be a master calls not for particular knowledge (*episteme*), but a certain character. However, there could be *epistemai* appropriate to master and slave: the latter would involve the various branches of domestic service (*diakonia*), such as cookery. The *episteme* appropriate to masters is not domestic work itself, or even the acquisition of slaves (that is a separate matter: a sort of warfare or hunting). Rather, the master must know how to employ slaves (cf. 1277a34–5).

Here is where Aristotle on slavery engaged the interest of Karl Marx. The broad context is a chapter on 'Interest and Profit of Enterprise' (370–90). Marx is concerned with the claim made by capitalists (and slave-owners) to a share of profits as a reward not for their enterprise, but for the effort involved in organizing dependent labour. Immediately before the speech of lawyer O'Connor, Marx quotes (in Greek) Aristotle on the proper role of the master ('the capitalist') in employing slaves (1255b30–6). He undercuts the claim to any significant reward by the slaveowner-capitalist by further quoting Aristotle to the effect that the labour of managing slaves is not a particularly important or dignified branch of knowledge. Indeed (adds Marx), Aristotle tells how those who can afford it employ an overseer

[15] Implications of friendship between master and slave are discussed by Brunt (n. 4), 366–9.

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(*epitropos*) to take on the 'honour' (*time*) of this drudgery, while they devote themselves to politics or philosophy.[16]

'So much may suffice to define master and slave' is how Aristotle signs off his substantive discussion of slavery, with the rest of Book 1 devoted to broader issues of *oikonomia*. In fact, what follows in the *Politics* is more than marginally relevant to our discussion. As has been seen, the end of Book 1 (1259b18–60b8) examines critically the virtues possessed by members of the *oikos* (including slaves). In Book 3 (1278b33–7), Aristotle notes that the authority of master over slave 'governs in the greater degree with a view towards the interest of the master, but incidentally (*kata sumbebekos*) with a view to that of the slave…'. This might be thought to put a further strain on the idea of friendship between master and slave.[17] But the most striking inconsistency appears in the final book (1380a32–4). Aristotle promises to explain later (but fails to do so): 'How slaves should be employed, and why it is advantageous that all slaves should have their freedom set before them as a reward…'. It seems impossible to reconcile that bare statement with the notion of natural slavery. As Brunt puts it (n. 4), 348: 'the "living chattel" was always potentially a free man'. An additional complication is provided by Aristotle's will, by which by he freed a number of his own slaves (Diog. Laert. 5.14–15); an act to which we will return.[18]

IV

The above is a selective analysis of the difficulties, inconsistencies, and downright contradictions inherent in Aristotle's theory of natural slavery. Garnsey (n. 5), 107 represents a common reaction when he writes of a 'battered shipwreck of a theory'.[19] It is true that scholars

[16] Marx sees the tone of *time* as sarcastic. The *epitropos* would probably be a slave (Pericles' Euangelus: Plut. *Peric.* 16.5), possibly a freedman or metic (Milyas: Dem.27.19; Sosias: Xen. *Poroi* 4.15), hardly a citizen (Eutherus so demurs: Xen. *Mem.* 2.8).

[17] The passage continues: 'for if the slave deteriorates the position of the master cannot be saved from injury'. Brunt (n. 4), 374–5 presents hypothetical situations (food-shortage, an overloaded lifeboat) in which the master might be expected to sacrifice a slave rather than himself or his family: it is always possible to replace a slave, restoring the freeman's role as master.

[18] For the transition from an object to a subject of rights as 'the most complete metamorphosis one can imagine', see B. Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley, CA, 1993), 108; on manumission as 'slavery eased': Garnsey (n. 5), 97–101.

[19] Against the trend, R. Sallares in his *Ecology of the Ancient Greek World* (London, 1991) provides insights from the world of ants to justify the notion that (211–12): 'Aristotle's concept [of natural slavery] contains the germ of a very important idea' (comprehending the polis in terms of biological models).

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have regularly tried to argue that many of the problems can in fact be countered within the terms of the theory itself, and of Aristotle's moral philosophy in general. A recurring theme has been to credit Aristotle with the desire to reform slavery of its worst abuses. Others relate the slave as presented in Book 1 to slave labour as conceived in the 'best state' of Books 7 and 8, or read Aristotle as responding to Plato's presentation of slavery.[20] Rather than engage directly with repeated attempts to rescue Aristotle's theoretical credit, I shall argue for the merits of an alternative approach: how Aristotle's difficulties reflect the tensions and intellectual evasions inherent in the institution of chattel slavery; for which reason the perceived problems admit of no real resolution. But, by way of preparation, two recent encounters with Aristotle on slavery deserve further exploration.

Bernard Williams in *Shame and Necessity* (n. 18) has the overall aim of demonstrating that the moral outlook of the Greeks is nearer to our own than often thought. Moreover, the theoretical constructions of Plato and Aristotle do not necessarily bring us closer to 'what we can understand as an adequate grasp of the matters in question' (111). Specifically, he aims to approach Greek thinking about slavery (103–17) so as better to understand whether our own rejection of it as unjust depends on conceptions not available to the Greeks themselves (106). Williams regards at least some of Aristotle's inconsistencies as 'clearly ideological products, the result of trying to square the ethical circle'. He is especially scathing of the possibility of friendship with a slave as a man, but not as a slave: 'a more than usually evasive deployment of one of [Aristotle's] least satisfactory philosophical devices' (110). Apart from being revealing in themselves, these 'inconsistencies and strains' are also illuminating in the way modern commentators have seized upon them. For once, it seems, Aristotle's 'omnipresent judiciousness' has deserted him. Scholars therefore express relief at

[20] The detailed ways in which philosophers and others have tried to come to terms with Aristotle on slavery would make a revealing study. Here is a selection of more accessible attempts. (Earlier treatments are summarized by R. Pellegrin, 'La Théorie Aristotelicienne d'Esclavage', *Revue Philosophique* 107 [1982], 345–57.) Aristotle the would-be reformer: Newman, (n. 5), i.144–58; Susemihl and Hicks (n. 11), 24–6; D. Ross, *Aristotle*, 5th edn. (London, 1949), 240–2; Huxley (n. 3); J. Chuska, *Aristotle's Best Regime* (Lanham, MD, 2000), 297–8, 303–4. Slavery in Book 1 as paving the way for Books 7–8: Chuska, 289; R. Schlaifer, 'Greek Theories of Slavery from Homer to Aristotle', *HSCP* 47 (1936), 165–204 (reprinted: M. I. Finley [ed.], *Slavery in Classical Antiquity* [Cambridge, 1968], 93–132). Responding to Plato: E. Schütrumpf, 'Aristotle's Theory of Slavery. A Platonic Dilemma', *Ancient Philosophy* 13 (1993), 74–111; W. W. Fortenbaugh, 'Aristotle on Slaves and Women' in J. Barnes et al. (eds.), *Articles on Aristotle* (London, 1977), ii.135–9; N. D. Smith, 'Aristotle's Theory of Natural Slavery', *Phoenix* 27 (1983), 109–22 (reprinted: D. Keyt and F. D. Miller [eds.], *A Companion to Aristotle's Politics* [Oxford, 1991], 145–55).

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what they identify as Aristotle's own 'embarrassment', justifying their segregation of these chapters from the main body of his work.

Williams prefers to read Aristotle's analysis of slavery as peculiar to his view of the world, which he cannot allow to be ultimately or structurally unjust. Its incoherence is, in part, the result of how he wanted slavery to be understood. In general terms, free Greeks saw enslavement as an arbitrary calamity. It was therefore understandable that slaves would complain and even resist. Slavery itself was regarded as necessary, being neither just nor unjust (117). Aristotle's distinctive contribution was to attempt to justify the system: if properly run and understood, there would be no grounds for complaint; not even from the slaves. His mode of argument, based on enslavement of those to whom that role was not contrary to nature, was in Williams' eyes a philosophical dead-end: 'these ideas did not have much future in antiquity' (115).[21]

By contrast, Malcolm Schofield in his slightly earlier analysis of 'Ideology and Philosophy in Aristotle's Theory of Slavery' concludes that the theory is not to any significant extent ideological.[22] By 'ideology', Schofield means a set of 'views, ideas, or beliefs that are somehow tainted by the social origin or the social interests of those who held them'. He identifies a philosophical belief as 'one which *inter alia* is held because of the rational considerations which are offered in its support'.[23] Is Aristotle on slavery to be regarded as an attempt to articulate an ideological belief, widely shared among better-off Greeks, that it was right for most masters and slaves (especially barbarian slaves) to occupy their respective roles; or is it the outcome of purely philosophical reflection? (2). Schofield argues at length that Aristotle's analysis of slavery was not the result of the 'false consciousness' characteristic of ideological belief; that is, labouring under a delusion or practising insincerity (3). He considers Aristotle to be committed to examining the issue by reason independent of common belief and prepared to be critical of it (6).

There is an initial problem: the 'endoxic method' as famously formulated by Aristotle (basing at least initial investigations on

[21] In fact, Garnsey has since demonstrated (n. 5), 13–16, that natural slave theory had a history both before and after Aristotle. N. Fisher reviewing *Shame and Necessity* (*Classical Review* 45 [1995], 71–3) argues for a wider acceptance of natural slavery through Greek society.

[22] In G. Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles 'Politik'* (Göttingen, 1990), 1–27; reprinted in M. Schofield, *Saving the City* (London, 1999), 115–40.

[23] For the emphatic opposite of Schofield's analysis, see E. A. Havelock, *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics* (London, 1957), 342–50, characterizing the *Politics* on slavery as 'the work of a mind that has…brought every one of its prejudices and moods to total abstraction' (340).

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endoxon or 'reputable opinions') has 'elective affinity' for ideology (7–8).[24] But, on closer investigation, according to Schofield, his approach with regard to slavery proves not to be endoxic (8–9). Although the reader of Book 1 might come to the conclusion that ideology is hard at work (particularly with reference to women), that need not apply to slaves: 'False consciousness may have eaten its way unevenly into his thinking on these questions' (11). This is apparently borne out by Schofield's treatment of 'anomaly and inconsistency' (12–16). The obvious inconsistencies are highlighted (12–13): a slave is simultaneously an 'ensouled tool' and (for the purposes of friendship) a man; the master–slave relationship is exploitative and at the same time in the slave's interest; slaves can perceive reason and possess *arete*, so how are they different from non-slaves? Need all this inconsistency be accounted for by ideology breaking in? Not so, suggests Schofield, anomaly and inconsistency occur elsewhere in the works of great philosophers: 'And there is at least one commonly employed strategy for dealing with them: the exercise of interpretative charity' (14).[25] Schofield proposes that this line of approach may eliminate supposed inconsistencies. Briefly, he argues that deliberative incapacity is not incompatible with a range of suitable skills, like cookery or shoemaking (1255b26, 1260b20); initial emphasis on physical strength may best be seen as 'expository exaggeration'. The psychological model for the natural slave favoured by Schofield is that of the 'childlike adult…a perfectly recognisable sort of human being'. True paternalism is not appropriate for these people in that, unlike children, they cannot acquire strategic purpose of their own (15–16).

Presuming (as Schofield would wish) that this is a defensible piece of Aristotelian philosophy, why has Aristotle advanced it in the *Politics*, if not for ideological reasons? Schofield suggests that the 'mainspring of the argument' of Book 1 is not slavery at all, but (rightly, as we have seen, 180) 'how many forms of rule are there?' On the subsequent occasions that Aristotle introduces master–slave relations into the *Politics* (19), it is to distinguish political rule from that of the *despotes*. There was therefore no reason for Aristotle to take any stand on slavery in contemporary society. However, his own attitudes occasionally emerge; especially in regard to the assumption that barbarians are

[24] The classic exploration of the endoxic method is G. Owen's '*Tithenai ta phainomena*' in J. Barnes et al. (eds.), *Articles on Aristotle* (London, 1975), ii.113–26 (reprinted in M. Nussbaum [ed.], *Logic, Science and Dialectics*, [London, 1986], 139–51); briefly, Cartledge (n. 5), 121–2.

[25] The notion of 'interpretative charity' is helpfully discussed by S. M. Cohen and D. Keyt, 'Analysing Plato's Arguments' in J. C. Klagge and N. D. Smith (eds.), *Methods of Interpreting Plato and His Dialogues* (Oxford, 1992), 173–200; I owe this reference to Malcolm Schofield.

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naturally slavish. As Schofield observes, this is 'a nasty piece of false consciousness' (21–2); but he concludes that this does not 'infect' Aristotle's theory of slavery itself: 'The false consciousness gets to work when Aristotle stops theorising.' He concludes that in Book 1 of the *Politics* there is a sort of 'insulation' of theory from the reality of slavery: 'The theory does not explicitly or otherwise pretend to be a theory directly or indirectly concerned with contemporary slavery.'

This idea, that Aristotle, in formulating his theory of slavery, was hardly concerned with slavery as it actually existed around him in fourth-century Athens, is common to many commentators. The idea appears explicitly in W. Ambler's paper, 'Aristotle on Nature and Politics. The Case of Slavery' (*Political Theory* 15 [1987], 390, 404), taken up with enthusiasm by Schütrumpf (n. 20), 121: 'It should not be surprising, then, that Aristotle's theory of slavery…is almost completely irrelevant for the understanding of the reality of social conditions in ancient Greece.' The identical theme runs through Garnsey's analysis of Aristotle on slavery (n. 5), which: 'is by no means concerned to offer a justification for the system of slavery *as it operated in his time*' (77, author's italics); how: 'His general strategy involves distracting our attention from the (thousands of) actual unnatural slaves, and forcing us to focus on an imaginary model slave…' (105); concluding that: 'Natural slave theory offered ideological support to slaveowners rather than prescriptions for or descriptions of actual master/slave relationships' (127).

A range of reasons encourages modification of this verdict. Overall, there is Aristotle's approach to issues elsewhere: the endoxic method, noted above, that makes his explorations potentially helpful for social and cultural historians. For example, his model in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of 'friendship for utility' has seemed to explain much about how friendship worked in other contexts.[26] Of course, this is precisely the point disputed by Schofield, who singles out the analysis of slavery as not dependent on *endoxa*. There is, however, room for manoeuvre in the degree to which Aristotle's analysis of slavery relates to perceived realities. Schofield accepts the possibility of a more flexible concept of *endoxa*, broadening out the *phainomena* Aristotle is anxious to pursue (7).

In his presentation of slavery, Aristotle wishes to win over his audience. That is apparent in modes of argument reminiscent of law-court

[26] On Aristotle and the practicalities of friendship, see the items in n. 14. For the analogous integration of natural slavery into Aristotle's *oeuvre*: M. I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (London, 1980), 118–19.

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speeches: exhortatory use of *delon estin* (when the point at issue seems not necessarily clear); arguments concluded with some variant on the phrase 'both expedient and just'; irony ('even among the wise…'); and appeals to non-philosophical authorities: Hesiod, Euripides, and apparent proverbs.[27]

Essential to the persuasive process is Aristotle's grounding of his philosophical exposition of slavery in realities familiar to his audience and delivering for their benefit some practical pay-off. It may be recalled that Aristotle prefaces his account of master–slave relations with the intention that it will not only improve on current ideas, but also have a bearing on practical utility (1253b15–17). As Schofield points out (14), a possible explanation of Aristotle's incorporation of intelligent, craft-practising slaves is that his 'real motivation was to justify the actual institution of slavery as he knew it'. Aristotle also promises (1254a20–54b23) to demonstrate the existence of natural slaves both theoretically (*toi logoi*) and empirically (*ek ton ginomenon*). What follows is basically argument by analogy: a key feature of Aristotle's theory of slavery. The technique is essentially rhetorical (introduced by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*, 1393a22–94a18): choosing analogies that, under the circumstances, seemed persuasive.[28] As Aristotle addressed his all-male, predominantly upper-class audience in the Lyceum, neither he nor they could easily have imagined a society in which it was emphatically not accepted that women, for their own good, should be subordinated to men; still less that animals might be thought by many sensible people to have rights. Argument by (to us dubious) analogy is symptomatic of the way in which Aristotle on slavery is locked into a socio-cultural context, essential to its understanding. As Schofield writes (11), it is possible to approach Aristotle's views on slavery from two different directions: from his own moral philosophy, or from contemporary Greek realities. In what follows, the second path is taken.

[27] The broad issue of rhetoric in *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* is raised by A. N. Shulsky, 'The "infrastructure" of Aristotle's *Politics*: Aristotle on economics and politics' in C. Lord and D. K. O'Connor (eds.), *Essays on the Foundations of Aristotelian Political Science* (Berkeley, CA, 1991), 104–11.

[28] For analogy as a persuasive rather than a demonstrative argument: G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy* (Cambridge, 1966), 403–14.

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V

The picture of slavery that can be pieced together from the *Politics* is of an institution seemingly too problematic to be sustained in practice. The aim in this and the following sections is to address that issue with an apparent paradox. That is, how so-called 'inconsistencies and anomalies', apart from being delimited, may be read to reflect slavery as it was perceived by slave-owners in Athens, including Aristotle.

The first stage of the argument is, in one sense, the least controversial: the identification of slaves in Athens with barbarians.[29] Here, at least, Aristotle's thinking represented a reality of Athenian slavery. As often remarked, it is impossible to identify even a handful of Greeks as slaves in classical Athens. In broad historical terms this need not surprise us. Slaves in other slave-societies have historically been identified with outsiders. According to a fragment of Theopompos (Athenaeus 6.265b–c = Wiedemann [n. 3], 84), the Chians were the first Greeks to use slaves, 'acquiring people who were not Greek-speakers and paying a price for them'.[30] The classic demonstration from Athens is the collection of slaves whose origins are indicated on the so-called 'Attic Stelae', recording the public auction of slaves belonging to wealthy citizens and metics confiscated in the aftermath of the Mutilation of the Herms. Of the thirty-two slaves whose nationality is recoverable from explicit ethnics or names formed from ethnics, only two are possibly Greek: a woman from Macedonia and a 'Messenian woman', either a former helot or a non-Greek from Messana in Sicily.[31]

But what of slaves originating as prisoners-of-war, about whom Aristotle expressed some concern? For those Greeks taken in war there were three possibilities: death, enslavement, or release (either unconditionally or through ransom). It is impossible to arrive at a statistical breakdown, but the passages collected by Pritchett suggest that, for fourth-century Athenians, there was an expectation that

[29] Non-Aristotelian material identifying barbarians as fitted for slavery: E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford, 1989), 190–200. I pass over the apparent inconsistencies between Aristotle's description of barbarians and their suitability as slaves: Asiatics may be deficient in spirit, but not in intellect; see Fisher (n. 4), 96; Brunt (n. 4), 380–1.

[30] Theopompus possibly reads current practice back into presumed Chian origins. Ethnic difference as a characteristic of slave societies: Patterson (n. 3), 176–9.

[31] R. Meiggs and D. M. Lewis (eds.), *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1988), no. 79. Of the names that are Greek or attributed to Greeks, it seems likely that 'Pistos', 'Satyros', and 'Charias' were thought appropriate to slaves. Three more are described as *oikogenes* or 'born in the house'. The evidence from Athens does not conform to Patterson's overall claim (n. 3), 132–37, that birth was by far the most important method of enslavement.

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fellow-citizens captured in war would be ransomed rather than enslaved or executed.[32] Did Athenians extend the same accommodation to those they defeated? A key passage seems to be Xenophon's statement (*Hell.* 2.2.14) that the Athenians in 404 feared they would be enslaved by the Spartans, copying the treatment they had themselves inflicted on other Greek communities; borne out by the combined testimony of Thucydides and Diodorus: Pritchett (n. 32), 227–8. The implication is that the Athenians' unwonted harshness engendered fear of an equally harsh reprisal, which was not in the event forthcoming. In fact, the ending of this 'War Like No Other' might be read as restoring a more merciful norm to this aspect of Aegean warfare.[33] From the fourth century there is only one unambiguous case of Athenians initially enslaving rather than ransoming: 3,000 prisoners brought to Athens by Chabrias after victory at sea in 376 (Dem. 20.77, 80). The overwhelming majority of slaves in Athens were barbarians and therefore assimilable to the category of natural slaves. So, an unfortunate consequence of warfare, confronted by Aristotle, may be reduced to a minor anomaly. Exceptional cases could safely be ignored. As Aristotle wrote in *Parts of Animals* (663b27–29), 'to study nature we have to consider the majority of cases, for it is either in what is universal or what happens in a majority of cases that nature's ways are to be found'.[34]

Equation of slaves with barbarians also weakens Aristotle's other practical problem: that nature slips up not just occasionally but *pollakis* in attributing appropriate bodies to slave and free. Aristotle avoids the issue by claiming that souls matter more than bodies; but Greek habits of thought persevered in imputing appropriate physical attributes to slaves. Frequently associated with Aristotle's 'ideal'

[32] W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War*, (Berkeley, CA, 1991), v.203–312.

[33] The description is Victor Hanson's (London, 2005), who provides a record of murder and enslavement across 'The Thirty Years Slaughter' (182–91). A fourth-century return to 'normality' is supported by F. Kiechle, 'Zur Humanität in der Kriegführung des griechischen Stadt', *Historia* 7 (1958), 129–56 (esp. 155–6). Pritchett objects (n. 32), 203 n. 297, that Kiechle fails to consider Dem. 9.47–50, but the passage contains no reference to the fate of prisoners. Across slavery as a whole, Patterson (n. 3), 106–15 comments on the relative infrequency of mass-enslavement through warfare, citing in support figures for Greece from P. Ducrey, *Le traitement des prisonniers de guerre dans la Grèce antique* (Paris, 1968), 110. It may be noted that Aristotle refers to the capture *and sale* of prisoners, which could lead to eventual redemption; as in the case of capture by pirates (see the note below).

[34] Regarding other methods of enslaving Greeks, the role of piracy seems conspicuous by its absence from Aristotle; possibly because it would have brought to mind the unfortunate experience of Plato (Diog. Laert. 3.20)? Other routes to slavery presumably had negligible impact: errant daughters of citizens; metics missing out on tax-payments. Although debt-bondage had been abolished for citizens in Athens, metics were possibly not immune: Menander, *Hero* 28–36 (with Millett [n. 14], 64, 78).

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natural slave is Theognis' uncompromising description (535–8): 'A slave's head is never upright, but always bent, and he has a slanting neck. A rose or a hyacinth never comes from a sea-onion: no more does a free child from a slave woman.' Xenophon in his *Symposium* (2.4) has Socrates state that free men exercising in the gymnasium are distinguished by a characteristic odour. Aristocratic perspectives may be complemented by the iconography of slave and free, with the former routinely depicted by vase painters and on stelae as disproportionately small, or ugly, or tattooed. The archetypal ugly slave was Aesop, traditionally a Thracian, and imagined as pot-bellied, weasel-armed, hunchbacked, a squalid, squinting, swarthy midget with crooked legs.[35] There are plenty of modern parallels for this species of upper-class false consciousness. The patrician politician George Curzon is reputed to have expressed surprise, on seeing soldiers from the Western Front bathing, that the lower-classes' skins were so white.[36] Symbolic of slaves' enduring status as barbarians was the custom of naming them after their ethnic origin: Thratta, Karikon, Syros; a comforting reminder for the owner each time they were addressed – less so for the slaves. The names are taken from the Attic Stelae, where we have already seen slaves overwhelmingly identified by their place of origin. The notion of ongoing barbarism was predictably reinforced by stereotyping: the Scythian archer in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* speaks a suitably barbarous form of Greek (1001, 1082, 1176).

The clearest evidence of Aristotle's concern with the practicalities of slavery is the trio of contradictions repeatedly identified as arising out of his theory: apparent possession by slaves of reasoning power, their vestigial friendship with masters, and (less directly) the universal possibility of manumission. Aristotle here strives to get to philosophical grips with the contradiction that is at the heart of chattel slavery everywhere and at all times: namely, how slavery depends ultimately on the treatment of a designated group of people as if they were in

[35] The description is K. Hopkins' from his 'Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery', *P&P* 138 (1993), 3–27 (reprinted in R. Osborne [ed.], *Studies in Ancient Greek and Roman Society* [Cambridge, 2004], 206–25), the whole of which has relevance for my analysis. For a vase-painting of a misshapen, crippled Aesop, see P. Cartledge (ed.), *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1998), 6. Further illustrations of slaves can be found in N. Himmelmann, *Archäologisches zum Problem der griechischen Sklaverei* (Mainz, 1971); for a small selection: Fisher (n. 4), 8, 54, 74, 88. Stampp (n. 3), 125–6 records a Louisiana slaveowner's description of James, a runaway slave: 'His look is impudent and insolent, and he holds himself straight and walks well.'

[36] The anecdote is all the more telling for being apocryphal: D. Gilmour, *Curzon* (London, 1994), 438.

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some way or ways deficient as human beings. But, in reality, those people called slaves are full members of the human race; so that, given the opportunity, their underlying humanity will reassert itself. The phenomenon looms large in black slavery. Stampp pointed out long ago (n. 3), 189–229, the tangle in law-codes of the slave-owning states of the Old South as they tried to legislate *inter alia* for the criminal responsibility of slaves.[37] Aristotle's *aporia* about the slave's possession of *arete* is magnified in the emotional turmoil experienced by Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn. The poor white boy feels he owes the reader an apology for crediting Jim, a runaway slave, with proper human emotions and repeatedly agonizes over helping him to escape.[38]

The slave's assertion of humanity may take a range of outward forms; from the master's view, both positive and negative. Obviously unwanted are rebellion and resistance, which, with respect to chattel slaves, receive no direct attention from Aristotle; understandable in the case of revolt, which never happened.[39] But Aristotle does list as one of the proper objects of military training for citizens the maintaining of despotic power over those who deserve to be slaves; the other aims being avoidance of enslavement, and enslaving those who benefit from being slaves (1333b37–34a2). Comparable is Xenophon's comment that citizens act as bodyguards against each other's slaves. Revolt is considered explicitly by Aristotle with reference to helots and *penestae* (1269a34–b13): why they rebel is attributed (in part) to the hostility of neighbouring states without their own servile under-class. Aristotle on the problem of policing the helots has some relevance to slaves, echoing Plato in the *Laws* on slave control (776d–778a). How, asks Aristotle, are relations (*homilia*) with the helots to be managed? If left to their own devices (*aniemenoi*), they are insolent (*hubrizousi*) and think themselves equal to their masters; if they are made to suffer hardship (*kakopathos*) they plot against and

[37] 'But legislators and magistrates were caught in a dilemma whenever they found that a slave's status as property was incompatible with his status as a person' (189); note, however, dissent from Patterson (n. 3), 196–7. For a brief statement of the 'inherent contradiction of slavery', see D. Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Oxford, 1988), 62–3. My approach comes close to J. Lear in *Aristotle. The Desire to Understand* (Cambridge, 1988), 192–9, who sees Aristotle as scrutinizing, not uncritically defending, the institution of slavery; but I do not follow his conclusion that Aristotle thought it wrong to enslave barbarians *en masse* (199).

[38] See C. Ward's brief introduction to the Folio edition: Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (London, 1993; first published, 1885).

[39] The distinction between 'revolt' and 'unrest' is apparent from Phillips' catalogue of outbreaks of violent slave resistance from the Old South (n. 3), 464–88, which he revealingly lists under the heading 'Slave Crime'. The spectrum of slave resistance (revolt to running away) is covered by Genovese (n. 3), 585–657.

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hate them. In the *Laws*, it is the Athenian speaker (regularly identified with Plato himself) who presents an identical dilemma with regard to treatment of slaves, though assigning different outcomes. For Plato, brutality results in excessive servility; the solution lies in firmness: punishment not admonition, ordering slaves about and not jesting with them.[40] Also common to Plato and Aristotle is advice not to allow concentrations of slaves of the same nationality. In the *Politics* (1330a25–30), the reference is to slaves who farm land in the ideal state; but as Plato (*Laws* 778a) and the Peripatetic author of the *Oeconomica* (1344b18) demonstrate, Aristotle cites a precaution common to existing slave-systems.[41]

Resistance in the sense of non-cooperation is implicit in the *Politics* in the requirement for slaves not to be too spirited and to have sufficient *arete* to avoid *akolasia* or indiscipline (185). Non-compliance is also inherent in Aristotle's advice on *nouthesia* or admonition of slaves, in place of the punishment advocated by Plato (1260b5–8). Aristotle surely writes from experience of the incompetent slave who puts in a metaphorical appearance in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1149a25–8), representing anger imperfectly listening to reason. The slave over-zealously scuttles out of the room before he has heard all the orders, which he proceeds to bungle. One would like to interpret his blundering as covert resistance. The escaped slave Frederick Douglass describes in his classic autobiography from 1885, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (n. 44), 81–2, ways in which artful slaves encouraged the master in his belief in their ignorance.

The passage is cited by Stampp in his chapter 'A Troublesome Property' (n. 3), 103, the whole of which sheds light on a largely unreported aspect of Greek slavery (91–141). The title, quoted from the slaveowner William Pettigrew (96), echoes exactly (and presumably unwittingly) Plato's description of the slave as *chalepon de to ktema*, 'a

[40] Brion Davis says of Plato's *Laws* on slavery (n. 37), 66, 'No American slave code was so severe'. The standard study of Plato on slavery remains G. M. Morrow's *Plato's Law of Slavery* (Urbana, IL, 1939), supplemented by his *Plato's Cretan City. A Historical Interpretation of the Laws* (Princeton, NJ, 1993; first published, 1960), 148–52; with G. Vlastos, 'Does Slavery Exist in Plato's *Republic*?' and 'Slavery in Plato's Thought' in G. Vlastos (ed.), *Platonic Studies* (Princeton, NJ, 1973), 140–6, 147–63.

[41] Aristotle supplies, as part of a critique of Plato's *Republic* (1264a32–6), a blanket reference to his *georgoi* being 'more awkward and unmanageable (*chalepous kai phronematon*) than helots and *penestae* and slaves'. The distinction drawn by Aristotle and Plato between the likely effect of non-paternal treatment for helots and slaves conforms to expectations and experience. The helots are 'left alone' and respond by violently resisting; slaves are treated brutally, as if wild animals, and became more servile. On the incidence of servile revolt, ancient and modern, see P. A. Cartledge, 'Rebels and Sambos in Classical Greece' in P. A. Cartledge and F. D. Harvey (eds.), *CRUX* (London, 1985), 16–46.

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troublesome piece of goods' (776d).[42] Nothing in the *Politics* acknowledges directly the resistance-response so well documented from the Old South: creation by the slaves of a counter-culture; but Aristotle's advice on maximizing the ethnic mix would minimize initial scope for cultural cohesion. There is the trace of a counter-measure in Aristotle's quotation of the proverb (1334a21), 'There is no time off (*schole*) for slaves'; *schole* is here to be understood as time free from getting a living to be taken up with activities appropriate to free men. Stampp documents (346) how the work regime on plantations lent pleasure to sheer idleness.[43]

Aside from these hints, the key manifestation of slave-humanity in the *Politics*, directly raised by Aristotle, arises out of the performance of their duties; evidences of humanity which, properly directed, were beneficial to the master. As we have seen, Aristotle honestly acknowledges, and then tries to explain away, how natural slaves seem to reason, form friendships with masters, and (by extension) apparently cope well with manumission. These were phenomena familiar to all slave-owners having direct contact with their slaves. My analysis here differs from Schofield, who sees Aristotle as potentially providing the basis for a programme by which the master can judge whether or not his slaves are 'natural' (11). 'Is my slave really a natural slave? Or is he too shrewd and purposeful?' I prefer to see Aristotle as providing masters with a series of 'get-out clauses'. So a master should not worry if his slave seems to be reasoning things out: 'it's only what he's learnt to do by watching you'. However close your slave might seem, he was not really your friend (and therefore somehow your equal): 'it's only that small bit of him that qualifies as human'. Finally, though this is not so explicit, a slave who deserved and could cope with manumission had plainly been well prepared by his master.

A key part of Aristotle's text in this regard is his quotation of yet another proverb, surely meant to demonstrate his rapport with slavery as commonly conceived. 'Slave goes before slave, master goes before master' (1255b30); in other words, there is a hierarchy of slaves as of free men. The context is the ownership by the wealthy of slave-overseers, who tell their other slaves what to do (1255b31–40).

[42] According to Stampp (n. 3), 105, 122, a Louisiana doctor, Samuel Cartwright, attributed slaves' tendency to sabotage their work and run away as diseases respectively labelled 'Dysaethesia Aethiopica' and 'Drapetomania'. For the Roman material on resistance: Hopkins (n. 35); K. Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge, 1994), 107–31.

[43] Stampp, in his anxiety to oppose Phillips' rose-tinted view of plantation-life (345–52), emphasizes the bleakness of the slaves' own world (Genovese's preface to Phillips, xviii); for a nuanced view: Genovese (n. 3), esp. 325–584.

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This apparently entails a slave acting as a substitute master; but, as appreciated by Marx, Aristotle provides reassurance that this particular skill is not of any great significance or dignity. He seeks to downgrade it (1255b24–6) by telling of a man in Syracuse who, for a fee, taught domestic slaves (*paides*) their 'everyday services' (*egkuklia diakonemata*). The notion of hierarchy extended beyond Aristotle's overseer and overseen. Confirmation (if needed) comes from the Old South. Stampp (n. 3), 317–21 demonstrates how the slaves had their own internal class-structure. The masters fostered a sense of hierarchy by allotting specialized tasks, isolating domestics and artisans from field-hands ('helots of the plough'). But the slaves themselves reinforced the tendency in the quest after recognition as individuals; again, a means of asserting their humanity. Frederick Douglass put it more cynically: 'Everybody, in the South, wants the privilege of whipping somebody else'.[44]

VI

Differentiation between categories of slaves helps to address a further apparent problem. This is the common criticism that Aristotle restricts his analysis (at least in Book 1) to slaves as members of the *oikos*; and then only to those involved in action or service as opposed to production. As Brunt points out (n. 4), 343, 370–1, this apparently ignores the considerable numbers involved in agriculture, manufacturing, and mining; also slaves hired out, those living apart from their masters (the so-called *choris oikountes*) and 'public slaves' employed by the community. In reality, discontinuity between categories may be read so as to add plausibility to Aristotle's analysis. It may prove helpful to think in terms of a spectrum of slave-types, with location determined in relation to the inner-*oikos* of master, wife, and children; in particular, the landed *oikos* familiar to Aristotle himself and his wealthier pupils.

Brunt considers (357, n. 30) that Aristotle conceives of economic activity as if the concern solely of the household. In theoretical terms,

[44] *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York, NY, 1969), 72. Douglass (109) labels the servants in the Great House a 'sort of black aristocracy', going on to tell (118) of the disgrace of being 'a poor man's slave'. J. W. Blasingame, 'Status and Social Structure in the Slave Community' in H. P. Owens (ed.), *Perspectives and Irony in American Slavery* (Jackson, MI, 1976), reconstructs the slaves' own perceived hierarchy, encompassing twenty-three categories, from conjurors, physicians, and midwives, *via* cool cats and self-employed slaves down to voluntary concubines and informers.

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the great majority of slaves in Athens were household slaves in the sense that they were formally the property of an individual *oikos*. This included, at the heart of the household, a large sub-set of domestic slaves, though the category is complicated by what Fisher (n. 4), 53 calls 'all-purpose slaves'. The commonest kind of 'doubling-up' would presumably be domestic slaves working in the fields, particularly at harvest-time. Elementary economics suggest that 'division of labour' would be clearest-cut in larger households; detailed testimony from the Old South provides an impression of scale. Stampp (n. 3), 43–4 records how, on smaller holdings with (say) six or fewer field-hands, masters and their families would regularly work alongside their slaves. Thirty or more slaves on a plantation made possible 'considerable labour specialization, the amount depending on its size' (49–50). At a minimum level, a clear distinction was drawn between domestic servants, slaves with special skills, and field-hands. On large plantations, 'specialization was complete' (65–6), with types of slave restricted to specific parts of the house. It is to be doubted whether such a degree of specialization occurred within even the largest Athenian *oikos*.

No more than hints are forthcoming from Athenian sources. Knemon of Menander's *Dyskolos* is presented as an extreme case: a man with a farm worth two talents, yet working in the fields without a single slave (328–33). Daos, the sole slave of the impoverished Gorgias (23–7), curses the poverty of the household, explaining how he has been a long time over the housework, but must now hurry off to help his master who has been working alone on the farm (206–11). By contrast, the three slaves who ran away from Nicostratus (Dem. 53.6), plainly a better-off citizen, are specifically 'farm-slaves' (*ex agrou*). The so-called 'Wills of the Philosophers', preserved by Diogenes Laertius, detail domestic slaves in the cases of Plato (3.41–43), Aristotle (5.11–16), and Theophrastus (5.51–7), but make no mention of the slaves presumed to be working on their estates, of which they were apparently treated as an integral part.[45]

How is this differentiation of slave types within the *oikos* to be squared with Aristotle's stipulation (1254a7) that slaves are concerned with action (*praxis*) but not production (*poiesis*)? Part of the problem lies in assimilation of *poiesis* to 'production' as in textbooks of political economy (explicitly cited by Susemihl and Hicks, n. 11). But it seems

[45] In the cases of Aristotle and Theophrastus, their lands outside Attica may have been farmed by non-chattel-slave labour; the possibility is implicit in the naming of Cretan compulsory labourers *oikeis* and *klarotai*: belonging to the household or the plot of land.

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likely from the example Aristotle gives of a shuttle that a better translation is 'making', with the sense of making for further 'action'. An additional clue is supplied by Aristotle's aside that 'Life (*bios*) is not *poiesis* but *praxis*' (1254a7). *bios* here seems to mean 'livelihood': what is needed to sustain life.[46] So it can be argued that *praxis* involves the normal range of activities within the *oikos* aiming at self-sufficiency, including agriculture. That agricultural slaves are engaged in *praxis* is explicit in Aristotle's imagined labour force in his ideal polis (1330a25–30) and implicit in his earlier equation (1252b10–15) of the plough-ox with the poor man's slave (*oiketes*).

Only here in the *Politics* is *oiketes* used for slave, suggesting that Aristotle might be quoting a proverb; the word used almost everywhere is some form of *doulos*.[47] The complex problem of the terminology of Greek slavery remains unresolved. For theorists, *doulos* had the advantage of abstract and adjectival forms. But *doulos* may also be favoured as indicating 'slave' in a neutral, generalized sense (slave as opposed to free) without any of the intimations of function inherent in *oiketes*, *therapon*, *akolouthos*, *diakonos*, and *pais*. *douleia* is used metaphorically by both Plato and Aristotle to indicate subjection to the discipline of rulers, laws, parents, and elders.[48]

In practice, the enlarged Athenian *oikos* could display considerable flexibility. Estates of the wealthy listed in the Orators include, alongside real property, slave-craftsmen, obviously producing for the market. One such estate (Isaeus 8.35) contained slaves, distinguished from three female domestic slaves, who were explicitly said to be 'income-earning' (*andrapoda misthophorounta*).[49] Would Aristotle be willing to incorporate this slave-category into his conception of the *oikos*? Probably not. By way of an analogy, he cites the existence of different kinds of slave, distinguished by their *ergasiai* or employments (1277a35–77b7). Singled out for special mention are handicraftsmen (*chernites*), including the 'mechanic artisan' (*banausos technites*). He

[46] For this sense of *bios*: J. Korver, *Terminologie van het Crediet-Wezen* (Utrecht, 1934; reprinted New York, NY, 1979), 6–8.

[47] The solitary use of *paides* in the account of the Syracusan teaching slaves their domestic duties suggests Aristotle may be closely paraphrasing his source. Another apparent anomaly is Aristotle's advice that in his model state the land could be farmed by 'barbarian *periokoi*' as an alternative to slaves (1329a24–6, 1330a25–31). Cartledge (*The Greeks*, 127–8) explains the labelling ('dwellers round about') as indicating their 'literally marginal political and social status'.

[48] For *doulos* having the strict sense of 'unfree' rather than slave, see the fundamental study by F. Gschnitzer, *Studien zur griechischen Terminologie der Sklaverei* (Wiesbaden, 1976), i.6–12; he further interprets *oiketes* as broadly relating to slaves in daily life (16–23). Plato (*Laws* 763a) treats *oiketai* as one type of *douloi*.

[49] For breakdowns of selected estates, see Millett (n. 14), 166–9.

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adds that, although these handicrafts are not appropriate to citizens or good men as occupations, they may be learned for occasional, private use. Presumably, their possession by slaves within the *oikos*, aiming at self-sufficiency, was even less problematic. Helping to locate market-orientated craft-workers with respect to the inner-*oikos* is the famous passage indicating the only alternative to slavery as magic, whereby things would work by themselves (1253b23–54a8). 'Thus if shuttles wove and quills played harps of themselves, *architektones* ('works-directors') would have no need of *huperetai* (assistants) and masters no need of slaves'. Although the status of these *huperetai* is not stated, workshops with free craft-workers producing for the market would be unprecedented. Xenophon's comment is well known (*Mem*. 2.3.3): those who can afford it have slaves as co-workers. Aristotle's reference is presumably to slave-manned workshops under the control of a slave- or freedman-foreman; as was the case with the couch- and knife-makers owned by Demosthenes' father (Dem. 27.19–22).

Aristotle's distinction between *despotes-douloi* and *architekton-huperetai* distances the latter from his conception of what we have been calling the inner-*oikos*. Even more remote from their formal *despotes* were hired-out slaves and those employed in the mines. An extreme case were the one thousand mine-slaves allegedly the property of Nicias, but kept at arm's length by being contracted out under a non-Athenian, possibly a slave (Xen. *Mem*. 2.5.2; *Poroi* 4.15–16 for other hands-off owners). Similarly disengaged from the master were the significantly labelled *choris oikountes*. Whether these groups of disassociated slaves met with Aristotle's approval is to be doubted. There is a hint in his summary of the legislation proposed by one Phaleas of Chalcedon (otherwise unknown), criticizing his suggestion that all artisans (*technitai*) should be publicly owned slaves (1267b14–19): 'If it is proper to have public slaves, it is those labouring on public works (*tous ta koina ergazomenous*) as is the case at Epidamnus and as Diophantus once tried to institute at Athens.' His concession concerning manual labourers would exclude the more 'privileged' public slaves (clerks and the like) who might merge with the free.[50]

These patterns of slaveholding have implications for master–slave relations, delimiting the perceived problems of Aristotle's analysis.

[50] The evidence for 'privileged slaves' in Athens is collected by E. Cohen, *The Athenian Nation* (Princeton, NJ, 2000), 130–54.

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The number of slaves coming into direct contact with the master with whom some kind of personal bond might be established (problematic from the point of view of preserving their naturalness) was restricted; for the remainder, there was less of a problem of 'how contact with them was to be managed', as Aristotle complained of the helots. Even within the inner-*oikos*, distance from the master might be maintained through the overseers recommended by Aristotle. Xenophon further suggests (*via* Ischomachus) that a female-housekeeper *(tamia)* might manage everyday relations with the household slaves, and that sick slaves should be looked after by the wife (*Oeconomicus* 7.37, 9). Aristotle also advises (1336a39–36b3) that free children in the household, the next generation of owners, should have as little contact as possible with slaves.[51]

In this way, the 'awkward corners' of natural slavery may be rounded off. With only a minority of slaves within the *oikos*, care and guidance were needed, lest reasoning power and friendly relations, advantageous in due measure, distort the master–slave relationship, with accommodation hardening into resistance. Komon, who was getting on in years, had a slave he thought to be especially trustworthy (*piston*), but this Moschion allegedly turned out to be thoroughly unreliable and exploitative (Dem. 48.14–15). The opponents of the son of Teisias allegedly used his relationship with his slave Callarus as a means of attacking the master, bringing a charge (*dike*) against Callarus (Dem. 50.31–2). Moschion and Callarus match up with Aristotle's otherwise puzzling statement that a limited friendship might be possible with slaves partaking in 'law and agreement' (187).[52]

This distancing ties in with the issue of manumission. Aristotle's proposal, made with reference to his ideal state, remains problematic: that freedom should be set before all slaves as a reward. Setting aside the possibility of a Machiavellian ploy, taking advantage of the false perception of natural slaves that they would be better off free, it is again possible to delimit the problem. From a comparative perspective, Patterson (n. 3), 220 argues that freedom remains a powerful incentive even if only a handful are actually to be freed. Also to be considered is the practical position of the freed slave. Patterson

[51] Contrary to Ischomachus' expectations, his wife expresses enthusiasm for her role as nurse: sick slaves will show her *charis* and be *eunousteroi*. For implications of contact between children and slaves: M. Golden, 'The Effects of Slavery on Citizen Households and Children: Aeschylus, Aristophanes and Athens', *Historical Reflections* 15 (1988), 455–75.

[52] The interplay between accommodation and resistance is a theme running through Genovese's study (esp. 658–60).

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(240–7) comments on the difficulty experienced by freed negro slaves in breaking the bonds of dependence. Freedmen in Athens, in addition to the constraints imposed on metics in general, might continue to owe significant obligations to former masters, with re-enslavement as the punishment for default. Plato in his *Laws* (915a) may preserve a version of the services owed by freedmen: calling at their former master's home three times per month to receive instructions which were to be 'just and practicable'.[53]

Which categories of slaves were most likely to be manumitted? Well represented from inscriptions are slaves presumed to be living apart from their masters.[54] But the other substantial group, known from different sources, was household slaves. Apart from isolated cases from a range of texts (the loyal freedwoman in Demosthenes' *Against Euergos* [47]) this returns us to the wills of Aristotle and other philosophers preserved by Diogenes Laertius (201). The instructions are detailed and specific. Plato freed one slave and bequeathed four named *oiketai*; Theophrastus gave instructions concerning ten household slaves: three to be freed immediately, two conditionally freed, four given away, and one sold on.

The most detailed instructions are from Aristotle's will. Aristotle bequeathed three *therapainai*, a *paidiske* and a *pais* (all unnamed) to his daughter and a named *pais* to son. A slave called Abracis was given her freedom, together with, on the occasion of his daughter's marriage, 500 drachmas 'and the *paidiske* she already has'. To Thale (a freedwoman?) was to be given a thousand drachmas and a *paidiske* in addition to one she already had. Simon (a freedman?) was to be given, in addition to a sum already his towards purchasing a *pais*, a *pais* or another sum of money. Aristotle instructs that three further named slaves and one of their children shall be given their freedom when his daughter is married. He additionally stipulates that none of the *paides* who waited upon him (*eme therapeuonton*) shall be sold, but will continue in service until they arrive at the appropriate age, when they are to be freed, according to their deserts (*kat' axian*). All this

[53] Schlaifer (n. 20), 178–80 emphasizes the formal fragility of freedom enjoyed by metics in Athens; for hints of obligations owed by freed slaves to former masters (and the possibility of re-enslavement) see Harpocration, s.v. *apostasiou*: Wiedemann (n. 4), 49. Brion Davis (n. 37), 55 is surely incorrect in stating that an ex-slave in Athens bore no stigma; the behaviour of Apollodorus, son of the ex-slave Pasion suggests the contrary: J. Trevett, *Apollodorus the Son of Pasion* (Oxford, 1992).

[54] The evidence is conveniently summarized by Fisher (n. 4), 69–70. According to Osborne (n. 4), 31–2, the fifty female wool-spinners in the lists are best understood as general domestic slaves.

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might seem to confirm our preliminary findings. Even within the household, from the master's perspective there was an apparent hierarchy: freed and slave; slaves named and unnamed; slaves possessing other slaves; those freed, conditionally freed, passed on, or sold.

Testimentary evidence blends with the *Politics* and Book 1 of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica* to create a broadly 'Peripatetic view' of slavery. The author, an early but anonymous follower of Aristotle, echoes the *Politics* in advising that it is 'just and expedient' to offer all slaves the possibility of freedom after a specified number of years (1344b15). He also advocates the principle of divide and rule. Those slaves whose position is closer to that of free men (that is, overseers) should be treated with respect. The author advises that slaves are not to be subjected to *hubris* or cruelty; clothing and food (but not wine) are to be given as 'pay' in return for work, and punishment should be balanced by rewards, sacrifices, and holidays; families are to be permitted so that children may serve as 'hostages' and eventually as replacements for freed parents. It is clear from the detail that the slaves are envisaged within the context of the household.[55]

By an ancient but unsubstantiated tradition, Book 1 of the *Oeconomica* was attributed to Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor as head of the Lyceum. There are several cross-bearings: a scholion on the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1145a10–11) reports Theophrastus as relating practical wisdom to theoretical wisdom,

> in a way similar to the way in which slaves acting as stewards of their masters are related to their masters. For they do everything which must be done within the house, in order that their masters may have leisure for the pursuits appropriate to free men.

Aristotle's restricted presentation of slavery in the *Politics* is paralleled by the deployment of slaves in Theophrastus' *Characters*.[56] As the sixty or so references to slaves suggest, they are an essential element in the Characters' elite households: fetching, carrying, attending, marketing. There is a further parallel with the *Politics* in that all the slaves in the *Characters* slaves are 'close' to their masters;

[55] Brunt (n. 4), 371–2 offers a composite recreation of the 'Peripatetic view' of slavery. The principle of divide and rule is evident from plantations in the Old South, with domestic slaves distrusted by other slaves and slave-overseers or 'drivers' actively disliked (Blasingame [n. 44], 139–40; Genovese [n. 3], 365–88 on 'The men between'). From the vantage point of freedom, Frederick Douglass professed himself thoroughly unimpressed by the tokenism of holidays for slaves: 'part and parcel of the gross frauds, wrongs and inhumanity of slavery' (n. 44), 251–4.

[56] It might be objected that this approach compares one fantasy world with another, but in *Theophrastus and His World* (forthcoming) I try to argue that the *Characters* presents a Peripatetic version of how elite citizens ought to behave in a democratic polis.

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they are all domestic slaves, with no mention of slaves in agriculture or manufacturing. Individual Characters routinely demonstrate their negative sides through relationships with their slaves. The *agroikos* or 'Country Bumpkin' (4) is ignorant of the need to maintain social distance from his slaves. He is therefore shown as answering the front door himself, trying to seduce the slave-girl who bakes the bread, then helping her to grind the grain he needs, and finally consulting his slaves about his personal business. As befits Aristotle's pupil, Theophrastus constantly confronts the reader with examples of the behaviour of manifestly non-natural masters.

VII

Aristotle's analysis reinforces the notion of a differentiated system of slavery in Athens, overlapping with the better-documented material from the Roman world.[57] At extremes of the *oikos*-orientated spectrum were domestic slaves and mine-slaves (and the very differently situated *choris oikountes*). Aristotle in his analysis is concerned with only one extreme: the implications of potentially close relationships between masters and certain household slaves.

We should avoid the crude ascription of 'better and worse treatment' along the spectrum, deteriorating as distance from the *despotes* increased; appropriate for hired-out slaves and mine-slaves, but hardly for slaves living independently.[58] By the same token, the experience of domestic slaves was far more complex than optimistic views of their integration into the family suggest. As explained by Fisher (n. 4), 73, the psychological interaction of masters and slaves in close proximity was complex: both sides had self-interest in feigning respectively

[57] Roman material is conveniently summarized by Bradley (n. 42); Garnsey (n. 5), 94 notes how Roman judges were evidently expected to take into account in their judgments the *qualitas* of individual slaves.

[58] The 'spectrum of treatment' approach reaches its zenith in A. Zimmern's 'Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour?' in his *Solon and Croesus and Other Greek Essays* (Oxford, 1928), 105–64, where slaves in Athens are divided between the majority 'serving apprenticeships for freedom' (120) and others, true chattel-slaves, destined for mines and quarries (122, 143–4). Zimmern ingeniously but misguidedly applies the findings of J. E. Cairns' polemical account of negro slavery, *The Slave Power*, 2nd edn. (London, 1863; reprinted New York, NY, 1968), to demonstrate that Athens cannot count as a slave society (109–19, 161–2). In fact, Cairns emphatically distanced slavery in the Old South from ancient and medieval slavery, identifying three 'deep-reaching divisions' (race and colour, monoculture, the slave trade) that 'take the case of modern slavery entirely out of the scope of the analogies furnished by the former experience of mankind' (109–27).

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kindliness and loyalty. Apparent amelioration in the form of family- and friendship-relations effectively heightened possibilities for punishment and potential suffering. Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias* (483b) considers that a slave, who, 'when wronged or humiliated, cannot come to his own defence or to the defence of anyone for whom he cares', would be better off dead. The precariousness of the domestic, personal slave is nicely illustrated by the slave-girl in Lysias (1), *On the Murder of Eratosthenes*: at one moment, the confidante of her mistress, the next being threatened by her master with being 'whipped and thrown into the mill, and having a life of perpetual misery'.[59] There have been determined attempts to identify humanity on the part of masters as integral to slavery. But humanity within slavery is the prerogative of the slave, ranging from the resistance merely hinted at by Aristotle to the intellectual activity and emotional engagement regarded by their masters as the preserve of the free.[60]

This study began with slavery in the Old South, asking how the false consciousness of pro-slavers could be so strong as to mask the (to us) obvious wrongness of natural slavery. Although we cannot share in their mentality, the ethical writing of Peter Singer provides an unsettling analogy in terms of self-delusion. In his *Animal Liberation* (New York, NY, 1975), Singer suggests that, in centuries to come, people might look back in amazement at the double standards that a professedly humane society feels comfortable in applying to the treatment of animals. The lesson to be taken away from Aristotle on

[59] On the ideology of physical punishment for Athenian slaves: V. Hunter, *Policing Athens. Social Control in the Attic Lawsuits, 420–320 B.C.* (Princeton, NJ, 1994), 154–86. As an antidote to optimistic assessments of Roman household, Garnsey (n. 5), 7–8 invokes the execution of several hundred domestic slaves and freedmen in response to the murder of their master (Tacitus, *Annals* 14.42–5). Stampp's chapter 'To Make Them Stand in Fear' (n. 3), 142–88. underlines harsh treatment or its threat as the essential accompaniment to negro slavery; in 'Between Two Cultures' (307–15), he explores the limits of paternalism with reference to domestic slaves; a theme subsequently developed by Genovese (n. 3), esp. 3–7. For distrust of domestic slaves by fellow–slaves, see n. 55.

There have been sporadic attempts to identify ancient domestic slavery with unregulated domestic service before (say) the First World War (Brunt [n.3], 348, 359). The tendency receives ongoing support through the routine translation of *paidiske* and associated terms as 'maidservant'. Without wishing to ameliorate the severe conditions of pre-War domestic service (not for nothing were servant-girls around the end of the nineteenth century referred to as 'slaveys'), there remains a crucial difference, at least as perceived by masters and mistresses. According to A. E. Housman, as recorded on Trinity High Table in the 1930s, true civilization was not possible without slaves, for which servants were no substitute, 'because you wouldn't possess their souls': T. Howarth, *Cambridge Between Two Wars* (Cambridge, 1978), 80.

[60] J. Vogt's classic defence of 'Slavery and Humanity' in his *Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man*, trans. T. Wiedemann (Oxford, 1974), as routinely implemented by slaveowners, is sharply criticized by M. I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (London, 1980), 93–122.

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slavery is not that to understand everything is to excuse everything; rather, it is a warning that we should never cease to question closely the assumptions underpinning our own everyday behaviour and beliefs.[61]

[61] I owe the reference to Singer to my pupil, Tom Barker.

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